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A case study of the perceptions of English faculty regarding interactions with students with disabilities

Ara V. Karakashian
Rowan University

A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH FACULTY REGARDING INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

by

Ara V. Karakashian

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my wife and both our children, our hope for the future, and to

my parents, who made it possible for me to see a life path worth walking. It is also

dedicated to all students with disabilities who have felt forgotten by the system.

Abstract

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A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH FACULTY
REGARDING INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
2020-2021
MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D.
Doctor of Education

The purpose of this qualitative case study (Yin, 2018) was to explore the perceptions of 11 full time English faculty who teach at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I,* regarding interactions with students with disabilities (SWD) and learning disabilities (LD) at Friendship County Community College (FCCC), an urban community college in the northeastern region of the United States. Of the 11 faculty sampled, 11 participated in one-on-one interviews and a review of 24 de-identified disability accommodation letters was conducted. Using the Theory of Justice (Rawls, 1971, 2001) and Ethic of Care (Noddings, 1984), data was collected to gain an understanding of faculty experiences with training for interaction with all SWD and providing accommodations. Knowledge of disability etiquette (DE) was also explored. Four key themes emerged from the data. First, faculty training at the institution was inconsistent, even as faculty yearned for more professional development. Second, all faculty exhibited positive attitudes, with implied DE, when interacting with all SWD. Third, the college policy forbidding faculty recommendation of accommodations created a stalemate in the faculty-student relationship, where faculty respected student confidentiality while wanting to know their disability. Fourth, faculty had positive and negative perceptions of Disability Support Services. Implications for theory, research, practice, and policy demonstrate the need to better prepare all community college faculty and staff, who can simplify the process of originating accommodations.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Students enroll in higher education in order to make a better life for themselves. College completion brings greater employment opportunities and financial success (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2009), but pursuing this goal is challenging for all students (Adams & Proctor, 2010; Kahn, 2016). Those challenges become magnified for students with disabilities (SWD), whose challenges often surpass those of traditional students. Students with learning disabilities (LD) also encounter difficulty, as their disabilities are invisible. When these students struggle, the institution may not notice that they are experiencing challenges. Moreover, while SWD are enrolling in college more frequently, there has not been a comparable increase in graduates who have disabilities (Belch, 2005).

The number of SWD enrolled in college has increased and students with disabilities are more likely to enroll in community colleges than four-year institutions (Lee, 2014; Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005). Many factors influence community college enrollment and completion for SWD, including those with LD. One such factor is legislation the federal government enacted that established a fair environment for all people seeking a higher degree, regardless of their disability (Jarman, 2008). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) extended the rights of citizens with disabilities (ADA, 1990). It established that citizens receive accommodations as needed, unless those accommodations create a financial burden on businesses and institutions. The ADA similarly applies to individuals with learning disabilities and their accommodations in higher education. The legislation

has enabled SWD to have a better experience in their pursuit of an education. However, faculty have varied levels of knowledge regarding the ADA and other legislation.

Faculty have generally reported having an understanding of the legal matters surrounding their interactions with SWD, positive perceptions of SWD (Burgstahler, 2007; Eckes & Ochoa, 2005; Gitlow, 2001; Leyser, Greenberger, Sharoni, & Vogel, 2011; Lombardi, Murray, & Dallas, 2013; Murray, Wren, & Keys, 2008; Scott, 1991), a willingness to ensure the success of students with disabilities (Austin & Pena, 2017; Burgstahler, 2007; Gibbons, Cihak, Mynatt, & Wilhoit, 2015), and positive experiences when interacting with SWD (Hong & Himmel, 2009; Sniatecki, Perry, & Snell, 2015). More specifically, faculty do not mind providing accommodations to students with LD (Gitlow, 2001). Faculty willingness to provide accommodations influences their level of knowledge regarding accommodations. However, not all faculty express the same sentiment when approached with the task of providing accommodations.

While most faculty are aware of the significance of legislation and their obligations in providing accommodations to SWD (Dona & Edminster, 2001; Jones, 2002; Leyser, Vogel, Wyland, & Brulle, 1998; Lundeberg & Svien, 1988; Rao, 2004), faculty indifference towards accommodations can be a barrier for SWD (Leyser et al.,1998). Faculty inaction or indifference to the students' needs for accommodations can result in internal grievance procedures and complaints leading up to the Office of Civil Rights (Office for Civil Rights (OCR), 2011). Therefore, faculty indifference can cause hardship for both SWD and the institution.

Faculty stereotypes can also have other negative effects. Some faculty have negative stereotypes of SWD, which stems from a lack of knowledge regarding

disabilities (Hansen, 2013). These stereotypes can overshadow faculty-student interaction even before it occurs. The stereotypes affect faculty perceptions because not all faculty approve of accommodations for SWD. Some faculty believe the accommodations give SWD an advantage and cause distractions during lectures (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Cook, Rumrill, & Tankersley, 2009; Gibbons et al., 2015; Guzman & Balcazar, 2010). In addition, in one study faculty reported they experience the most difficulty when providing accommodations to students with invisible disabilities in comparison to students with visible disabilities (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006). One way for faculty to overcome these challenges is to utilize disability etiquette (DE) when interacting with students who have visible or invisible disabilities.

Faculty are practicing disability etiquette when they treat SWD and students with LD with respect and discretion during interaction. Disability etiquette occurs when someone maintains a courteous approach to people with visible and invisible disabilities (Hill, 1996; Murphy, 2007; Stodden, Jones, & Chang, 2002; Wessel, 2016; Worthy, 2013). The process of using DE also guides physical and social interactions with students with LD (Alliston, 2010; Cook, 2007; Cook et al., 2009; National Center for Access Unlimited [NCAU], 1995). Faculty use of disability etiquette can reduce pressures and barriers for students with LD as they enter higher education.

A significant barrier for students is that, in high school, they received accommodations from the school automatically. However, in college, students must self-identify and ask for accommodations, which can be a difficult adjustment (Clark, 2005; Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Students with disabilities may encounter academic difficulty from the time they self-identify until the community college provides the

accommodations (Weis, Speridakos, & Ludwig, 2014). Faculty can ease the stress of self-identification for students with LD if they can empathize with their struggles.

Statement of the Problem

Enrollment of SWD in higher education has grown significantly since the 1980s, having tripled over the last 30 years (Alliston, 2010; Cook, et al., 2009; Eckes & Ochoa, 2005; Lee, Oakland, Jackson, & Glutting, 2008; Murray, Flannery, & Wren, 2008; National Center for Learning Disabilities [NCLD], 2014; National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD], 2007); Worthy, 2013). In addition, SWD enroll disproportionately in community colleges (Raue & Lewis, 2011). However, not all students with disabilities self-identify once they enter college.

In 1996, 6% of undergraduate students self-identified as having a disability, which rose to 11% in 2009, and then leveled off in 2012 with 11% reported having a disability (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016; U. S. Government Accountability Office [USGOA], 2009). Although the number of SWD who self-identify has increased, a lack of self-identification can be a reason for lower graduation rates among SWD since, without accommodations, students may struggle. This struggle can cause SWD to abandon their pursuit of a higher education.

The SWD enrollment in postsecondary education has increased between 2003-2012, however SWD do not remain enrolled at the same rate as students without disabilities. Out of first year undergraduate SWD who attended college for the first time in the 2003-2004 academic year, 11.2% of students left college and never returned compared to 8.3% of students without disabilities (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). For SWD enrolled in their second year of studies at the same

institutions in 2003-2004, 21.3% of second year SWD left college and never returned compared to 15.1 % of students without disabilities (NCES, 2017).

Almost a decade later, SWD and students without disabilities have had a continued pattern of disproportionate retention. In the 2011-2012 academic year, 25.1% of first year SWD left college and never returned compared to 13.5% of students without disabilities (NCES, 2017). For SWD enrolled in their second year of studies in 2011-2012, 35.4% of SWD left college and never returned compared to 22.4% of students without disabilities (NCES, 2017). Therefore, from 2003-2012, both first and second-year SWD were reported to be leaving colleges at higher rates than first and second-year students without disabilities. Between 2003-2012, students with disabilities have not earned a certificate or completed college at the same rate as students without disabilities.

In 2003-2004, 10.2% of second-year SWD earned a certificate or degree compared to 7.7% of students without disabilities. However, the graduation rates shifted between 2004 and 2011. In 2011-2012, completion rates for second-year SWD were 6.8% while the rate for students without disabilities was 9.1% (NCES, 2017). The college graduation rate for SWD is 25.5% (U.S. Department of Labor [USDOL], 2015) while the rate for students without disabilities is 52% (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). These statistics address the comparison of SWD to students without disabilities. However, the graduation rate specifically for students with LD is 41% (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014).

The lower college completion rate may be due, in part, to a decreased use of accommodations in higher education compared to secondary schools. Even upon self-identifying, students may still experience difficulty receiving accommodations (Rao & Gartin, 2003). A reason for students' lack of accommodations may be faculty

indifference towards all SWD (Leyser et al.,1998). Faculty attitudes towards students with LD is more negative, as faculty may not believe a student who has an invisible disability (Rao & Gartin, 2003). In one study, faculty reported they experience the most difficulty when providing accommodations to students with invisible disabilities in comparison to students with visible disabilities (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006). Faculty additionally could have missed training on their mandated responsibilities in providing accommodations and may not feel comfortable engaging with SWD and students with LD. These findings all point to issues with faculty preparedness in an institution.

Prior research found that faculty would benefit from general information and that faculty attitudes play an integral role in their interaction with students (Gibbons et al., 2015; Rao, 2004). Faculty perceive that training for working with students with visible and invisible disabilities would help them interact with SWD (Cook et al., 2009; Donato, 2008). Faculty have noted that this training would create a more comfortable, open, and caring environment for SWD and could break down any potential faculty barriers and fears (Cook et al., 2009). Faculty's prior experiences with SWD play an integral role in the attitudinal-approach for future interaction (Donato, 2008).

In addition to faculty perceptions and willingness to provide accommodations, faculty may not be aware of disability etiquette when interacting with SWD. Faculty may not understand that students with LD may be fearful of faculty's negative reaction to their need for accommodations (Quinlan, Bates, & Angell, 2012). Although several studies discuss disability etiquette for students with visible disabilities (Hill, 1996; Murphy, 2007; Stodden et al., 2002; Wessel, 2016; Worthy, 2013), few of them address the use of DE with students with invisible disabilities. Faculty being underprepared for providing

accommodations is unfair to SWD and students with LD who are trying to gain an education. A focus of this study will be to understand the level of training that faculty receive for SWD and students with LD.

While 94% of high school students with LD received accommodations, only 17% of students with LD received them in college (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Faculty perceptions of students with LD can have an effect on self-identification and college completion. While faculty generally reported positive perceptions of SWD (Burgstahler, 2007; Gitlow, 2001; Leyser et al, 2011; Lombardi et al., 2013; Murray et al., 2008), some faculty have reported frustration with DSS personnel at not being able to appeal students' requests for accommodations (Shaw & Dukes, 2006; Wolanin & Steele, 2004). Although faculty follow guidelines set forth by requests for accommodations, negative faculty perceptions can delay the delivery of accommodations for SWD (Leyser et al., 1998).

Several studies have explored faculty willingness to provide accommodations (Bourke, Strehorn, & Silver, 2000; Dallas, Upton, & Sprong, 2014; Hill, 1996; Lewis, 1998; Leyser et al., 2011; Malangko, 2008; Nelson, Dodd, & Smith, 1990; Vasek, 2005; Vogel, Leyser, Wyland, & Brulle, 1999; Wright & Meyer, 2017). This study will examine faculty opinions that may differ between providing accommodations for SWD and students with LD. However, there is no research that exclusively examines the perceptions of English faculty regarding SWD and students with LD in community colleges. Therefore, a focus of the study will be to study English faculty perceptions of SWD and specifically LD, in a community college.

Purpose and Overview of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study (Yin, 2018) was to explore the perceptions of full time English faculty who teach at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I,* regarding interactions with students with disabilities and with LD at Friendship County Community College (FCCC), an urban community college in the northeastern region of the United States. The original purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of ten (10) English faculty regarding training and interaction with SWD and students with LD, and specifically their level of knowledge regarding disability etiquette when interacting with SWD and students with LD. The exploratory nature of this study was meant to create a better understanding of faculty use of disability etiquette while interacting with students with invisible disabilities (LD) (Ponelis, 2015). The data collection included interviews, a review of de-identified documents prepared by DSS for presentation to faculty, and journal entries of my experiences during and after completion of the study (Creswell, 2014).

Specific areas of interest addressed in this study included: (a) faculty perceptions about the training they received for interacting with SWD and students with LD, (b) faculty experiences of professional development related to SWD and students with LD, (c) faculty knowledge of disability etiquette in providing accommodations, (d) faculty perceptions of the level of support received by SWD and students with LD, and (e) the process of providing accommodations by faculty. I explored any disconnects that existed between English faculty's perceptions and their requirements for assisting SWD and students with LD. I also explored whether training could potentially reduce barriers for SWD and students with LD.

This study was driven by the following three research questions that addressed faculty perceptions and understanding of interaction with SWD and students with LD.

1. What types of training do English faculty receive for interacting with SWD?

    a. What is the training regarding students with LD?

2. How do faculty provide accommodations for SWD?

    a. How do faculty provide accommodations for students with LD?

3. What is English faculty knowledge of disability etiquette for SWD?

    a. What is English faculty understanding of disability etiquette when used with students with LD?

The findings from this study can better assist institutions in determining training requirements for their faculty.

Conceptual Framework

This study utilized social justice and ethic of care in analyzing faculty interviews, documents, and a personal journal (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; McKenzie, 2016; Noddings, 1984). I also explored the presence of equality and equity with providing accommodations that faculty have with SWD and students with LD. Additionally, I explored faculty knowledge of disability etiquette during interactions with SWD and students with LD.

I have been a faculty member for over 10 years, having familiarity with addressing equality and equity by providing various accommodations to students with LD. I have additionally seen how the request for accommodations affects the faculty and student relationship (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte, & Trice, 2012). My experience as a faculty member helped me better

understand why students self-identify and how faculty reacted to requests for accommodations.

Social justice. Rawls (1971) defines the theory of social justice as people having equal rights and liberties. Rawls (1971) also notes that social justice involves collaboration among groups of people who willingly collaborate for the sake of the betterment of everyone's condition. The concept of social justice was updated by Rawls (2001) when he defined social justice as a process of inclusion whereby everyone is able to exercise her rights to equality of opportunity, while also maintaining the social obligation of ensuring the same ability for others (Adams et al., 1997).

The concept of social justice defined by Rawls (1971) and his revised viewpoints on equal opportunity (2001) can be applied to education. Social justice can be practiced with SWD and students with LD when they are given the physical and structural accommodations they need to succeed. Students with disabilities who have reported receiving accommodations in higher education have benefitted positively from the assistance (Graves, Asunda, Plant, & Goad, 2011; Newman et al., 2009). However, the theory of social justice and equality of opportunity are not only applicable to SWD.

The theory of social justice and equality of opportunity (Rawls, 1971, 2001) applies to students with LD, who have invisible disabilities (Clark, 2017). Students with LD should experience college life as do their non-disabled counterparts. A faculty member can ensure equal chances for students with LD by providing accommodations to those students (Gitlow, 2001).

Faculty are expected to abide by legislation that protects the rights of SWD and students with LD, regardless of their understanding, interpretation, or attitudes

surrounding it. Positive attitudes are a foundation for social justice as they help regulate

faculty's interaction with SWD (Dona & Edmister, 2001; McEldowney-Jensen, McCrary,

Krampe, & Cooper, 2004; Salzberg et al., 2002). In addition to having positive attitudes,

faculty prefer training on the accommodations process (Vasek, 2005). Even with well-

meaning attitudes, the available resources to train faculty may differ from one institution

to another. Some institutions are better than others at helping faculty fulfill

accommodations. Faculty can seek training on DE, in addition to having a positive

attitude regarding SWD and students with LD. This step can help in the practice of social

justice when interacting with all students.

However, faculty can be underprepared to interact with SWD and students with

LD, which is unfair to students who are trying to get an education and may not

understand the inner workings of the institution and the accommodations. The institution

can eliminate this gap in knowledge especially if it has a mission that encourages the

practice of social justice (Riddle, 2014). The DSS office can advocate for social justice

by following through with students' requests for accommodations and providing

paperwork for students to furnish to faculty. The DSS office demonstrates care about the

process of inclusion when SWD and students with LD are able to exercise their rights

while also maintaining the ability of everybody else to do the same. DSS personnel can

practice the ethic of care by ensuring SWD and students with LD are given assistance

once they have self-identified.

Ethic of care. The ethic of care is having the desire and commitment to care and

being of assistance (Noddings, 1984). Institutions are responsible for being the

foundation of social justice and the ethic of care by having a culture that prepares employees for proper behavior with students.

Faculty often need the help of the institution to bridge the gap between SWD and their accommodations. However, the institution cannot *make* people care (Noddings, 1984). An institution cannot fully guarantee ethical behavior from its staff, as the willingness to care has to ultimately come from the individual person (Noddings, 1984).

Faculty can exhibit the ethic of care when they interact with SWD and students with LD. This ethical sentiment stems from prior experiences of either receiving or giving care to others (Noddings, 1984). Faculty are entrusted to care for students in the classroom and can build their experiences of interacting and helping students, which will then help build their ethic of care.

One tenant of the ethic of care is that one should be able to request help from another with the expectation of a positive response (Noddings, 1984). This expectation may be applied to the faculty and student relationship when SWD request accommodations. Students with disabilities and students with LD should feel comfortable around faculty and should expect a welcoming and positive response.

Faculty can help ensure all students are given attention regardless of their needs. Therefore, forming a connection between the faculty perceptions and students' needs is considered the practice of the ethic of care. A positive relationship between faculty and SWD and students with LD can influence the performance of students for the better (Austin & Pena, 2017; Timmerman & Mulvihill, 2015). Faculty can practice the ethic of care by paying attention to students' needs, acting on any noticed deficiencies, and responding effectively with services (Keeling, 2014). Faculty can practice equality when

referring to the treatment of all students in a class. In specific cases, faculty can harbor greater equality by practicing equity for SWD or students with LD who need accommodations.

Equality. Equality is defined as the right of various groups of people to receive the same treatment (Equality, n.d.). Students with disabilities and students with LD can experience equality in the classroom, which is where they will spend their most time while studying at the institution. An example of faculty support of equality is when a student receives the same opportunity to earn extra-credit as her peers. The equality supported by faculty allows for an inclusive experience that is free of isolation on the part of the student (McKenzie, 2016).

If faculty are not understanding of SWD needing accommodations, this can be detrimental for the SWD (Wright, & Meyer, 2017). For example, faculty may feel that giving all students the same amount of extra time to complete a written exam is the correct and equal thing to do. Although this may seem like a noble thing to do for students, there may be SWD who feel incomplete because their needs may exceed those of a student without a disability. For the sake of trying to provide equality to all students, faculty make the mistake of using a one-size-fits-all approach with accommodations. Instead of focusing on equality, faculty must ensure that they are practicing equity for SWD and students with LD.

Equity. Equity is defined as one's right to justice and fairness (Equity, n.d.). In the case of ensuring equality for all, everyone is supposed to receive the same exact tool or service to enhance their learning. Equity for SWD and students with LD is an example of a more detailed approach for faculty in providing accommodations. The practice of

equity ensures that when students do not have the ability to use a tool or service offered to all students, they will receive a supplemental form of assistance in the form of an accommodation. When accommodations are provided in all classroom activities, SWD and students with LD can be given an equalized opportunity as students without disabilities (McKenzie, 2016).

A faculty member can approach interaction with SWD and students with LD with the worldview of social justice for all students. Some faculty do not have that worldview due to a potential lack of knowledge of students with LD (Hansen, 2013). The research questions for my study not only explored whether faculty have received training for interaction with SWD and students with LD, but additionally explored how faculty provided accommodations. This study also explored faculty use of disability etiquette with SWD and students with LD, along with whether or not faculty were attempting to support equity for all of their students.

Significance of the Study

Even though there are studies that compare faculty perceptions in different academic specialties, there is little research regarding the attitudes of English faculty exclusively at community colleges. All students who matriculate in community colleges are required to take English coursework in order to receive a degree. The English faculty in this sample were full time faculty who taught at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I,* a college-ready course, per academic year. The focus on full time English faculty exclusively provided a useful sample that, although limited, provided data from faculty exposed to all SWD who hoped to earn a college degree. By researching the faculty perceptions of SWD and students with LD specifically, along with faculty

knowledge and use of disability etiquette, I was able to open a pathway that has had little research.

Although research of faculty perceptions of SWD and students with LD in relation to disability etiquette is very limited, there have been guidelines set forth that faculty can follow for using DE. A significant guideline applicable for the use of DE are the *Ten Commandments of Etiquette* (NCAU, 1995). The commandments include guidelines for interaction with students with visible and invisible disabilities. Disability etiquette is based on using the ethic of care with students who need accommodations and modifications to their coursework. If a student has an invisible disability and the faculty member becomes aware of that disability when the student self-identifies, then faculty can use their leadership to ensure equity for the student by providing her with accommodations. Faculty and student interaction should allow for dignified treatment of the affected person, enabling her to avoid low self-esteem and isolation (Lynch & Gussel, 1996; Scott, 2009; United Spinal Association, 2008). Faculty use of DE, in regards to the community college classroom, is rarely studied.

Assumptions

Assumptions are present in every study because if there were no assumptions in a study, there would be no topic to be researched (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Before I conducted this rigorous study, I acknowledged my assumptions that could have affected the study. I initially worked as an adjunct faculty member. I then became a full time, tenured faculty member for the past 10 years. At least one student in every section of every course had approached me seeking accommodations by presenting the letter requesting accommodations, from DSS.

My background and experiences added assumptions to this study because of my interaction with new and returning students with LD who have needed accommodations. I had experiences with other faculty, SWD, students with LD, note takers from DSS, and the hierarchy of DSS. For every class taught, I had inserted a mandatory paragraph in my syllabi that notifies SWD and students with LD of the presence of the DSS office. Although I had provided accommodations to SWD and students with LD, I had concerns regarding the process and its effectiveness. Through conversations with fellow faculty at my institution, I had heard that some faculty did not know what accommodations were permissible. Additionally, I had witnessed students with LD having academic difficulty, unaware of the process of self-identifying and receiving accommodations in college.

Delimitations of the Study

Even as this dissertation explored the perceptions of English faculty regarding SWD and LD specifically, there were delimitations that were addressed. This case study occurred in Friendship County Community College, an urban community college in the northeastern region of the United States. A delimitation of this study was that only one institution was included in the study. Each community college varies in its size and geographical location. The study took place in institution that offers over 50 Associates Degree programs and over 10 Certificate programs. There are currently over 3,000 students enrolled at this college with over 300 full time and adjunct faculty.

The participants in the sample had experiences with students who have previously requested accommodations in courses. The *ENG 101-College Composition I* course is one of the preliminary courses taken at the college. However, SWD may have taken remedial courses and have prior experiences requesting accommodations. This would

make them more aware of both the student's responsibilities but also of the faculty's duties.

The sample consisted of eleven (11), tenure-track full time English faculty who taught at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I* per academic year and had 5 years of experience teaching this course at the college. The *ENG 101-College Composition I* course was offered in its face-to-face and online form at both of the campuses of the institution. A delimitation of this study was its sample size of 11 participants, who were English faculty only. Studies have shown comparisons of faculty from several divisions or disciplines (Bourke et al., 2000; Dallas et al., 2014; Leyser et al., 2011; Rao, 2002; Vasek, 2005), but very few studies have a sample that originates from exclusively one academic discipline.

Definition of Key Terms

Accommodations - The assistance provided to students that has been recommended by a clinician in the form of (a) extended test-taking times, (b) use of technology during examinations, (c) use of a separate room, (d) extended breaks, (e) use of study notes, (f) preferential seating, (g) permission to record faculty, and (h) modifications (Gregg, 2009).

Case study - a form of research that can take place in one or more settings, where a phenomenon is studied using several sources of data (Yin, 2018).

Confidentiality policy (faculty handbook) - [FCCC] is committed to providing support to students with disabilities through its Disability Support Services at [number removed]. To take advantage of these services, students voluntarily disclose pertinent information to the Center for Academic & Student Success (CASS). The Coordinator of

Disability Support Services will then schedule a confidential appointment with the student to review documentation and arrange instructional accommodations, as appropriate. Faculty members may not recommend or refer a student to Disability Support Services, unless the student independently requests referral. A complete guide (ACCESS) for students, faculty and staff can be obtained on the Faculty Advising portal page.

Disability etiquette (DE) – Respectful actions, words, and thoughts used when interacting with SWD, whether in-person or online (Cook, 2007). When someone maintains a courteous approach to people with visible and invisible disabilities (Hill, 1996; Murphy, 2007; Stodden et al., 2002; Wessel, 2016; Worthy, 2013). A guide to physical and social interactions with students with LD (Alliston, 2010; Cook, 2007; Cook et al., 2009; NCAU, 1995).

Disability Support Services (DSS) – The office that processes students' requests for accommodations and provides documentation to students for presentation to faculty (Alliston, 2010).

ENG 101 - College Composition I - An essay writing course at FCCC that focuses on the writing process. Topics include: pre-writing, composing, and editing, completed through demonstrations and analysis.

English faculty – full time, tenured faculty who are teaching at least 12 overall credits at the college and who teach at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I* per academic year.

Ethic of care –when someone has the desire and commitment to care for and be of assistance, inclusive of the recipient's expectation of a positive response in any request

for help (Noddings, 1984); making the distribution of care the focus for determining the common good (McKenzie, 2016), which can be accomplished by paying attention to students' needs, acting on any noticed deficiencies, and responding effectively with services (Keeling, 2014).

Faculty – Employees of the college who complete instructional responsibilities within one of the following settings: classroom, online, or experiential education (Hoffman, 2013).

Friendship County Community College (FCCC) - the pseudonym of the urban community college in the northeastern region of the United States, which is the setting for this study.

Modifications – Accommodations that are encouraged for SWD, which include (a) allowing the student to ask questions during tests, (b) alternative and shortened exams, (c) alternative grading rubrics, and (d) the ability to resubmit homework and quizzes (Gregg, 2009).

Students with disabilities (SWD) – Students who (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities," (2) have a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment (Office of Disability Employment Policy [ODEP], n. d.).

Students with learning disabilities (Students with LD) – Students who experience difficulty in learning speech, writing, reading, math, and interpretation due to neurological concerns (NJCLD, 2007).

Theory of social justice - The social justice noted by Rawls (1971) has equality as its core component, suggesting that people should come together for the common good

instead of working independently, in order to shun marginalization of SWD in all aspects of education (McKenzie, 2016). Additionally, social justice is a process of inclusion, whereby everyone is able to exercise her rights to equality of opportunity (Rawls, 2001), while also maintaining the social obligation of ensuring the same ability for others (Adams et al., 1997). Equality of opportunity can be defined as providing equity for SWD and students with LD, because each student's needs must be met in different ways, hence the need to practice social justice.

Summary

Students face challenges when they graduate from secondary school and pursue a higher education. Those challenges are more significant for SWD, who are challenged more than traditional students. Students with LD experience more difficulty, as their disabilities are invisible. Many students have visible disabilities that are apparent to faculty and other personnel in higher education. However, students with LD have invisible disabilities that may not be readily apparent to faculty (Clark, 2017). A faculty member may not feel the need to provide accommodations because students with LD can generally blend into the full student population. Another possibility is that the faculty member's perceptions may cause them to avoid realizing that specific students require additional assistance. These types of delays can prevent social justice for SWD and students with LD, in the form of delaying or even denying accommodations.

Faculty enforcement of social justice provides opportunities to SWD (Ahlberg, 2014) and helps students with LD feel comfortable in approaching DSS officers and faculty with requests for accommodations. The accommodation could be available without prejudice. Even though the ethic of care would influence faculty to take

corrective action with SWD (Noddings, 1984), faculty often let their personal perceptions of both students with LD and the process of accommodations affect their willingness to provide those accommodations. This study occurred through the lens of social justice and the ethic of care and explored whether faculty were using both theories as a compass in providing accommodations.

Overview

Chapter 2 explains the literature that pertains to SWD and students with LD, especially the federal regulations that govern faculty and student interaction. Other content in Chapter 2 includes the accommodations process, disability etiquette, and faculty attitudes. Chapter 3 describes the methodology for this study, including the setting, participants, research design, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Chapter 4 and 5 present the findings of the study and a discussion of the results, respectively.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Since this dissertation focused on students with disabilities and specifically students with learning disabilities, in this literature review, I begin by defining learning disabilities (LD). I then provide an overview of the federal regulations pertaining to students with disabilities (SWD). I describe the challenges experienced by students, faculty, and institutions as students transition from secondary education to higher education and take greater responsibility for their accommodations. The use of disability etiquette is discussed as it relates to interaction between faculty and students. I discuss faculty attitudes regarding SWD and how those attitudes raise concerns for community colleges. Many studies highlight challenges faced by SWD and the legislation that affects their education (Alliston, 2010; Berry & Mellard, 2002; Cobb, 2015; Cook et al., 2009; Donato, 2008; Getzel, 2008; Hong & Himmel, 2009; Lyman et al., 2016; Wessel, 2016), but fewer focus on the challenges faced by students with LD at community colleges. This study focuses on faculty perceptions of students with LD, which are invisible disabilities.

Definition of Learning Disabilities

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), the word *disability* is defined as a person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which significantly diminishes one or more major life activities, (2) has a history of having an impairment, or (3) is considered as having an impairment. Major life activities include walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks. Some examples of impairments include loss of a limb, blindness, AIDS,

cancer, hearing impairment, drug addiction, and heart disease (Adler, 1995). The students with disabilities experience physical or auditory   limitations that can be visible or invisible to others (Karabin, 2010). They have trouble with many of life's common experiences that people without disabilities take for granted. For example, SWD have difficult and challenging experiences with employment, relationships, and their education (Newman et al., 2009). Visible disabilities may be apparent to others during daily interaction. However, invisible disabilities remain by definition, invisible to others when those students do not self-identify.

Learning disabilities are invisible disabilities that "arise from neurological differences in brain structure and function and affect a person's ability to receive, store, process, retrieve, or communicate information" (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014, p.3). Invisible disabilities include learning disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Gordon, Lewandowski, Murphy, & Dempsey, 2002). The students with invisible disabilities are often misunderstood or ignored when they interact with people who do not have disabilities. Therefore, the government has worked to enact legislation that would help prevent the negative treatment of all people with disabilities and to ensure their fair treatment.

History of Legislation: IDEA, Section 504, ADA, HEOA

The federal government has supported the success of SWD through a number of measures over the last 50 years. Legislation mandates access and supports for SWD in all aspects of education. Students with disabilities have experienced a solidification of their rights and privileges in more recent decades. For example, the segregation of SWD from the general student population is now a form of discrimination (Aron & Loprest, 2012).

Supports for SWD include providing accommodations to students who would otherwise have academic difficulty. What follows is a summary of legislation that affects SWD, highlighting laws regarding the rights of SWD transitioning from secondary education to higher education. Key legislation has included the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA).

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1990 (IDEA, 1990) was enacted to protect the rights of children ages 3 to 21 identified with disabilities. This legislation protects students in their pursuit of a free, public, K-12 education (IDEA, 1990). Students protected by this law have one or more types of classified disabilities. The 13 categories of classified disabilities include (1) emotional disturbance, (2) distinct learning disabilities, (3) blindness or difficulty with sight, (4) deafness, (5) deafness/blindness, (6) difficulty hearing, (7) orthopedic constraints, (8) difficulty in communicating, (9) traumatic brain injury (TBI), (10) autism, (11) mental retardation, (12) multiple disabilities, and (13) other health concerns (IDEA, 1990). A student must receive documentation of a disability from a qualified professional to be eligible for classroom accommodations (Association for Higher Education and Disability [AHEAD], 2008).

The mandates of IDEA do not assist a student during her pursuit of higher education (Kauffman, 2005). The student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) is an effective tool that can stipulate accommodations in K-12 institutions. However, it has no direct bearing on standards for SWD in higher education (Stodden et al., 2002) and does not influence the student's access to higher education. Professionals in higher education

use the IEP only as a guideline for assessment. Other federal legislation, such as the

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, n.d.), provides SWD

with access to resources in higher education (Kallio & Owens, 2012).

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973,

Section 504, mandates availability of all services to all students and guarantees K-12

students access to a free and appropriate education (Cory, 2011; OCR, 2011;

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, n.d.). This law prohibits discrimination against people with

disabilities who are participating in any form of public or private education, especially in

programs that are receiving federal funding (Thomas, 2000). The law provides open

"access and support" for SWD (HEATH Resource Center, 2013, para. 5; Madaus, 2000).

Additionally, Section 504 ensures that postsecondary institutions cannot

discriminate in providing any service to students because of their disabilities. They also

cannot create policies that would adversely affect a student's receipt of services within

specific majors (Madaus, 2000; Thomas, 2000; Wong, 2004). Section 504 further

protects students' rights by prohibiting institutions from procuring information related to

their specific disabilities (McGuire & Shaw, 1987; Thomas, 2000), as students will have

varying challenges of a physical, mental, or psychological nature requiring various levels

of support.

Although Section 504 provides equal opportunity for SWD, it does not mention

specific, minimum requirements for accommodations. Section 504 establishes the non-

discriminatory environment for SWD in higher education. However, the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA) goes further by not only establishing equal opportunity for SWD,

but by addressing accommodations that are relevant to students in higher education (ADA, 1990).

Americans with Disabilities Act. There are specific laws that address accommodations for all SWD. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) creates standards for physical accommodations related to physical aids and infrastructure only (ADA, 1990). The ADA addresses accommodations for people with all types of disabilities, but it does not explicitly discuss accommodations for students with LD. The type and amount of accommodations can vary among institutions.

The ADA prevents citizens' exclusion from fair participation in everyday activities. It mandates that all citizens with physical or mental impairments be entitled to the same opportunities for employment, goods and services, involvement in local and statewide programs, and education (ADA, 1990; Office for Civil Rights [OCR], n.d.). The ADA protects students' rights for the duration of their collegiate years. These protections exist whether or not the student has relied on the protections of Section 504 in the past (Field, Sarver, & Shaw, 2003).

According to the ADA, institutions of higher education must provide reasonable accommodations for SWD (Cory, 2011); however, the accommodations must occur without "undue hardship" to the institution (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2007, para. 1). The undue hardship provision exempts the institution from providing accommodations if (1) the costs of the accommodations are excessive; (2) there is a lack of available resources; or (3) the accommodations adversely affect the functioning of the institution (USDOE, 2007). Equipment redesign, aides, alternative testing methods, and

facility modification are all specific examples suggested by the ADA in providing reasonable accommodations.

The ADA does not mandate significant changes to programs, curricular offerings, or academic standards to provide an alternate service (Madaus, 2000). Further, the ADA does not limit services for SWD. Rather it stipulates the minimum components for providing accommodations in all aspects of campus life (AHEAD, 2012; Madaus, 2000). An institution will most commonly provide academic adjustments for SWD, such as a different method of delivery that best fits the needs of the student (OCR, 2011).

The ADA further extends the rights of SWD defined in Section 504, ensuring that discrimination does not occur in any entity, regardless of receipt of federal funding. For instance, any public or private entity that provides public accommodation of any degree must abide by the laws regarding SWD (Thomas, 2000). Non-compliance can cause unnecessary and costly litigation.

The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) specifically broadened the definitions for inclusion for SWD, with the intended purpose of making it easier to receive accommodations (AHEAD, 2012; Heffron, 2013). This updated version of the ADA created policy for documenting a student's status (Oslund, 2013). A major component of the ADA that remained with the ADAAA was the requirement that students self-identify their disabilities. Institutions cannot ask a student to provide details of her disability unless the student requests accommodations (Worthy, 2013). The student essentially does not have to self-disclose unless the purpose is to request accommodations. However, the ADA protects students only after they have self-identified and begun the process of asking for accommodations (Pardeck, 1998). The

self-disclosure requirement is a key difference between requesting and receiving accommodations in higher education and in secondary school. However, there are federal laws, such as the Higher Education Opportunity Act (Higher Education Opportunity Act [HEOA], 2008), that establish a seamless administrative transition for students with SWD when entering college.

Higher Education Opportunity Act. The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 provides SWD with access to services, such as work-study programs, federal grants, and Pell Grants (HEOA, 2008). The HEOA also mandates professional development in interacting with SWD for college personnel in higher education (HEOA, 2008). The impact of the HEOA is important for SWD, as it ensures the inclusion of SWD in all aspects of campus life. The law ensures students with disabilities have greater support regarding their academic, social, and extracurricular participation on campus in comparison to students without disabilities. Laws and regulations assist SWD with setting the foundation for their treatment in education. However, laws do not guarantee SWD an easy transition to higher education and SWD often have trouble when they transition to higher education (Beale, 2005; Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Jones, 2002; Lynch & Gussel, 1996; Sniatecki et al., 2015; Van Noy, Heidkamp, & Kaltz, 2013).

Transition to Higher Education

Students with disabilities attending an institution of higher education for the first time should understand that their legal environment changes upon leaving secondary education. A student's experience in K-12 includes guidance from counselors, administrators, faculty, and evaluators. However, in the higher education environment, such services are not provided automatically to SWD. SWD are responsible for self-

disclosing their need for accommodations in higher education, therefore, they should be involved in dialogue with both faculty (Hoffman, 2010; Lock & Layton, 2001) and the office of Disability Support Services (DSS), as defined by the law (Cole & Cawthon, 2015). Institutions rely on DSS to manage interactions between faculty and SWD. All public and private institutions of higher education are required to provide at least one DSS representative on campus (OCR, 2011).

The SWD who enroll in college having received help in K-12 are better equipped to handle the rigor of higher education and have higher test scores than those students who initially self-identify in college for the first time (Abreu-Ellis, Ellis, & Hayes, 2009). However, young adults who had experienced the benefits of special services in high school may struggle with the demanding completion of paperwork for receiving the same services in a postsecondary institution (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014).

The changes in responsibilities can affect students with LD and their families, who are accustomed to having direct involvement in decisions regarding accommodations. Parents are usually the voice of SWD through their years studying in secondary education. Once the student becomes 18 years old, the parents are not entitled to the student's records. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits family members from having access to grades and other records without the student's consent (Washington Student Achievement Council, 2014). Family members cannot inquire about a student's academic records and may remain challenged with the complexity of being in higher education. For example, when a student transitions to college, the student and her family members may be confused about accommodations (Zafft, 2006). Family members may be unclear about the distinction between what is and

is not an accommodation, which could hinder the student's understanding of what to request from the DSS office. The institution can communicate information to involved parties in the form of information sessions, which can assist those who were unaware of accommodations in higher education.

Requesting Accommodations in Higher Education

In higher education, the student maintains the burden of completing assessments and other paperwork for requesting academic accommodations (Newman et al., 2009). A student is not required to inform the institution of her disability and may even skip informing the institution altogether (Hudson, 2013). When she chooses to self-identify, the process of requesting institutional support will amount to a scenario of role reversal. Self-disclosure is part of the maturing process in which the student takes on the responsibility for her own learning (Barnard-Brak, Lechtenberger, & Lan, 2010; McClouden, 2008; Wright & Meyer, 2017). When a student chooses to disclose her disability, she is making a purposeful attempt at revealing something personal with the intention of validating a specific need (National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth [NCWDY], 2005).

Although SWD who use accommodations have achieved positive outcomes, up to and including college completion (Lightner et al., 2012), the steps to success, beginning with the receipt of accommodations, are not always easy. Confidence on the part of the student is necessary (McClouden, 2008). The process of self-disclosure is a very private one for SWD and carries risk. Students often express reluctance to disclose their disabilities. Many students choose not to self-disclose to the institution or delay

disclosure (Cook et al., 2009; Waltman, 2003). The institutions need to make a better effort to ease the process of self-disclosure for SWD (Hudson, 2013).

Furthermore, students may have to endure the actions of faculty who often deem their requested accommodations as unnecessary and advantageous over students who do not have a disability (Cory, 2011; Rocco, 2001; Thomas, 2000). If a student is negatively affected by the treatment of college personnel and fellow students, she may resist disclosing her disability when her educational experience is at a crossroads (Berry & Mellard, 2002; Nee, 2012).

Students may feel reluctant to disclose a disability to faculty if they are too proud to ask for help (Kallio & Owens, 2012; Lyman et al., 2016; Murray et al., 2008), forcing themselves to struggle alone out of fear. Students may avoid self-disclosure out of fear that faculty may discuss their disability in front of other students (Cook, Gerber, & Murphy, 2000), causing embarrassment. Students who experience embarrassment are more likely to seek greater privacy regarding their need for accommodations.

Steps in the Disclosure Process

The first major step in the disclosure process involves the student contacting the institutional DSS office (Nee, 2012). The office will request third-party documentation from a secondary school department for special education, or from a psychologist, medical doctor, or any other licensed professional (Nee, 2012). At this point, the student has completed her initial responsibility of self-identifying, and it is now up to the institution to process the request for accommodations. DSS personnel arrange for evaluators who are available to students with a range of disabilities (Beale, 2005; Cory,

2011; OCR, 2011). DSS evaluators prepare documentation outlining a student's need for accommodations, which the student can present to faculty and other institutional staff.

A student has the choice of selecting the timing of her disability disclosure to the institution. The possibilities for disclosure timing are (1) before enrolling, (2) during enrollment, (3) during the course of classroom study, (4) upon diagnosis by a medical professional, or (5) never disclosing at all (Mock, 2012). The student's choice can have a profound effect on her level of success. The timing of self-identification has an impact on college completion rates for SWD. Students who have self-identified sooner have had higher completion rates that those who have not self-identified (Abreu-Ellis et al., 2009). Therefore, it is imperative that a student self-identify as soon as she experiences academic difficulty. Once disclosure occurs, a student cannot retroactively modify her academic standing. The disclosure of a disability affects the student's experience permanently and only after the date of disclosure (Autism Self-Advocacy Network [ASAN], 2013).

There are two major categories of students with LD who self-identify: those who communicate immediately with a professor or the DSS office on the first day of class and those who wait until they experience academic challenges (Kranke, Jackson, Taylor, Anderson-Fye, & Floersch, 2013). Students who wait until they are struggling prolong their academic suffering (Lyman et al., 2016). However, students may not always have the opportunity to convey their need for specific accommodations. Therefore, it is up to the students to self-identify as soon as they enroll so that a licensed professional can conduct a needs analysis for that student.

A licensed professional should conduct an examination that includes dates, rationales, and other supporting information regarding the diagnosis. A significant component of this professional documentation in higher education is understanding challenges that a disability can impose on the student (OCR, 2011). This step also involves the clinician's preparation of a formal report, which is a major step in the document-submittal process for students with disabilities in general and with LD specifically. This documentation evaluates a student's need for accommodations (NJCLD, 2007).

Each student's document-submittal and review process is unique and must occur discreetly. Therefore, it is up to the clinician to ensure that the student is aware of her rights and that the information gathered during any assessment is confidential. Even with these measures in place, the clinician's report can be problematic due to a lack of rigor. Clinicians are often poorly trained in preparation of ADA documentation (Gordon et al., 2002), causing problems for both faculty and students. An ill-prepared report for a learning disability is documentation disconnect that can delay or restrict a student from receiving accommodations (NJCLD, 2007).

After the student has approached the institution for accommodations, the institution is liable for the provision of accommodations for that student. DSS will generally provide notification to instructors regarding the accommodations via an accommodation letter, which is given to the student. It is the student's responsibility to furnish this documentation to faculty, while establishing arrangements for the requested accommodations (Nee, 2012; Cory, 2011).

Student Challenges in Seeking Accommodations

Students suffering from academic difficulties should be able to receive accommodations from faculty. However, not all students are able to convey their academic difficulty (Getzel, 2008). There are reasons why students are not able to get their accommodations. Students have reported that people interacting with them have insufficient knowledge of what a disability is (Thoma & Getzel, 2005). However, some students have reported that faculty have not provided the requested accommodations. Students have also reported that accommodations have been ineffective or insufficient (Lyman et al., 2016). If students feel that accommodations are ineffective for their success, they will not request them in future courses (Kranke et al., 2013).

Students who need accommodations will face other challenges, too. One challenge is their lack of knowledge of the accommodations process, which has been reported as a hindrance to receiving accommodations (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Lightner et al., 2012; Lyman et al., 2016). Students may not be aware of the process of self-disclosure or of the accommodations available to them (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Lyman et al., 2016). Specifically, students with LD may fail to understand the importance of self-identifying their need for accommodations and may miss the opportunity to receive them.

Not all students who received accommodations in secondary school receive them in higher education. The 2011 NLTS study found that 87% of high school SWD received accommodations in high school, while only 28% of self-identified SWD continued receiving some sort of accommodation in postsecondary institutions (Newman et al., 2009). Similarly, only 24% of community college SWD who had received services in

high school continued to receive some type of accommodation in college (Newman et al., 2009).

Accommodations for students with LD may differ from those needed by students with physical disabilities and are not universal in their effectiveness (Hill, 1996). For example, a common accommodation for students with LD is for faculty to modify a standardized test and perhaps allow untimed or oral administration of the test. However, for students with unique needs, the initial attempt at providing this accommodation might be unsuccessful (Sireci, Scarpati, & Li, 2005). These students will need a stronger approach to communicating their needs. Because students often have difficulty with the initial provision of accommodations, faculty should do what they can to ease this process.

Many institutions do not allow retroactive accommodations, but instead force a student with LD to reregister for the relevant course. This situation compounds the struggles that students with LD face when pursuing a higher degree, which sometimes occur in quiet and without any help from the institution (Gormley, Hughes, Block, & Lendmann, 2005). If the institution does not allow the retaking of academic benchmarks, it should provide counselors to train students on how and when to self-identify their need for accommodations (Jones, 2002; Lynch & Gussel, 1996; Zafft, 2006).

Students with disabilities have trouble with the process of requesting accommodations. Therefore, the entire process of self-identification of a disability must be collaborative in nature. Institutions of higher education may ask students for documentation of their disability if the student has requested accommodations (OCR, 2011). The institution must be committed to providing the available resources to the student (Heffron, 2013), as each student's needs are unique. This commitment begins

with the actions of the DSS office and continues through the student's receipt of accommodations (Wright & Meyer, 2017).

A student's comfort level with her disability can be a challenge as it affects the degree to which she is able to communicate effectively with others (Myers & Bastian, 2010). For example, the stress involved in asking for faculty assistance does not change a student's right to accommodation. However, if a student remains silent and does not self-identify, she will likely suffer academic difficulty. The pressure to self-identify may overrun the student's ability to succeed in higher education. Certain factors are attributed to whether or not a student self-identifies their need for accommodations.

Students with LD experience additional distractions as they maneuver through higher education. Students with LD are confronted with *how* and *if* they should come forward and self-identify their needs for accommodations. A student's fear of social classification may create unwillingness to ask for accommodations (Banks, 2014; Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Kranke et al., 2013). This is a challenge for students with LD as the added pressure of self-learning as a means of coping with academic difficulty can cause complications. Students also experience trouble with the process of requesting accommodations due to negative or unproductive interactions with DSS personnel (Lyman et al., 2016). Barriers in daily communication can prevent students with LD from comfortably interacting with staff (Myers & Bastian, 2010). Some students have avoided contacting DSS and instead requested accommodations directly from faculty (Condra, Dineen, Gauthier, Gills, & Jack-Davies, 2015) because of their frustration or misunderstanding of the process of self-identification.

Students may question the long-term fairness and value of accommodations provided to them. They may feel guilty for having a perceived unfair advantage over other students and additionally may worry that accommodations will prevent them from building the self-confidence they need to figure things out on their own (Lyman et al., 2016). A perception of delayed progress may occur even when students are requesting retroactive accommodations, as a class is already in progress and asking for change later in the semester can seem difficult for students with LD.

Students with LD also can experience less commonly discussed issues in the process of learning. For instance, students in general have overly confident opinions of their abilities (Rath & Royer, 2002). Such overconfidence is especially dangerous for students with LD if they incorrectly believe that their journey in higher education can be successful without accommodations.

Another concern for students with LD is time management. Concerns about time management can overtake the focus of a student's academic success. Time for studying is scarce in higher education, and inefficient time management by students with LD can be discouraging (Rath & Royer, 2002). These students must improvise unique studying methods, which can reduce actual study time (Heiman, 2008). Faculty can alleviate the pressure of time management by providing accommodations that suit the needs of each individual student.

Faculty may be willing to provide only minor accommodations instead of major ones for fear of excessively modifying coursework (Murray et al., 2008; Nelson et al., 1990). This hesitation is unnecessary if faculty have the capacity to make accommodations fair for all students, while carrying out modifications. However, faculty

are obligated to follow the directives of the DSS office, regardless of the intensity of the request for accommodations (Thomas, 2000).

Alternative testing accommodations can raise questions about the equality of rigor and testing standards. When providing testing accommodations, a faculty member may struggle to ensure fairness and equity between the original and modified test formats (Rath & Royer, 2002) or fear the perception of unfairness on the part of mainstream students. These concerns can lead faculty to hesitate to carry out needed accommodations. Any hesitation from faculty in providing accommodations can lead to problems for an institution.

Institutional Challenges

Institutions of higher education are concerned with the completion rates of students (Bozick, 2007; Tinto, 2004). Institutions of higher education should be concerned with ensuring success for students with LD, who are less likely to graduate (Hudson, 2013). Persistence is a major factor in student success. College students who complete their first year of studies will likely return for their second year and eventually graduate (Bozick, 2007; Horn & Carroll, 1998). Therefore, the institution has a role in preventing any unfair treatment of students with LD through preparation of its employee stakeholders. Professional development is available to full time faculty to assist those who may have had poor interactions with SWD (McCallister, Wilson, & Baker, 2014). The institution's commitment for preparing faculty for interaction with students with LD is through professional development.

A caring institutional culture of preparation should protect the success of students at an institution while incorporating clear communication among all stakeholders

(Murray et al., 2008). Faculty of a college should be aware of the challenges faced by all students with LD and should ensure that communication with SWD exists. The support provided by the institution, coupled with challenges involving communication, can affect accommodations provided to students with LD.

Support from the institution. The institution is responsible for creating an inclusive environment for all students that practices social justice (Evans, Broido, Brown, & Wilke, 2017; Myers & Bastian, 2010; Rawls, 1971, 2001; Scott, 2009). This includes an environment that encourages open communication amongst students and faculty. The institution sets the tone for faculty and impacts their willingness to provide a meaningful experience for all students. Faculty have reported that stronger support from institutions would positively affect their opinions regarding accommodations (Bourke et al., 2000; Murray et al., 2008).

Institutions often rely on the law to direct their support in providing accommodations for SWD. However, laws such as the ADA do not require the institution to provide mandatory training for faculty and staff regarding what to expect from interactions with SWD (Thompson & Bethea, 1997). However, institutions should not wait for the law to dictate faculty preparedness for interactions with SWD.

Challenges involving communication. For the accommodation process to be effective, DSS staff must have clear lines of communication with other college personnel. A lack of or delay in communication is a barrier to providing services to SWD in general and students with LD specifically (Lancaster, Mellard, & Hoffman, 2001). For example, visually impaired students in one study struggled to obtain necessary accommodations (Myers & Bastian, 2010) because library personnel instructed students to contact DSS for

specialized training in assistive technology at the library (Scott, 2009). This lack of follow-though by college personnel, an impediment for those students, should not have occurred. Laws such as the ADA protect students from similar delays in receiving accommodations.

Communication challenges do not occur only between the administration and students with LD. The institution may not prepare faculty for communicating with students with LD. A component of that preparation is learning to identify traits of SWD and students with LD (Ikematsu, Egawa, Endo, & Yokouchi, 2016).

Students with LD will benefit when faculty are aware of the traits that require student accommodations (Getzel, 2008). Faculty knowledge of traits of all SWD may indirectly alleviate potential pressures faced by students with LD. Traits that faculty can identify include poor concentration, frequently leaving class, asking for repetition of statements, frequent asking for clarification on basic concepts, poor grades, and looks of confusion may be indicators of a learning disability (Ikematsu et al., 2016). Even as faculty attempt to interact with students, students may continue to have personal challenges and may avoid approaching the institution for accommodations.

Faculty awareness of challenges faced by students with LD eases the stress faced by students with LD on campus and helps to reduce barriers. Faculty are the main point of contact for those students, as students with LD utilize other services at the college only on an as-needed basis. Therefore, it is essential that faculty be proactive regarding what to expect during interactions with this group of students (Chan & Bauer, 2014).

Faculty & Student Interaction

Faculty must consistently balance the basic civil rights of all students while maintaining academic standards (Wessel, 2016). Faculty should strive for equality in providing services for all students, even while providing accommodations to only some of them (Quinlan et al., 2012). Faculty must ensure a positive and open environment that practices social justice and the ethic of care (Noddings, 1984; Rawls, 1971, 2001) for all students. The approach that faculty take affects the comfort level of the students (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Lightner et al., 2012).

Faculty who embrace students with LD help establish a welcoming and comfortable environment, paving the way for the students who require accommodations to seek help. Students feel more comfortable approaching a faculty member who has a positive demeanor in comparison with one who seems less approachable (Cole & Cawthon, 2015). Students have reported that disability awareness training for faculty helps create a more thoughtful environment (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Myers & Bastian, 2010) and eases the process of receiving accommodations.

Faculty view the idea of accommodations in different ways. While some consider providing accommodations a necessary duty of the job (Zafft, 2006), others appreciate the presence of students with LD in the classroom as it enables them to practice different teaching styles (Burgstahler, Duclos, & Turcotte, 2000). Faculty report that teaching students with LD adds wealth to the diversity of instruction (Berry & Mellard, 2002). This perception can foster a relationship of concern for all students, both with and without learning disabilities.

However, faculty's negative perceptions or opinions about disabilities can adversely affect their willingness to provide accommodations (Hong & Himmel, 2009). Although faculty are required to provide accommodations to students who request them, some are still reluctant to do so (Lock & Layton, 2001). Students may have unreliable or uneducated faculty assisting them with accommodations (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005), when these accommodations may be key to their success. A student with a LD should not have to be concerned with potentially indifferent or careless faculty, who may not respect or empathize with her disability (Hong & Himmel, 2009).

When faculty have positive relationships with students that include caring interaction, the outcomes and success of students with LD tend to improve (Myers & Bastian, 2010). Students themselves are interested in establishing open communication with faculty (Myers & Bastian, 2010). Student access to faculty, whether inside or outside the classroom, brings about greater academic success (Worthy, 2013). Furthermore, when faculty work to create a welcoming environment for all students, those students with LD are respectful of faculty time (Myers & Bastian, 2010).

Disability Etiquette

One way for faculty to overcome these challenges is to utilize disability etiquette (DE) when interacting with students who have visible or invisible disabilities. Faculty are practicing disability etiquette when they treat SWD and students with LD with respect and discretion during interaction. Disability etiquette occurs when someone maintains a courteous approach to people with visible and invisible disabilities (Hill, 1996; Murphy, 2007; Stodden et al., 2002; Wessel, 2016; Worthy, 2013). The process of using DE also guides physical and social interactions with students with LD (Alliston, 2010; Cook,

2007; Cook et al., 2009; NCAU, 1995). Faculty use of disability etiquette can reduce pressures and barriers for students with LD as they enter higher education.

A significant amount of information on the importance of maintaining a courteous approach to people with physical disabilities, known as disability etiquette (DE), is available (Hill, 1996; Murphy, 2007; Stodden et al., 2002; Wessel, 2016; Worthy, 2013). DE also guides physical and social interactions with students with LD by defining actions and other considerations (Alliston, 2010; Cook, 2007; Cook et al., 2009; NCAU, 1995). It provides guidelines for respectful treatment of students with LD.

The National Center for Access Unlimited (NCAU) (1995) created *Ten Commandments of Etiquette*, which stands as a benchmark for DE. The commandments include guidelines such as how to converse with students with hearing-impairments and those who use wheelchairs, and understanding the environment of those who are visually impaired. The NCAU recommends that faculty use common courtesy during interactions with all SWD (NCAU, 1995), including students with invisible disabilities. If faculty follow the recommendations of the NCAU, they also understand the difficulties experienced by students with LD. This is a crucial step in the application of DE. Faculty and student interaction should allow for dignified treatment of the affected person, enabling them to avoid low self-esteem and isolation (Lynch & Gussel, 1996; Scott, 2009; United Spinal Association, 2008). Little information exists in the literature involving the practice and delivery of DE specifically for LD in the classroom. Even with this shortfall in research, one study shows that faculty responded very positively to the concept of DE and interacting with students with LD (Cook et al., 2009).

Faculty use of DE creates a welcoming environment for students with LD, and implementation can begin with the first faculty/student contact. As described previously, the process for receiving accommodations begins with the student self-disclosing her need for an accommodation to the DSS office (Rath & Royer, 2002). The DSS personnel evaluate the needs of the student and prepare an accommodation letter, which the student presents to faculty (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010; ODA, n.d.). The faculty member has the responsibility of providing the accommodations once an initial consultation has occurred. The student's declaration conveys her need for the accommodation and is the first opportunity for faculty to practice DE (Van Noy, et al., 2013).

Faculty play a significant role when interacting with all students; however, they should approach DE as a special concern. Community college faculty who are unwilling to create an encouraging class setting are ignoring the institution's vision of being approachable for all people in the community (Murray et al., 2008). If faculty fail to apply DE, they may unintentionally commit errors that embarrass students with LD. However, trying to use DE with students can cause delays in receiving accommodations (Banks, 2014; NJCLD, 2007), especially when adhering to rules of discretion. Additionally, when faculty use disability etiquette (Murphy, 2007) students without disabilities are influenced positively. In sum, providing accommodations is a significant part of DE for faculty/student interaction as it provides a strong sense of inclusion within the classroom.

Students without disabilities can also help establish a welcoming environment for students with LD because they report not feeling distracted by the presence of students needing accommodations in the classroom (Gibbons et al., 2015). If students without

disabilities complain about how students with LD receive preferential treatment, this can cause students with LD to silence their need for help. A welcoming setting established by students without LD is an encouraging component that helps to create the environment of DE in the classroom. The dedicated practice of DE promises payoffs in the broader relationship between students with LD and their faculty.

Faculty Attitudes

Faculty have generally reported having an understanding of the legal matters surrounding their interactions with SWD (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005; Murray et al., 2008; Scott, 1991). Additionally, faculty have positive perceptions of SWD, thanks to professional development courses focused on this group of students (Burgstahler, 2007; Gitlow, 2001; Leyser et al., 2011; Lombardi et al., 2013; Murray et al., 2008). Faculty have reported a willingness to ensure the success of students with disabilities (Austin & Pena, 2017; Burgstahler, 2007; Gibbons et al., 2015) and have reported having positive experiences when interacting with SWD (Hong & Himmel, 2009; Sniatecki et al., 2015). In general, faculty do not mind providing accommodations to students with LD (Gitlow, 2001).

However, conflicting findings show faculty are not aware of the significance of legislation and their obligations in providing accommodations to SWD (Dona & Edminster, 2001; Jones, 2002; Leyser et al., 1998; Lundeberg & Svien, 1988; Rao, 2004). Insufficient knowledge of legal matters can lead faculty to make errors and create the potential for litigation. Learning to interpret legal matters surrounding SWD would assist faculty in providing better services and overcoming stereotypes.

Faculty have reported that their past experiences and preparedness for interacting with SWD positively affect their willingness to interact with them (Hong & Himmel, 2009; Kleinsasser, 1999; Murray et al., 2008). Research has indicated that faculty exposure to all SWD reduces barriers and creates a more comfortable environment that is conducive to learning. However, faculty cannot experience this level of ease without the assistance of the institution.

Some faculty have negative stereotypes of SWD, which can overshadow faculty-student interactions. Faculty prejudice should not hinder in-class interaction with SWD nor should it hinder SWD from being provided with accommodations (Murphy, 2007; Wright & Meyer, 2017). Faculty have reported they experience the most difficulty when providing accommodations to students with invisible disabilities in comparison to students with visible disabilities (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006). Not all faculty approve of accommodations for SWD and students with LD, and some believe the accommodations gives an advantage and causes a distraction during lecture (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Cook et al., 2009; Gibbons et al., 2015; Guzman & Balcazar, 2010).

Scholarly research exists on the influence of faculty attitudes on SWD and students with LD (Wolanin & Steele, 2004). Faculty who interact negatively with SWD and students with LD can prevent other students from conveying their accommodation needs to the institution. Data regarding faculty attitudes, career experience, gender, and disciplines taught have been studied and evaluated as significant criteria for research and comparison.

Faculty Experiences

Studies have been conducted to compare the length of tenure of faculty and its correlation with faculty attitudes when interacting with SWD. Senior faculty were found to be more knowledgeable of disability etiquette than less experienced faculty (Dallas et al., 2014; Hong & Himmel, 2009). A recent study showed that faculty who were employed for over 20 years or for under five years had more positive attitudes than faculty who were employed five to 20 years (Clark, 2017). Faculty lack the pedagogical knowledge for interacting with SWD but are willing to go through professional development (Hong & Himmel, 2009; Vasek, 2005).

Faculty rank influences attitudes regarding accommodations. Faculty with a lower rank received more training and were more prepared to provide accommodations than more tenured colleagues (Bourke et al., 2000; Leyser et al., 2011). Additionally, full time faculty reported having more positive attitudes than adjunct faculty in regards to providing accommodations for SWD (Hong & Himmel, 2009).

Research has also compared the attitudes of male and female faculty. Studies have found that female faculty are more willing to assist SWD than similarly experienced male faculty (Leyser et al., 2011; Rao, 2002). In addition, female faculty are more likely than males to provide accommodations for students with LD (Leyser et al., 2011; Murray et al., 2008). Female faculty are more willing to provide accommodations for testing over other situations (Murray, et al., 2008).

Scholars have classified the varying opinions of faculty, by discipline. A study has shown that faculty from social sciences and humanities had more positive attitudes than faculty from hard sciences (Rao, 2002). Faculty teaching fine arts, humanities, and

education were more willing to provide accommodations related to in-class instruction than faculty in natural sciences, social sciences, business, or mathematics (Bourke et al., 2000; Dallas et al., 2014; Leyser et al., 2011; Vasek, 2005). Regarding specific types of accommodations, faculty in social sciences have reported a stronger willingness to provide technological accommodations than faculty in education (Leyser et al., 2011).

Concerns of Faculty

However, faculty can also experience myriad challenges and concerns when interacting with SWD (Dona & Edminster, 2001; Jones, 2002; Leyser et al., 1998; Lundeberg & Svien, 1988; Rao, 2004). Some faculty are concerned that all students are attempting to cheat the system and that students with LD cannot be trusted as having a true disability (McEldowney-Jensen et al., 2004; Vasek, 2005). Faculty have concerns for protecting the integrity of their exams (McEldowney-Jensen et al., 2004; Sniatecki et al., 2015; Vasek, 2005), which is related to the amount of time they have with students in the classroom.

Faculty have concerns regarding the use of extra time to help students with LD and how instruction to the entire class would be interrupted (Berry & Mellard, 2002; Gibbons et al., 2015; Lancaster et al., 2001). Providing special accommodations, such as repeating concepts during class time and providing extended time for test-taking, can take away class time for students without disabilities. However, other faculty feel that the accommodation process is not an extra demand of time (Hong & Himmel, 2009).

Faculty have concerns for students without disabilities being distracted by the accommodations provided to students with LD (Gibbons et al., 2015). A faculty member may have to use an alternate means of instructing students with LD that can involve

repetition of information and very unique approaches to instruction (Oslund, 2013). This action can lead to students without disabilities potentially losing interest in subject matter due to the excessive attempts at reinforcing lecture materials for students with LD. It can also lead to other errors by faculty who may focus their attention on primarily instructing students with LD.

College faculty should have adequate training for interaction and accommodation with SWD and students with LD (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005). A component of that interaction involves knowing which actions are permissible with SWD. Proper training can enable faculty to gain invaluable experiences of interaction with SWD.

Preparing faculty to interact with SWD can be a challenge for institutions. Training should be provided by the DSS office, as many faculty have felt compelled to offer personal assistance to this group of students (Zhang et al., 2010) in the absence of formal training from the institution. Faculty should not be left alone to maneuver their journey with SWD, rather the institution should formally support faculty when interacting with SWD (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Wright & Meyer, 2017). All faculty should be trained to use discretion when interacting initially with SWD, so they learn to set aside stereotypes and be empathetic to students' needs (Wright & Meyer, 2017).

Student Perceptions

Students have benefited from the use of special services provided through accommodations, such as use of note takers and extended test taking times (Zafft, 2006). Students have reported faculty have maintained positive attitudes when interacting with them; accommodations, such as untimed testing, have assisted them in understanding the

coursework (Smith, 2015). However, students may not comprehend the legal, social, and medical ramifications of being classified as having a learning disability.

Many students do not understand their disability enough to become successful (Thoma & Getzel, 2005). Students have had to research their disability online and have gathered information on their own in a quest to reach success. In turn, the students have had to educate stakeholders of the institution in order to receive accommodations in the classroom setting (Thoma & Getzel, 2005). Students can play a more active role in their education throughout their course of study (Belch, 2005).

Conceptual Framework

Students may face a myriad of challenges that can hinder their ability to succeed academically (Wren & Segal, 1998). Students with disabilities enrolled in higher education have reported a hostile (Scott, 2009) or uncaring environment full of doubt from their faculty (Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Hong, 2015). Faculty must respect the specific needs of students with a LD as they pursue a higher degree. In a study of students with a LD, it was reported that students did not have a reason to disclose their academic challenges, as they were not aware of the services provided by DSS (Cole & Cawthon, 2015). If a student is not aware of her rights, she will not understand the benefits and aides she is entitled to receive. The student will be experiencing a lack of social justice that may prohibit her from receiving benefits for which she is entitled.

The Theory of Justice posited by Rawls (1971), which states that everyone should have equal basic liberties and that communal and monetary positions must be equally accessible and beneficial for all that utilize them, is a basis for the application of the concept of social justice theory. Rawls (2001) updated his Theory of Justice to include

one's right to equality of opportunity. The dedication of citizens—in this case, faculty—to the treatment of students with a LD as the equals of their classroom peers deserves more careful attention than it has received in the past. The social justice noted by Rawls (1971, 2001) has equality as its core component, shunning marginalization of SWD (McKenzie, 2016). Although SWD can self-identify, the institution can take steps to provide services to them without making them feel different than the general student population.

The institution is the key stakeholder that provides the tools for faculty to do their jobs. The institution can encourage a system-wide ethic of care when it provides training for faculty and encourages greater collaboration between DSS and other stakeholders of the institution (Jones, 2002). The office of DSS is not the only group of people who ensure that the ethic of care is applied in the classroom setting (McKenzie, 2016; Noddings, 1984). Faculty can ensure that equality occurs in the classroom so that SWD do not experience subjective categorization based on their disability (Rembis, 2010). In some extreme cases, faculty have reported having to remind SWD about their accommodations (Quinlan et al., 2012). This encouragement and consideration stems from an underlying theory that drives social justice and provides the basis for better inclusion. The theory can be referred to as the Ethic of Care.

The Ethic of Care is a movement of social justice for the fair treatment of SWD (Kittay, 2011; Noddings, 1984). This form of care is what can influence the institution to service the student population from admission, through specialized services, and graduation (Annette, 2010). The Ethic of Care protects privacy during the democratic treatment of everyone in the classroom (Tronto, 2013). Even though discretion regarding

SWD is a private concern, the in-class experiences of SWD are to be democratic. The faculty role in exhibiting an ethic of care is when faculty and students learn about each other and develop a trusting and respectful relationship that is unique from other faculty-student relationships (Hawk & Lyons, 2008).

This definition exemplifies the uniqueness of each student's needs and explains why faculty can customize their approach for each student. The establishment of a caring relationship between faculty and SWD can positively influence the performance of students (Austin & Pena, 2017; Timmerman & Mulvihill, 2015). Faculty believe that SWD have more positive reactions to their assessment of performance once the students have reached a certain level of comfort and trust (Austin & Pena, 2017).

When attempting to apply theory to the study, a researcher can use practiced and perceived theories of the sample as part of the study (Maxwell, 2005). Findings from faculty will establish the unforeseen application of theories to provide a richer explanation of the results. Any injustice experienced by students with LD was uncovered through the lens of social justice.

Summary of Literature Review

As more SWD and students with LD enroll in community colleges, the need arises for better preparation on the part of college faculty. Both SWD and students with LD experience complications when they transition to higher education. A component of that transition involves fair and equal treatment. Students with disabilities and students with LD should receive accommodations in order to have the same chances at success as students without disabilities (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Egalitarianism, n.d.). Students must receive appropriate services when they have a disability, but faculty do not always

provide the accommodations even though legislation mandates accommodations (Dowrick, Anderson, Heyer, & Acosta, 2005). Federal guidelines protect basic standards that pertain to faculty interactions with SWD and students with LD.

Faculty are aware of the significance of legislation and their obligations with accommodations for SWD (Dona & Edminster, 2001; Jones, 2002; Leyser et al., 1998; Lundeberg & Svien, 1988; Rao, 2004). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) and the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA, 2008) are the two significant forms of legislation that enabled SWD and students with LD to experience equity with students without disabilities. However, faculty indifference towards accommodations can be a barrier for SWD (Leyser et al., 1998). Faculty indifference can cause internal grievance procedures and complaints against faculty and the institution (OCR, 2011). Faculty attitudes also influence the provision of accommodations to students with LD.

Some institutions fail to create an inclusive environment for students with LD. Those institutions may be abiding by the law when it comes to processing requests for accommodations, but perhaps are failing at enforcing accommodations at the classroom level. Laws may protect students with LD but will not be enforceable unless a student is able to voice her frustrations regarding the provision of accommodations. Some colleges offer training for interaction with SWD and students with LD.

Students with LD experience pressure when they graduate secondary school and enter the unknown environment of higher education. If students with LD are not aware of their responsibilities to self-identify, the institution cannot intervene and make assumptions on the condition of the student. Faculty should take the challenges faced by

students into consideration when interacting with them. For these reasons, faculty can alleviate distractions faced by SWD by basing their work in the ethic of care that is supported by actions stemming from social justice.

Through coding the faculty interviews, assessing de-identified documents, and reflecting on my personal journal, I completed this study of faculty perceptions of SWD and students with LD through the lenses of the theory of social justice and the ethic of care. I utilized my professional experiences as a faculty member and teacher to many SWD and students with LD to offer a clearer interpretation of the data, especially through discovering any training needs that existed with English faculty in providing accommodations. Results from this study may assist both administrators and faculty within community colleges in identifying where any areas of concern exist with providing accommodations to SWD and students with LD.

Chapter 3

Methods

Introduction

Community college faculty need to be prepared for interaction with SWD because their enrollment has increased (Lee, 2014; Newman et al., 2009; Wagner et al., 2005), as has the enrollment of students with LD, who also experience complications when they transition to higher education. Students with disabilities in general and with LD specifically should receive accommodations in order to have the same chances at success as non-disabled students (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Egalitarianism, n.d.). Students must receive appropriate services when they have a disability, but faculty do not always provide the accommodations (Dowrick et al., 2005). Faculty attitudes influence how accommodations are provided to SWD and students with LD specifically. For this reason, I selected faculty for my sample. Researching English faculty's perceptions regarding SWD and specifically students with LD, made the single site, common case design appropriate for this study (Yin, 2018) as English faculty are commonly found within all institutions of higher education.

This chapter discusses the structure and design of this common case study, while also presenting the research questions, propositions, rival explanations, and the method of analysis. In addition, the chapter identifies the data sources, data collection strategies and techniques, and the strategies of analysis of those sources of data.

Purpose

This study is driven by research questions that address faculty perceptions and understandings of their interaction with students with disabilities and specifically students

with learning disabilities at Friendship County Community College (FCCC) in the Northeastern region of United States. Specific areas of interest explored in this study include: (a) faculty perceptions about the training they received for interacting with students with disabilities and specifically LD, (b) faculty experiences in professional development related to students with disabilities and specifically LD, (c) the process of providing accommodations by faculty (d) faculty knowledge of disability etiquette in pedagogy, and (e) faculty use of disability etiquette. This research additionally explored any disconnects that exist between full time English faculty's perceptions of and their requirements for assisting SWD and students with LD specifically.

Research Design & Strategies

This study was a qualitative, single-site case study that took place at FCCC (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative case studies occur in a natural setting, using multiple sources of data and data analysis best suited for understanding human behavior and perceptions (Creswell, 2014, Yin 2018). All case study research designs have five key components: (1) case study questions, (2) propositions, (3) setting of the case, (4) link between data and the propositions, and (5) criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2018).

Case study questions. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore full time English faculty's perceptions, experiences, knowledge, and practices regarding training, accommodations, and disability etiquette towards SWD and students with LD who receive accommodations. I had developed research questions based upon my review of the literature and my career as a faculty member.

The following research questions guided my data gathering surrounding those

topics:

1. What types of training do English faculty receive for interacting with SWD?

    a. What is the training regarding students with LD?

2. How do faculty provide accommodations for SWD?

    a. How do faculty provide accommodations for students with LD?

3. What is English faculty knowledge of disability etiquette for SWD?

    a. What is English faculty understanding of disability etiquette when used

        with students with LD?

The findings from this study may better assist institutions in determining training

necessities for their faculty.

Propositions and rival explanations. This case study can contribute to theory

regarding the interaction of faculty with SWD and specifically, students with LD (Yin,

2018). It gave me the opportunity to offer my theoretical propositions and rival

explanations regarding that interaction. The overarching propositions and rival

explanations could support or rebuke the positions of social justice and the ethic of care

contained in this study. I had paired the research questions and sub-questions with

overarching propositions and rival explanations for the case study, which offered general

and alternate findings for the data (Yin, 2018).

1. What types of training do English faculty receive for interacting with SWD?

Overarching proposition. Faculty may have no formal training for interacting

with SWD but are willing to partake in training if it is for the betterment of students'

experiences. While faculty await training sessions at FCCC, SWD suffer with not

knowing the different regulations that govern their education in college. This may lead to SWD become disillusioned with the process of attaining a higher degree.

Rival explanation. Faculty may receive training that addresses methods of interaction with SWD and are willing to participate in such training. Faculty may attend training that occurs on a yearly, monthly, or weekly basis.

a. What is the training regarding students with LD?

Overarching proposition. Faculty training may generally address interaction with all SWD. Therefore, faculty may not be prepared to identify traits that would help identify, guide, and assist students with LD.

Rival explanation. Faculty receive training related to students with LD and are able to ensure equality of education in the classroom.

2. How do faculty provide accommodations for SWD?

Overarching proposition. Faculty provide accommodations as required on the accommodation letter, on a full and unrestricted basis to SWD such as extra space to move around, untimed testing, use of a note taker, or recording of lectures, among others.

Rival explanation 1. Faculty provide only some of the accommodations for SWD. The English faculty may only be willing to provide minor accommodations for fear of excessively modifying coursework.

Rival explanation 2. Faculty do not provide accommodations for SWD because they don't know how to or are against the process of providing accommodations.

a. How do faculty provide accommodations for students with LD?

Overarching proposition. Faculty provide accommodations as required on the accommodation letter to students with LD such as untimed testing, freedom to get up and move around frequently, use of a note taker, or recording of lectures, among others.

Rival explanation 1. Faculty provide only some of the accommodations for students with LD. The English faculty may only be willing to provide minor accommodations for fear of excessively modifying coursework.

Rival explanation 2. Faculty do not provide accommodations for students with LD because they do not know how to or are against the process of providing accommodations.

3. What are English faculty's knowledge of disability etiquette for SWD?

Overarching proposition. Faculty generally understand the principles of DE towards SWD.

Rival explanation. Faculty are not aware of the concept of DE for SWD.

a. What are English faculty's understandings of disability etiquette when used with students with LD?

Overarching proposition. Faculty are aware of the application of DE to students with LD. This knowledge is based on prior experiences with students self-identifying and presenting letters from the DSS office.

Rival explanation. Faculty are not aware of the application of DE to students with LD. Even though faculty have students who have self-identified and presented letters from the DSS office, they are not fully aware of their duties when providing the accommodations.

Setting of the case. The study took place at FCCC located in the northeastern United States. The college is part of a statewide community college system. This institution offers over 50 Associates Degree and over 10 Certificate programs. There are currently over 3,000 students enrolled at this college with over 300 full time faculty, adjunct faculty, and lecturers. The English department was the specific setting for this study, where over 10 tenured faculty members who teach *ENG 101-College Composition I* are employed.

Participants. Deciding the sample of participants for the study is a key component to establishing the foundation of that study (Maxwell, 2005). Yin (2018) defines a participant as a person from whom case study data is collected. Prior research involving faculty perceptions of SWD has compared academic divisions from within one institution (Alliston, 2010; Hoffman 2013; Lewis, 1998; Nelson et al., 1990; Vogel et al., 1999), however I did not find studies that exclusively focused on full time English faculty as the only sample. For this reason, the sampling of faculty for this study was purposive sampling of English faculty. Additionally, every student had to take *English 101-College Composition I* in order to receive a degree.

Specifically, the sample was 11, tenured full time English faculty who taught at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I* per academic year and who have been employed in that capacity for a minimum period of five years. I originally intended a sample size of 10, however 11 faculty volunteered. English faculty were the sample because English is a required course. All students who are earning a degree are required to take *ENG 101-College Composition I* as a requirement for graduation, which is one of the English, credit bearing General Education courses at the college. Since this course is a

requirement for receiving a degree, this course is one of the most populated courses at the

college with several dozen sections running each semester. The purposeful selection of

English faculty was because of their exposure to a high number of matriculated students

(Rossman & Rallis, 2012). This was the specific sample, part of the common single case

study design (Yin, 2018).

Upon receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I asked the Office of

Institutional Research to provide a list of eligible English faculty who met the criteria for

this study. I requested the names, email addresses, and office telephone extensions of

faculty. I used email to solicit volunteers for the study, who met the criteria for

participation. Upon receiving faculty's confirmation of participation in this study, I

provided the Informed Consent document for them to review and sign. Faculty were

informed of the confidentiality of their responses with the use of informed consent forms,

which acknowledged the participants' willingness to be involved in the study, along with

the explanation of concerns regarding privacy and confidentiality of their information. I

assigned a pseudonym to each participant to ensure confidentiality of their responses.

There was no penalty or risk for faculty for participation or non-participation (Creswell,

2014).

The use of a single case study design allowed me to collect empirical data from a

small sample of participants with similar characteristics (Yin, 2018). I was able to bind

the case study in a few ways (Yin, 2018). What made this a case study was the specific

inclusion of English faculty with tenure and who taught at least one section of *ENG 101-

College Composition I.* The study occurred in only one community college. Also, the

sample only consisted of tenured English faculty. I elected to interview tenured faculty

only because non-tenured faculty may have felt pressured into participating or abstaining from participating in this study, for fear of exclusion or discrimination from the tenure process. Additionally, the English faculty had to be teaching at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I.* Even though parameters of the study were specific, this single case study design incorporated several sources of information (Yin, 2018).

   Single case sample. According to Yin (2018), case study research can shed light on existing theory. Using the single case study sample, I hoped to add findings to the worldview of social justice and the ethic of care between faculty and SWD and students with LD. Most faculty are aware of their duties to provide accommodations (Dona & Edminster, 2001; Jones, 2002; Leyser et al., 1998; Lundeberg & Svien, 1988; Rao, 2004) and some do not mind providing accommodations to students with LD (Gitlow, 2001). However, some faculty believe the accommodations give SWD and students with LD an advantage and cause distractions during lectures (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Cook et al., 2009; Gibbons et al., 2015; Guzman & Balcazar, 2010). When faculty want to be pedagogically inclusive (Szeto & Cheng, 2018), they are practicing social justice and providing the ethic of care in their daily interaction with students. I hoped to ground my research in these two theories while exploring a very exclusive sample of English faculty.

   This study used the single case sample to identify participants from a specific context, the English department. Through interviews of English faculty, I gathered data regarding approaches they utilized when interacting with SWD and students with LD. The interview questions were geared towards faculty perceptions and interaction with SWD and students with LD. Faculty provided responses that may have been a reflection of personal beliefs regarding inclusion and equity of SWD and students with LD, as all

students will take the *ENG 101-College Composition I* course in order to graduate with a degree. I interviewed the full time, tenured English faculty in order to gain a better understanding of their perceptions of SWD, especially students with LD.

Data Collection

The qualitative case study explores phenomenon using a variety of data sources gathered and reviewed by one researcher (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018). The use of multiple data sources offers a better opportunity to collect data on English faculty (Yin, 2018). The data collection included interviews, interview field notes, a review of completed de-identified documents prepared by DSS for presentation to faculty, and journal entries of my reflections during through completion of the study (Creswell, 2014).

Interviews. According to Yin (2018), case study research involves detailed studies of phenomena that occur in a specific environment. The setting of a community college campus allowed me to gather information on faculty perceptions in the environment within which faculty interact with SWD and students with LD (Creswell, 2014). However, the emergent nature of qualitative studies allows for flexibility in asking questions and collecting data from faculty as the process of the entire study unfolds (Creswell, 2014).

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 11 full time tenured English faculty on a community college campus. This is where faculty conducted their job responsibilities of conducting classes and completing administrative paperwork for all students enrolled in their courses. Case study research evaluates a process, event, or activity (Creswell, 2014) within organizations or small groups (Yin, 2018).

The common case of interviewing English faculty involves interviewing faculty in a common and highly enrolled discipline found in every community college (Yin, 2018). English faculty exist at every institution of higher education in the United States. Therefore, the research could generally shed light on the process of faculty interaction with SWD, specifically students with LD (Yin, 2018).

Interviews are a vital source for data collection and I used guided, open-ended questions to ask about faculty perceptions, knowledge, training, and interaction with students with both visible and invisible disabilities, as case study interviews generally use a flexible interview format (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This interview format allowed me to prepare a predetermined set of questions with a specific order arranged before I began interviewing. As I asked open-ended questions, the faculty members were able to provide a wide range of answers that may allow for additional probing and the collection of very rich data. The probing caused the sharing of unique information, as case study interviews can remain somewhat open-ended (Yin, 2018). I asked probing questions as needed, to extract more meaning from the faculty's responses. In addition to conducting an audio recording of the faculty interviews, I prepared summaries of the interviews where I recorded my thoughts and observations of the faculty during the interview process. Ultimately, a faculty member may talk about a topic that answers an unasked question (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). For this reason, it was of utmost importance to record the interviews to capture these types of descriptions.

Recording the interviews allowed for better accuracy of the data instead of simply completing notes (Yin, 2018). I recorded the interviews (Maxwell, 2005) upon receiving verbal and written permission to record from the participants (Yin, 2018). The electronic

versions of the transcribed interviews were stored in my possession. The findings from the interviews helped establish themes regarding faculty perceptions.

Case study interview protocol. Case study research questions and case study interview protocols are different in one significant way (Yin, 2018). If interview protocols are specific questions directed at the sample, the case study research questions are to be answered by the researcher. The purpose of case study was to provide a checklist of procedures (Yin, 2018). However, the most significant part of that case study protocol were the protocol questions. Yin (2018) suggests five levels of questions that are applicable to single and multiple case studies. Since I completed a single case study, the first two levels of questions are to be addressed.

The first level of questions pertained to specific interview questions addressed to the faculty. However, the second level of questions were not be posed to the sample, as they were the "true" questions that I really wanted answered. The first level questions were posed to the sample to invoke a direct response. However, the second level questions were the "mental inquiry" that I conducted when assessing the responses to the level one questions (Yin, 2018, p. 101). Additional data came from observing the de-identified documents related to SWD and students with LD.

Documents. One significant component of the data collection was the examination of de-identified documents related to accommodations (Yin, 2018). There were three categories of accessible documents: personal, private, and public (Payne & Payne, 2004). The documents that I used for this study were private documents that have been used by students. When students needed accommodations, they approached the DSS office of their institution. The DSS office then provided documents to the student to

deliver to the faculty. By law, faculty were to make adjustments or provide accommodations. I reviewed the details of these de-identified documents to gain a better understanding of what accommodations English faculty were supposed to provide.

Documents were also used to cross check and confirm information found from other sources in a study (Yin, 2018). For example, SWD and students with LD had specific needs that they conveyed to the DSS office. When faculty were asked about specific types of accommodations that were available, they confirmed what was readily available within the requests for accommodations provided by DSS.

The DSS office had a way of determining which accommodations were appropriate for each student. Upon assessment, the DSS office provided a detailed list of accommodations to the student who then submitted this documentation to each faculty. Some examples of accommodations requested were the use of a note taker, tape recording of lectures, extra time on assignments or examinations, and many others. I examined de-identified documents intended for English faculty from the SWD and students with LD, which were provided by the DSS office with names covered or removed. Yin (2018) notes that precautions must protect the identities of vulnerable groups, such as the SWD and students with LD. I did not directly study SWD or students with LD as part of the sample. However, I examined English faculty's descriptions of experiences with SWD and students with LD. My personal experiences and reflections were recorded in a personal journal.

Journal. I used a journal to record my personal observations, thoughts, and reflections as this study progressed. This reflective tool documented my emotions and experiences that were often concealed during the data-gathering phase of the study

(Annink, 2017). Ultimately, the journal allowed me to reflect on the most substantial component of the data: the interviews.

Annink (2017) notes that journals are an effective tool in capturing the emotions of the researcher. This can happen throughout five stages of data collection during the study: (1) before data collection, (2) while contacting participants, (3) after the first interview, (4) during the interviews, and (5) after completing the interviews. I kept a journal about my experiences with receiving accommodation letters and providing accommodations. However, I maintained a journal throughout all five stages of data collection (Annink, 2017).

The journaling was especially significant in recording any observations and reflections during and after interviews of the English faculty (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I encountered faculty reactivity in the study where participants were reacting or responding in certain ways due to my affiliation as a faculty member (Maxwell, 2005). Some English faculty offered opinions that were supportive of SWD and students with LD for fear that I would judge them as a colleague. Contrarily, some faculty displayed a relatable attitude as they felt comfort in the fact that I am a faculty member and could potentially empathize with their experiences. I recorded the faculty's reactivity as the interview is being completed, in order to better record faculty's opinions on specific issues.

The journal was a vital component of this study as it helped me to think, reflect, analyze, interpret and understand data, thoughts, and feelings throughout this dissertation process (Meloy, 2002). Specifically, I used the journal to connect thoughts and reflections with the theory of justice and ethic of care. I identified themes from the

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journal that helped me draw conclusions between the responses that are provided by the English faculty and my thoughts (Meloy, 2002).

Criteria for Interpretation

Qualitative case study research also includes the assessment of themes discovered from the analysis of data (Guest et al., 2012; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I researched faculty perceptions regarding SWD and students with LD in the classroom and uncovered themes and patterns from the data during analysis (Creswell, 2014). Another way I interpreted the case study's findings was to identify and address the rival explanations for the responses to the research questions (Yin, 2018). According to Yin (2018), the findings within the study were better enforced when the rival explanations had been addressed and rejected. This category of findings only saw concrete information once the original data was analyzed and classified. However, the study had a plan for data analysis as a basis for processing and analyzing the data.

Data Management

The data management was a significant step in completing this study that required me to log data accurately and efficiently (Creswell, 2014). After recording the interviews and saving the recordings on a digital recorder, I personally transcribed all of the interviews. After transcribing the data, I maintained Word and Excel files of all information collected. Physical documents were kept locked in my residence (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I saved the information securely on my password-protected personal computer at home and in the Rowan University hard drive. This ensured the safe preservation of data and the maintenance of confidentiality of the participants.

Data Analysis

Using varied steps to data analysis provided patterns of similar findings or conflicting results, which both worked to provide a new level of understanding for me (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). When I analyzed the transcripts, I prepared two steps of coding and sought patterns within the data. The English faculty of my study presented complex data that was interpreted using the lens of two theories: Theory of Justice (Rawls, 1971, 2001) and Ethic of Care (Noddings, 1984). I completed two steps of coding, but was especially mindful to identify the codes that are attributable to the two theories.

Coding

The qualitative interview data was transcribed, which created the basis for analysis based on tentative findings from the data (Maxwell, 2005). Manual and categorical coding of data occurred to organize the data and to prepare it for interpretation. The coding occurred for interviews, interview thoughts and observations, de-identified documents prepared by DSS for presentation to faculty, and journal entries of my reflections during through completion of the study (Creswell, 2014). I completed two cycles of coding for this study.

First cycle of coding. Manual coding is a preliminary method of assigning codes to data by handwriting them on or near the data (Bazeley, 2007; Saldana, 2009). For example, once the recorded interviews of English faculty were transcribed, the faculty had the opportunity to member check their interviews to ensure accuracy of data (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Once this step has occurred, I read the transcripts and initially assigned codes next to the data, which acted as a form of

discovery (Saldana, 2012). This step allowed me to identify any patterns of ideas that existed within the data using much thought and reflection (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). These interpretations were based on my thoughts regarding the data and were not objective (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The interview transcripts were not the only source of data that will be coded.

The journal entries of my thoughts, observations, and reflections before, during, and after data collection were also coded. I noted the key words, behaviors, repeated words, and expressions noted by the English faculty during the interviews. The process of journaling itself helped to record information that may not be initially apparent from the interviews or interview transcripts. Therefore, keeping a journal and then coding its content helped to better unpack the theoretical framework presented in this study.

The de-identified student documents helped shed light on the many specific accommodations that were provided to SWD and students with LD. I coded the specific accommodations based on their tangibility as a "resource" or "service" to the students. For example, allowing SWD or students with LD to use a laptop allowed them to use a tangible piece of equipment. This accommodation was coded as a "resource". However, allowing extended time on an exam was coded as a "service", as this was an intangible accommodation.

Second cycle of coding. Once all of the data had been coded, it was categorized during categorical coding. This two-step process included identifying micro-level codes, which were organized into macro-level categories, by theme. Categorical coding will allow for the identification and organization of patterns and themes amongst the codes (Guest et al., 2012; Saldana, 2009). This process enabled me to organize the qualitative

data into general categories and themes (Maxwell, 2005; Saldana, 2009). The data was organized in a number of ways. Data was ultimately (1) grouped into themes and subthemes by frequency, (2) reduced, simplified, and organized, and (3) linked to existing theory (Guest et al., 2012; Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Qualitative codebook. All of the codes assigned to the data were compiled and organized once the first cycle of coding took place. The qualitative codebook housed all codes in an organized manner, to better define ideas, concepts and themes amongst the codes (Creswell, 2014). In order to organize these findings, I first defined each code that was earmarked from the data and then proceeded to provide the quotation from where the code was initially assigned. The organization of codes and code-related information were housed in Microsoft WORD, in order to maintain an organized list of the data.

Pattern matching and explanation building. The identification of specific patterns from the coded interview data enabled me to establish categories, which helped link responses from faculty (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Assigned codes from the interview observations, personal journal, and de-identified documents additionally assisted in establishing patterns and themes. The process of linking patterns within the data established a connection between the first cycle of codes and my theoretical propositions and rival explanations (Yin, 2018).

Case Study Rigor

Rigorous data analysis can occur in a qualitative study in a number of ways. Rigor can be achieved by interpreting a phenomenon using detailed methods of data collection and interpretation (Tracy, 2010; Weick, 2007). I achieved rigor in this study by seeking a robust sample of participants, while spending a sufficient time interviewing each of the

participants (Tracy, 2010). Each faculty offered a different experience, which could be described as their own personal reality of their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The rigor was also strengthened when the transcription and subsequent member checking of information occurred by the English faculty (Maxwell, 2005; Tracy, 2010). The member checking process helped eliminate any misinterpretation of data collected. Lock and Seele (2018) note that rigor can be difficult to achieve in a qualitative single case study unless there are other actions taken to ensure validity and reliability.

  Validity. The concept of validity in qualitative research relates to the quality of the research (Maxwell, 2005; Yin 2018). When the steps of a study are reviewed, the steps are assessed for the integrity throughout the entire process. I tested the validity by performing specific actions in the data collection and analysis of this study, by establishing construct validity, internal validity, and external validity.

  Construct validity. Construct validity refers to the identification of correct operational measures for the ideas being studied (Yin, 2018). One way to achieve this is to identify multiple sources of evidence that may convey a convergence of data. I reviewed the transcribed interviews of faculty and incorporated my thoughts and observations from those interviews, along with de-identified student documents. However, simply identifying the steps in data collection and assessment did not fully guarantee validity but helped establish the credibility of the study (Guest et al., 2012).

  Another way that construct validity was achieved in this case study design was that I emailed participants their transcripts after transcribing the interviews to ensure the accuracy of their statements and responses. This member checking allowed participants to check the actual content of the data to ensure that their statements were recorded

correctly in the transcription process (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012, Yin, 2018).

  Internal validity. In a single case study design, the researcher may discover that certain conditions lead to the occurrence of other conditions, similar to a scenario of "cause and effect" (Yin, 2018). As stated earlier, I suggested overarching propositions and rival explanations to all research questions to ensure that as many potential explanations were addressed. These inferences were established before reviewing interview transcripts, interview thoughts and observations, de-identified student documents, and my personal journal. The inferences were subsequently validated or refuted based on the data analysis (Yin, 2018).

  External validity. The external validity refers to whether findings of this study can be generalized to other people and in other contexts (Guest et al., 2012; Yin, 2018). It can also show if theory has driven the use of certain research questions (Yin, 2018). However, the generalizability of the study can be difficult with such a limited sample size.

  In a qualitative study, I was able to identify any definitive threats to validity by identifying and addressing them (Guest et al., 2012; Maxwell, 2005). Even though it was almost impossible for me to remove prior beliefs and perceptions regarding the research, I presented any biases during the study while also explaining the process of handling those biases. Other threats to validity of my study could have been inconsistency in data collection or assessment (Guest et al., 2012). Just as I had suggested threats to validity by identifying those threats, I had to explain steps taken to ensure reliability of my study (Yin, 2018).

Reliability. Reliability refers to how repeatable this study can be in future attempts while achieving similar results (Yin, 2018). Although achieving duplication of a study by others is not a priority, researchers should organize their procedures and present them to reinforce the reliability and rigor of their work (Guest et al., 2012). Yin (2018) suggests that even though a single case study design is rarely replicated, the researcher should document all procedures and data with the mindset that someone will be reviewing the methods. The overall reliability of my study had the data collection, assessment, and reporting steps presented in a transparent manner. Another way I strengthened the reliability of this study was to go through the process of triangulation of the data.

Triangulation strengthens case study rigor as many sources of information are gathered and assessed (Yin, 2018). I completed triangulation in this study when I incorporated and assessed interviews transcripts of English faculty, my interview field notes, de-identified requests for accommodations, and my journal. Similar interview questions, whether level 1 or level 2, helped converged the data into one set of findings (Yin, 2018). The triangulation of data worked to reinforce the rigor of the findings from more than one data source (Yin, 2018), especially when the evidence from those sources creates a pattern of themes (Creswell, 2014). A significant reason for completing a case study was because of the ability to complete the study in a real-world setting (Yin, 2018) which strengthened the trustworthiness of the study.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the factual integrity of the data collected. There are ways in which I enhanced the trustworthiness of the data within the study. During the

interview process, I spent sufficient time with the participants and honored their perceptions by completing the study in a confidential and ethical manner (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). In addition to using member checking to verify the accuracy of data (Yin, 2018), I used a reflective journal to keep track of my observations and reflection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This helped explain my rationale for using certain methods in this study. It additionally provided another human element to the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Positionality

Positionality can affect a number of factors throughout the process of a dissertation. Positionality is the effect that a researcher or participant has on the information being studied, based upon one's job title (Acevedo et al., 2015). The positionality within this study existed in multiple shapes and forms. It could have affected the way I interviewed English faculty leading through my interpretation of data. As I am currently a faculty member, I had worked with this type of population that was part of the study. While I may have had similar experiences as a faculty member, I was not entering this study with an agenda for recommendations before discovering any findings.

Having to interview a faculty member may have affected the level of seriousness of the interview, as we both could have experienced similar paths as educators. After the interviews, I could have been affected by the bias of empathizing with faculty. This bias could also have occurred when interpreting data having to do with English faculty's positive and negative experiences when interacting with SWD and students with LD. I approached the study with a neutral stance where I monitored my subjectivity to ensure that it did not affect the collection and outcomes of the data (Peshkin, 1988). An example

of controlling subjectivity was to avoid asking leading questions (Webb, 2018), which could sway the English faculty member to answer in a desired way. I had to ensure that I conducted the interviews and interpreted the data in a neutral manner, to disallow any bias from affecting the process.

I was not alone in feeling the effects of positionality in this study. For example, I took into consideration the aspect of faculty providing me answers that I "wanted" to hear, also referred to as social desirability. For this reason, I had elected to seek participants using specific sample criteria. Regardless of who was in the sample, this qualitative single case study concerned itself with the utmost ethical behavior.

Ethical Considerations

This study was completed with the highest ethical standards in qualitative research. One significant enforcer of ethical research is the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the institution. The IRB of colleges are influenced by federal guidelines concerning human research in the United States, including institutions of higher education (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Yin 2018). Any actions such as interviewing employees, gaining access to data, and reporting results of a study are all grounds for obtaining permission from the IRB of the institution (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). One way I alleviated any potential conflicts during this process was to take a proactive approach in contacting the individuals responsible for institutional research at the anticipated urban community college of interest.

Once the institutional-level concerns of the study were addressed, I ensured the ethical treatment of the English faculty. I presented Informed Consent documentation to the faculty in the study so that participants can have a firm understanding of the

implications of their participation in my study (Yin, 2018). Faculty consented to participation, which was voluntary and noted as being such in the Informed Consent document for them to review and sign. If I had chosen non-tenured faculty, they would have likely felt pressured into participating or abstaining from participating in this study. There was no penalty for tenured English faculty whether they accepted or declined participation in my study. As SWD and students with learning disabilities are a protected class, I decided to conduct research solely on English faculty.

Role of the Researcher

This institution had been selected because of my experiences as a faculty member of a similar community college. Therefore, I had relatable connections to both the site of this study and the faculty's experiences. As a faculty member, I directly interacted with students on a daily basis. I had been confronted with the concern of having to provide accommodations to SWD and students with LD who requested them through the DSS office. I had never experienced training for interaction with either group of students, whether mandatory or voluntary. Students with disabilities had regularly furnished me with a detailed letter from the DSS office and I had provided or allowed accommodations according to the student's individual challenges. I had seen the result of students having satisfactory academic progress with the use of accommodations. I have had positive experiences with SWD and students with LD and have similarly heard positive things from fellow faculty.

On a few occasions, I had heard informal feedback from faculty at my institution. Faculty had expressed their appreciation of the organized system of students approaching DSS and then furnishing the accommodation letter to get the accommodations they need.

Faculty had also expressed satisfaction at the ease of providing those accommodations. Although I may have had positive experiences, not every experience with SWD or students with LD and fellow faculty had been positive.

I had witnessed faculty indifference with providing accommodations. This indifference stemmed from a lack of preparedness on the part of faculty. I had heard the derogatory remarks of other faculty who felt that accommodations provide an advantage to students and create a distraction in the classroom. Faculty had also expressed confusion regarding the process of providing or allowing accommodations to SWD and students with LD. This study helped inform the college with an understanding of whether a training gap exists for faculty.

As a faculty member, I had witnessed students with LD seeming ill prepared for their challenges in higher education. These challenges were compounded by their attempts to maneuver through the confusing processes involving enrollment, financial services (Nagaoka, Roderick, & Coca, 2008), and accommodations from faculty. The participants in this study, English faculty, helped shed light on their perspectives of experiences with SWD and students with LD.

Even with the previously mentioned experiences, I knew that I had to set aside my personal beliefs in order to conduct a rigorous study that reports findings in a neutral manner. Instead of trying to report what I felt were the results of the study, I approached the collection and analysis of data with an open mind and without the control of any preconceived outcomes (Peshkin, 1988). Upon completion of Benchmark II, I sought approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Rowan University and FCCC so that I could begin conducting interviews with the English faculty, being careful to

maintain neutrality in my approach and during the interview. I additionally completed a

journal of experiences and reflections of the interviews along with my own experiences

with SWD and students with LD. The de-identified documents were interpreted with an

open mind, free from the influence of subjectivity (Peshkin, 1988).

Closing Summary

This study explored faculty perceptions and use of disability etiquette when

interacting with SWD and students with LD. Through the use of interviews, I explored

the perceptions, experiences, knowledge, and practice regarding disability etiquette and

accommodations between English faculty and students with disabilities at FCCC in the

Northeastern region of the United States. Interview thoughts and observations offered

non-verbal information regarding my interviews with English faculty. The completed de-

identified documents prepared by DSS for presentation to faculty additionally offered

insight into the mandatory transaction between DSS, faculty and students. Finally,

journal entries of my reflections throughout the study were an artifact of my journey

throughout this study (Creswell, 2014). This research explored any disconnect that

existed between faculty's perceptions and their requirements for assisting SWD, and

especially students with LD.

Through the use of a common case study, this qualitative study contributes

findings that can better explain the relationship between faculty perceptions and

treatment of SWD and students with LD. Practitioners desire research that is timely and

that offers suggestions for best practices suitable for daily use (Kezar, 2000). That

willingness was a positive driver and motivator for this research. Perhaps this study helps

add to the discourse regarding best practices for faculty interaction with SWD and

students with LD, especially in the realm of providing equitable accommodations.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study (Yin, 2018) was to explore perceptions of full time English faculty regarding interactions with students with disabilities and with LD at Friendship County Community College (FCCC), an urban community college in the northeastern region of the United States. The perceptions of English faculty who taught at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I* were explored regarding training and interaction with SWD and students with LD. Faculty knowledge of disability etiquette was explored in this study. The data collection included interviews and a review of de-identified documents prepared by DSS for presentation to faculty. I also maintained a journal of my experiences during the completion of this study.

This chapter provides a description of the participants, the interview content, and document analysis of the accommodation letters prepared by Disability Support Services (DSS) at the college. Initially, 11 English faculty were invited to participate in the study based upon the participant criteria. After receiving four responses from faculty, I sent a second email soliciting participation in the study. The second email brought upon five more respondents. A third email and a handwritten note were sent to the final two participants, who eventually agreed to be part of the study. Therefore, I had 100% participation from all invitees (N=11) who met the qualifications of participating in the study. The interviews were transcribed and transcripts were provided to faculty as member checking for content and accuracy (Creswell, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I coded data manually and categorically to organize the data and to form themes (Creswell, 2014).

I maintained and organized the codes from the data sources in a qualitative codebook. I then identified patterns in the codes. Finally, I established categories of codes to best summarize meanings behind the codes (Yin, 2018).

Description of Participants

Eleven participants participated in this study (N=11). All participants were full time, tenured English faculty who had taught at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I* during the past academic year. The participants were both female and male, with various levels of experience teaching at the institution. Figure 1. displays years of full-time teaching experience at FCCC. There were nine female and two male participants in this study.
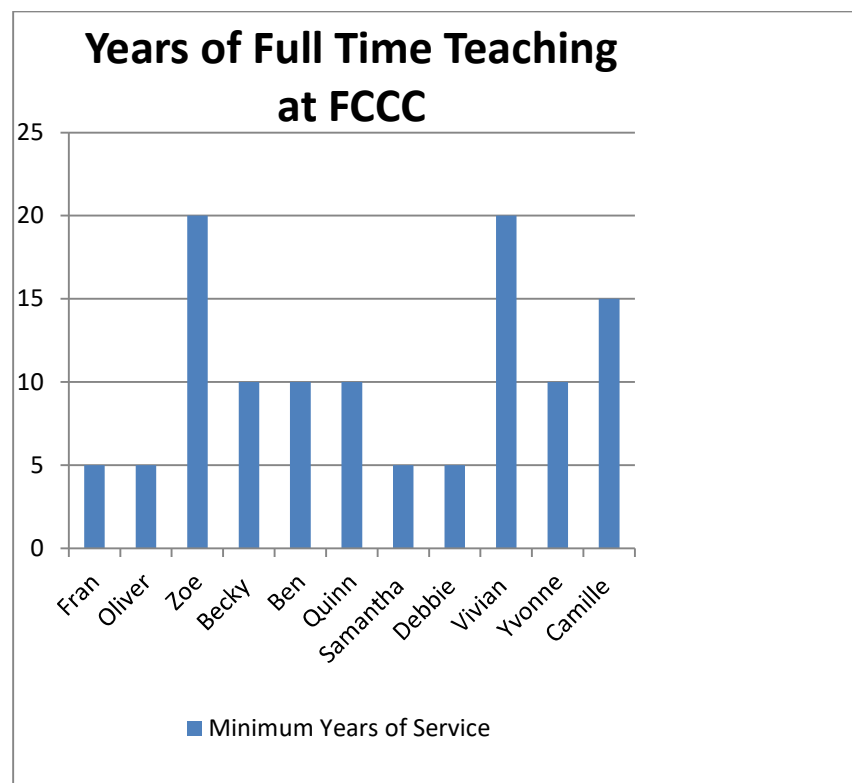
Figure 1. Minimum Years of Full Time Teaching at FCCC

Below is a description of each faculty member that contains a summary of their responses to questions about SWD and students with LD. Additionally, I have summarized each faculty's overall experiences of teaching at FCCC. I have also included additional details on how each faculty member interacts with SWD and students with LD.

Fran. Fran is an English faculty member who has worked at the college for over 10 years, in a full-time capacity. She described her overall satisfaction at the institution with great enthusiasm. Fran is very respectful of her students but is frustrated with the lack of disability training the institution has offered.

Fran said she felt empathetic for her students. She would make every effort to assist and accommodate them after class. Fran said, "I have allowed students to give speeches to me in my office." However, Fran had limited experience with students with physical disabilities and had trouble recalling ever receiving an accommodations letter from one of them. She mentioned having several hearing-impaired cousins and has prior experience with interacting with hearing-impaired people because of this fact. It had also helped Fran identify with the experiences of all SWD in the classroom.

Fran felt held back by the campus policy of not being able to ask a student if they have a disability. She also felt held back by her inability to find out the individual disabilities of students. Fran also seemed frustrated that she could not do more than what was prescribed by the letters requesting accommodations.

Fran has made assumptions about student disabilities after receiving writing samples from the students in question. She has sent many students to tutoring in the hopes that other college staff will also realize that the student has a learning disability.

Overall, Fran was aware of the process of providing accommodations to students who have self-identified and provided an accommodations letter from the DSS office.

Fran was frustrated with the lack of attendance for note takers at the college. She explained that on many occasions, note takers would be absent from their duties. Fran added that note takers would have inconsistent attendance throughout the semester. She said, "So note takers are very spotty, in my personal experience here." When present, the note takers almost never identified themselves to Fran on the first day of class.

Oliver. Oliver is an English faculty member who has worked at the college for over 10 years, of which nine years have been full time. He finds teaching a rewarding and intrinsic experience. Oliver is especially fond of helping to ensure college completion.

Oliver has experienced professional development at conferences. However, he has limited experience with professional development at the college. Oliver noted that few training sessions have occurred since he began teaching at this institution. He mentioned The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 by name, as a law that protects all SWD. Oliver wished more information could be discussed with affected students but respected the discretion that occurs in these situations.

Oliver has offered assistance to SWD and students with LD in the form of office hours and after class assistance. He has encouraged unidentified students to seek tutoring as a remedy for their difficulties. Oliver wishes he could do more to ensure student success.

Oliver was empathetic towards student success. He said, "I just wish we had a little bit more to offer these students, as far as other services that can help them with their disabilities." Oliver was frustrated that he could not offer more assistance to SWD and

students with LD. Although Oliver was aware of the various types of accommodations for disabilities, Oliver felt that faculty had limited power to enact change because of college policy.

Oliver offered general praise towards the services offered to SWD and students with LD by DSS at the college. However, Oliver also suggested concern on DSS and its efforts when he added:

> We don't have any services really at the college that can help them in dealing
>
> with their disability that if we did, it would help them be able to succeed
>
> academically…more of the students would graduate with an Associate's degree.

Although Oliver was concerned with the lack of services the college was providing all SWD, he still praised the work of DSS.

Becky. Becky has been a full time English faculty member of the college for over 10 years. She was content with her unique, daily experiences with students. Becky was also proud of the fact that she can be creative with her teaching methods.

Becky has experienced one session of professional development at the college geared towards teaching SWD and students with LD. She had received unique training in graduate school that differs from the professional development of most other English faculty. She uses her experiences from graduate school to help with interacting with SWD and students with LD.

Becky has a positive attitude towards her students. She is helpful to her students and makes significant attempts at ensuring student success. Becky completes this by scaffolding her curriculum, building on the prior experiences of students in the course. Becky said, "I try and scaffold, be cognizant of having visuals for anything I'm saying. [I

give] step-by-step instructions, which are helpful for all students really when they have bigger papers to write." Becky could not explain the definition of disability etiquette even though she seemed to be practicing equity on all students. She understood that students did not want to be "singled-out", which is the core principle of disability etiquette. However, she was unable to explain what steps to take to ensure the practice of disability etiquette in the classroom and beyond.

Becky seemed frustrated with the discretion related to interacting with SWD and students with LD. She wanted to help all SWD but did not want to held liable for saying anything against college policy to her students. Becky referred to interaction with SWD and students with LD as, "It's tricky."

Her experience with DSS staff was unique in comparison to others in the sample for one reason. Becky had a disappointing experience with a signer. Just like many others in the sample, Becky was empathetic to the needs of students and felt like the student deserved a better signer who could meet the needs of that student.

Becky expressed frustration at the accommodation allowing extra time on exams and papers. She noted that allowing extra time on exams and papers decreases the motivation of SWD and students with LD and works against their success. Becky said:

> They [SWD and students with LD] get more time on exams and more time to turn in papers, which is a blessing and a curse. It's a nice thing, but then they fall away too far behind and so it has to be within reason and these are, unfortunately, a lot of times the students who are not doing well anyway. The motivation's not there and sometimes they are allowed to get more time, but it works against them.

Because then again, the papers keep piling up, because they're falling behind to

begin with.

Becky was confused by this practice because there was no alternative solution to

providing extra time on exams and papers.

Zoe. Zoe has been teaching at FCCC for over 20 years as a full-time faculty of the

English department. She enjoys experiencing the varied demographics of the college. Zoe

cares about her students and their needs.

When asked about training for interaction with SWD and students with LD, Zoe

was adamant that she had not received any from FCCC. She said "no, to answer your

question, no, with a big N-O." Zoe was very disappointed that no training was offered for

interaction with either group of students.

Zoe conducts weekly meetings with SWD and students with LD, who she referred

to as "special students."   She noted that when students asked for more time and did not

provide an accommodations letter, she would suspect procrastination or a learning

disability. Overall, Zoe was aware of the nature of asking for accommodations and has

been flexible in assisting her students. She was implicitly practicing DE in ensuring

discretion, as she said "And sometimes, in the office situation, students feel less visible,

among their classmates, they're more comfortable".

Zoe felt that college policy was restrictive for students and faculty. She felt that

students did not always know what to do in the faculty-student relationship. With the

restrictions of the college policy for not discussing disabilities, Zoe felt that her

conversations could not be as detailed as they needed to be. She felt that students were

held back from expressing their needs. Zoe said, "Never the sense that they we're

allowed to articulate their concerns, except when you're talking to them, on a one-on-one

basis, within the framework of not the classroom, but in the framework of the conference

[private meeting]."

Zoe has been frustrated with the level of engagement that DSS has with faculty.

She said, "It doesn't make itself present." Zoe also mentioned that her department

requested training but had not received it. Even with her perceived lack of interaction

with DSS, she has seen SWD receive accommodations from DSS. For example, she has

seen accommodations such as a "tutor" for a visually impaired students and a special

computer with large font for another.

Zoe stated the she had not received a letter requesting accommodations in a long

time. When contacting the office regarding a question on an accommodation, she felt like

the DSS staff were not welcoming in their tone. Zoe was bothered by not only the tone of

the conversation, but by the fact that students were not fulfilling their responsibility with

the relationship of asking for accommodations.

Ben. Ben has been a full-time English faculty member at FCCC for 10 years. He

has had a good experience teaching at the college. Ben cares about his students and is

flexible with providing accommodations.

Ben had received professional development from the DSS. He was open to

helping all students, especially those who requested accommodations. However, Ben felt

confused by the encounters with SWD and students with LD because these interactions

were not addressed during his training. For example, Ben has had to rely on sign

language staff for instructions on interacting with hearing-impaired students. He said,

"The sign interpreters will tell you 'oh, it would be helpful if you did this…' or they'd say 'where do you want us to sit?'."

Ben has never heard of the concept of disability etiquette. However, he said he is respectful of students who are requesting accommodations and he uses the utmost discretion. Ben is able to extract information regarding the student's past use of accommodations, without implying they are a SWD or student with LD. Ben is interested in obtaining further information regarding use of disability etiquette towards students.

Ben also yearns to know the specific disability of each student when they present a letter for accommodations. He expressed frustration with discretion and its effect on SWD and students with LD. Regarding accommodation requests, he said:

I'm not sure why, but it used to be more common that students would just forget or they'd show me a letter two weeks into the semester, it's just anecdotal. Some of them, I don't know, they get the message, they show me the letter of the first day.

He felt that SWD and students with LD may not understand the formal policy for requesting accommodations.

Ben mentioned the flexibility of DSS in accommodating students who required proctoring for their tests. He said, "[I tell them] 'You need to have the test proctored by DSS.' They're usually pretty good about it but that's something that it's just up to me and the student." However, he added, "[It's] between us to remember, you know, a week out or two weeks out."

Quinn. Quinn has been employed as a full-time English faculty member of FCCC for over 10 years. She greatly enjoys the diverse backgrounds of community college

students in comparison to students at private universities. Quinn is a faculty member who can be described as being helpful towards SWD and students with LD. When referring to experiences with SWD and students with LD, she said, "It's a challenge. But, you know….enjoyable…I've enjoyed working with students and also the sign language interpreters."

In regards to professional development, Quinn had experienced only one training session associated with learning disabilities and none regarding SWD. Although she had praise for the DSS office, she did feel that her only internal training session was very uninformative and left her frustrated. Quinn felt that the training was compliance-based and not helpful at all. She has expressed interest to her Dean in attending conferences on working with SWD and students with LD.

Quinn was confused by the concept of disability etiquette. However, she was aware of the confidentiality and discretion associated with requesting accommodations at the college. Quinn wished to be better prepared to interact with SWD and students with LD. She said, "I wish there was more help, and I wish there were more qualified instructors." Quinn wished that all students who received accommodations would potentially achieve higher academic success.

Quinn described a time when discretion was used by someone involved in providing accommodations for a student. The student did not identify herself to Quinn, rather the sign language interpreter approached her at the start of the first day of class. Quinn said, "And they will tell me that 'I'm working with such and such student for the semester.' So, that's the way that it's worked, usually". Quinn also mentioned other ways that she tries maintaining discretion with SWD and students with LD. She said, "You

can suggest maybe going to tutoring or going to the writing center, to have [other] students look at their work."

Quinn had praise for the DSS office of the college, especially with the hiring of effective sign language interpreters. She also mentioned the Director by name when she said, "[Name] actually contacting me about the textbook." Quinn felt her training experiences were not helpful but her other interactions with DSS were positive. Therefore, Quinn had both positive and negative experiences with DSS at the college.

Samantha. Samantha has been a full-time faculty member of the English department for over five years. She felt a strong level of support from her fellow faculty. Samantha felt that her students are enthusiastic, hard working, and interested in learning.

Samantha has never received professional development for interacting with SWD and LD at the institution. She has experienced professional development for working with SWD and students with LD, but only from her studies in college. Samantha feels comfortable teaching SWD and students with LD and is respectful of their challenges. She said, "I talked to them briefly and I assured them that if they needed something…then they should talk to me."

Samantha had a positive attitude regarding interaction with SWD and students with LD. She practices inclusion and involves all students to ensure their success. Samantha said, "I will make sure they are comfortable."

Samantha is against the use of discretion when providing accommodations to SWD. In fact, she feels that any sort of discretion attempted for providing accommodations for SWD is a waste of time. She felt that such attempts at hiding the obvious are an insult to people's intelligence. In Samantha's opinion, she has tried to use

disability etiquette even though she feels it is not necessary for SWD. Samantha said she is respectful towards students with LD and is willing to take extra steps to ensure they are not singled out or embarrassed because of their learning disability. She checks on student comprehension during class when she asks all students in the room, "My attitude is to carry on the lesson. I would check with all of the students."

Overall, Samantha was frustrated with the way she is supposed to act with SWD. Her body language made it clear that she cared about SWD but was upset about something. She rolled her eyes while describing a situation with a visually impaired student who was incorrectly in her class. She reported that DSS staff had scolded her for not abiding by discretion that guides the accommodations process.

Debbie. Debbie has worked at FCCC for over five years as a full-time English faculty. She enjoys working with her fellow faculty. Debbie provides an open and welcoming environment for SWD and students with LD. She said, "I will try to work with the student."

Debbie has never received training for interaction with SWD or students with LD at the institution. She said that "trial and error" were what helped her navigate interaction with SWD and students with LD. Debbie wanted to receive training so that she could learn new methods and strategies to navigating classroom interaction. She referred to any future training as being "really helpful."

Debbie understands the struggles of all students at the institution. She is supportive of giving accommodations to students. When asked about disability etiquette, Debbie knew to wait for an accommodation letter before approaching students who she suspected of having a disability.

Debbie was frustrated because of her inability to speak candidly with students who she suspected as being SWD or students with LD. Debbie knew what she was permitted to discuss with students with LD. However, Debbie admitted to breaking protocol on one occasion. She asked if a student had been receiving accommodations in high school. Debbie broke protocol because that student had completed her class and he knew he was going to receive a failing grade.

Debbie has provided accommodations to SWD and students with LD, but she felt uncomfortable providing the accommodation for extra time on assignments and examinations. Debbie felt this accommodation is a disservice to students with LD. Debbie has also been approached by students who provide medical notes as excuses for missing class, but fail to provide accommodation letters from DSS office.

Debbie felt a little confused by the summarized nature of the accommodation request letters prepared by DSS. Debbie explained the generic nature of the documentation and its lack of explanation when she said, "But I think it's just a boiler-plate thing that everybody gets." She did express some discomfort with having note takers proctoring exams for students. Debbie felt that a person who is taking notes for a student should not have the authority to proctor exams to that student. She was uncomfortable with that arrangement and felt that two separate people should have been responsible for those roles.

Debbie feels frustrated with the DSS office and feels they should be doing a better job with providing note takers for her students. She went on to say that the lack of a note taker in the class made her take extra steps to ensure that the student was receiving information properly. She felt confused as to why DSS would not simply hire another

person to be a note taker. Even when Debbie does have a note taker in her class, she feels

that they overstep their boundaries and try to become active participants in the class.

Debbie felt that this was a distraction for all of the other students legitimately enrolled in

the class.

Vivian. Vivian has worked at FCCC for over 20 years as a full-time English

faculty member. She expressed excitement over the diversity of students. Vivian stated

that SWD and students with LD used to negotiate their accommodations directly with the

faculty for each class, saying:

> I think years ago, we would just meet students and we would determine that they
>
> were probably learning-disabled based on how they responded or the time that
>
> they needed. But, as things changed, they had the ability to get to the Disabilities
>
> Office.

Even though the legislation governing accommodations has changed, Vivian has still

maintained a strong passion for helping all students succeed.

Vivian has never received professional development for interaction with SWD nor

students with LD. She was frustrated and disappointed that faculty could not fully assist

SWD and students with LD. However, Vivian said that she is, "Willing to go the extra

yard. You know? Because you can't ignore the fact that the student requires a little

more… [Faculty should] be willing to go the extra yard."

Vivian felt that disability etiquette was a mutual understanding between faculty

and students. She said:

> We still want our students to progress, we still want them to learn. So, it's
>
> important that they too recognize that even when they have extensions, even when

it's understood that they require some extra attention, that it's important that we teach them as if they are indeed just college students, who want to push, who want to do more. So, when we force them, I think that some of them might feel, like 'I want to force you to recognize, that you still have boundaries, because that will make you even stronger'.

Nevertheless, Vivian is respectful of students and is willing to do extra things for all deserving students to succeed.

Vivian expressed confusion over how accommodations can be provided to someone in an online class. Specifically, she could not understand how SWD and students with LD can receive extra time on assignments. The college only allows a full calendar week for submission of assignments in online courses.

Vivian mentioned that accommodation request letters would be prepared by the DSS office of the institution. She also said that the DSS plays a role with services to SWD and students with LD. Vivian said, "it's between just their instructor and themselves, and the Disability Office [DSS]." Other than identifying the role of DSS as the provider of accommodation request letters, Vivian did not say anything else regarding DSS at the institution.

Yvonne. Yvonne has been employed by FCCC as a full-time English faculty member for over 10 years. She loves working at the college and feels that she would not feel the same if employed elsewhere. Yvonne said, "Honestly, it's been great. I'm still here. I love it, you know? I love our students."

Yvonne mentioned the scarcity of professional development at the college, both for interaction with SWD and students with LD. She was especially satisfied with the

training provided for students with LD, even though it was provided by a teacher certified in K-12 pedagogy. Yvonne maintains a cautious approach to interaction with all students, where compliance is her leading motivator.

Yvonne practices disability etiquette even though she had never heard of the concept. She takes steps in her classes to ensure that no student feels excluded. Yvonne said, "I feel like I want to believe…we all want to believe we have a respectful and have etiquette. I don't think I've been trained, however." Yvonne would like to see DE as a part of professional development in the future.

Yvonne provided accommodations to visually impaired students who required larger font on notes and handouts. Additionally, she has provided many accommodations to students with LD. She knows that faculty are legally bound to provide accommodations to students when requested from DSS. Yvonne knew not to attempt diagnosis of student disabilities, saying "I don't have the credentials to diagnose somebody."

Yvonne has also stated that she has no knowledge of what type of disability affects each student with LD. She was frustrated that this information was kept from her, even though the law states that students do not have to disclose their disability to the public. Yvonne conceded, "we are not in a position to identify students [with disabilities]."

Yvonne did not mention much about DSS at the institution. She did say that when extra time on a test was needed for a student, she would send the test to the DSS office to proctor it there. When asked about providing accommodations to students with LD, Yvonne said, "I really just give them the accommodation that [Director] asks for."

Camille. Camille has been a full time English faculty member at the college for over 15 years. Her experiences were very different from the other participants in the sample. Camille had a disability at one point in her teaching career. This influenced her approach to interacting with SWD and students with LD in a very significant way. Not only is Camille empathetic to students with disabilities, but she has gained the trust of SWD and students with LD with her approaches.

Camille was frustrated with the lack of professional development provided by the college and how the college has approached the topic of disabilities as a "fad" and has not taken serious measures to help faculty interact with SWD and students with LD. When referring to training, Camille said, "When I think about it, it's absolutely startling how few experiences I have in the last 19 years." She stated that her division had asked DSS for a special training session but their request was denied. In the absence of significant training, Camille has experimented with various approaches to getting SWD and students with LD acclimated with the curriculum, saying "we devise a plan." Camille has done this with little guidance from the college.

Camille wants to work with every student individually and is passionate about ensuring their success. She stated how she interacts with SWD and students with LD differently than students without disabilities. Camille said:

> In fact, my interactions with students with disabilities is also from the experience of being a person with a disability. I take that point of view. I'm not really used to thinking of students and how I deal with students with disabilities as vastly, vastly different from all of my students.

Camille seemed relentless in trying to help SWD and students with LD. She said:

I want them to haunt my office, I want them to see me in lab, I want them to go to
the Writing Center, the Tutorial Center, and for us to get creative. For example, if
reading aloud is really essential for them to learn, to take in the reading, then
that's what we do. I've had students who have basically sat in my office and read
a work aloud it then proved to the student that 'Wow, I'm processing it in a much
different way'

She has taken major steps to foster better dialogue between faculty and students at the
college. Camille feels that better communication between SWD and students without
disabilities would help remove any stereotypes and misconceptions.

Camille said that the accommodation request letters for students with LD may
seem vague to faculty. She said, "It's pretty much the same [as SWD] with no other
specific instructions or guidance. The two are not really differentiated and I've been told
that's because of, you know, HIPAA laws, and so on."

Camille and her colleagues had requested that DSS come to divisional meetings to
conduct training sessions. However, a visit for this training was refused. However,
Camille included the paragraph offering DSS on campus on all her syllabi and made it a
point to discuss it on the first day of each class. Regardless of the involvement of DSS in
her work, Camille showed support for helping SWD and student with LD when she said,
"Oh, I am so pro-people, students with disabilities, in fact, it is your right, it is a legal
right."

Summary

All English faculty in this study (N=11) said they maintained positive interaction
with SWD and students with LD. Although some faculty stated that their interaction was

positive, there were still many instances of unclear moments and doubtful actions. Faculty training for interacting with SWD and students with LD seemed to be lacking at the institution. However, all faculty expressed interest in obtaining more professional development to provide better service towards those groups of students. There was no hesitation with their willingness to learn more about SWD and students with LD. A significant part of interacting with SWD and students with LD was when faculty were providing accommodations to them.

Faculty mentioned that students provided letters requesting accommodations from the DSS office. There seemed to be a marginal amount of SWD requesting accommodations at the institution. Many faculty could not recall the last time they had a SWD in their class. However, all faculty were able to provide many details when asked about interacting with students with LD. A significant focus of the interaction between faculty and SWD and students with LD involved some implicit form of disability etiquette.

When asked about disability etiquette, many of the faculty did not understand the concept. After further explanation, faculty were able to provide details of their treatment of SWD and students with LD. Most faculty expressed a high level of respect for SWD and students with LD. They were generally willing to ensure that all students had an equitable chance at success. A few faculty had personal experiences with physical disabilities. None of the faculty mentioned having experience with learning disabilities outside of FCCC. Overall, faculty were using disability etiquette even though they could not identify their actions as being DE. Regardless of their opinions on helping SWD and students with LD, many of the faculty were not willing to compromise the academic integrity of their assignments or exams.

Participants in the sample described their experiences with SWD and students with LD at the institution. The data helped to answer the research questions related to faculty training, accommodations provided to students, and disability etiquette. After the analysis of interview data, four themes emerged from the codes to help answer the research questions.

Themes

Through coding the participants' responses, four themes were established from the data: training, positive faculty attitudes and DE, policy not fitting circumstances, and experiences with DSS. An explanation of each theme is noted below.

Theme 1: Training. The interviews yielded important data about faculty perceptions of training and professional development related to interacting with SWD and LD students. Of the 11 faculty interviewed, six recalled professional development about working with SWD and students with LD early in their careers at FCCC. Two out of those six had training for working with students with LD only; four out of those six had training for both SWD and students with LD. These six participants reported receiving training during workshops held on College Service Day, Orientation, or division meetings. DSS staff conducted some professional development. Adjunct or K-12 faculty provided other sessions. Three faculty members out of six reported professional development outside of FCCC, whether in their graduate education or by attending conferences. Five faculty out of 11 recalled no training for working with either category of students.

Training completed. Almost all faculty felt that FCCC could have better prepared them. Four faculty talked about the absence of training by FCCC. Fran stated that she had

not received any training for interaction with SWD or students with LD, explaining, "I've had zero training." She said, "We're really just kind of thrown in there, and don't know how best to help them." Similarly, Samantha reported no FCCC training for interaction with either group of students. She said, "I don't know if our college has offered any of that, but I have never received anything." Zoe said she has received "zero training" from the institution and Debbie told me very simply, "I have never had that."

Despite having had some training, a number of faculty felt they were not prepared to offer sufficient help to SWD and students with LD. For instance, Vivian said, "Learning disabilities is always a little tricky, right? Because we are not trained specifically to necessarily meet the needs." Asked about her experience with training, Camille described minimal training offered by FCCC and said, "I have almost felt as though the level of my education and communication that has been provided by the college has really been absent." She went on to explain her opinion of the approach the college has taken towards training for interaction with SWD and students with LD, saying:

> [The college thinks] learning disabilities is in fashion now. It's almost like it's not real…and "you want extra something" or rather. But "it's not really real", it's just sort of like this invention, a fad, and you know, "ha ha ha….come on, just try harder."

Three faculty had uncertain recollections of their experiences with FCCC training. Oliver, who had some non-FCCC training through his graduate studies, described limited experience with professional development at the college. He commented, "I can't remember the exact title of the workshop, but we've had a few workshops. We could use

more at the college, on how to work with these types of students with disabilities."

Yvonne struggled to recall training as well. She said, "I think there was at the College

Service Day, once there was a workshop, but it seemed to be more about compliance."

Ben had a similar response amid his difficulty recalling training at FCCC, saying, "No, I

don't think there's been formal professional development. I think early on, we had

meetings and workshops...where they explained the policies and everything. I think in

some cases I've learned…informally…I've had [to] in numerous occasions." Asked

specifically about training for interaction with students with LD, Ben said, "I think that

we have…it's been many years, I think people… adjunct faculty who have experience

with it have done workshops in the past."

Quinn also described a focus on policy and compliance in her DSS training and

the absence of practical training:

OK, here's where you, go…."here are the numbers you need to know, here are the

[various] accommodations"…nothing towards "what can we do"…"how can we

help"…"what are some things…where can we go to get that help, conferences"

and something along those lines.

Although Quinn had praise for DSS, she reported that her only internal training

session was compliance-based and uninformative. She said, "I have not received any

[training] [laugh]...probably [during] college orientation….There was one workshop

where I did attend that was on learning disabilities more so…but nothing with physical

disabilities." She added:

But we've had some professional development by some of the instructors, adjunct

instructors actually. I remember them giving a workshop…on a Saturday I think it was and, so, I went to that. And I remember College Service Day once, we had one session.

Becky characterized FCCC training as rare. She said, "Since I've started at FCCC, I have not received, maybe, maybe once." However, she brought up her specific training in graduate school, as did Oliver, who had some college study for working with SWD and students with LD.

Camille said something contrary to what many faculty said. She asserted that workshops had provided information that would benefit students with LD. Camille said, "We've had some workshops…given by specialists or experts in learning disabilities and they were very helpful." Camille was the only faculty member who felt the training was meaningful for interacting with students with LD.

Perceived FCCC faculty training needs. Although most faculty perceived themselves as capable of navigating specific situations with SWD and students with LD on their own, five of them expressed desire for more professional development in the field. Fran said, "I wish we had of some kind of training." Quinn felt that faculty could benefit from more training for interacting with SWD and students with LD. She commented:

> I wish there was more training, I wish we had more…. Someone come in and teach us a little bit more…[not just] what accommodations there are, but actually showing us if you suspect, "here's what you can do" or "if this is the case, here's what you can…here's how to help them." I personally wish that I was more trained in this. Many of us do not have a

disability background at all and we are given these students…it's tough,

it's tough.

Debbie also spoke about the value of additional training. She said:

I think it would be helpful also because like let's say a student has a disability that

affects how they read and I have no training whatsoever in how to help them…it

would be really helpful if there was some sort of strategy that I could share with

them, like "this might help you."

She went on to imply that integrating more regular training into FCCC would be positive:

It would be helpful if we had some sort of training…It would be pretty

cool if I knew so I wish we offered something like that here, like every

once in a while…that seems like if could be great thing for College

Service Day.

Zoe observed that "we've never had anything formal" and commented that "it's a

shame….it would be useful not only for faculty but also for the college." She added, "I

would love to have any kind of training….workshops…something."

Some faculty have not waited for training opportunities to be offered. Two noted

they had asked for training from their supervisors but received no response to their

requests. Quinn stated her personal interest in training for interaction with SWD and

students with LD, saying, "I've expressed interest, I think to one of the deans or directors,

that I would be interested in attending a conference on disabilities." Fran had made a

similar request when she said, "I've asked for training."

Two other faculty made requests for training that were denied. Camille cited

multiple requests for training in her division, when she said:

At division meetings, faculty have expressed….wanting to have

Disability Services visit our meeting…a visit was refused…. It's clear

that we have the intentions of being an accommodating and inclusive

institution, and we hold ourselves, at least from the outside, to higher

standards than what we think is going on in society.

Camille also mentioned the impact the lack of training had on SWD and students with LD. She expressed disappointment with the lack of resources placed on training faculty at the college. Camille mentioned the importance of educating faculty, when she said, "I feel they [students] are more disempowered, if that's even possible. I mean both are, but because there just seems to be so much…lack of education."

Zoe also mentioned disappointment at the denial of requests for training. She said, "I've been here long enough that unfortunately the office, I say unfortunately…that office has not attempted to [conduct training] even in my division, when asked to come and speak to faculty." None of the requests for training mentioned by participants in this study materialized.

Summary. Faculty wanted to be better prepared for interaction with SWD and students with LD. Many faculty mentioned their lack of professional development provided by FCCC. Some faculty had relied on professional development learned from their own postgraduate education. There were faculty who learned as they experienced interaction with these students. However, faculty wanted training and some have asked for it from their superiors. No further training occurred based on faculty requests to obtain more professional development.

Theme 2: Positive faculty attitudes and disability etiquette. Throughout interviews conducted for this study, faculty expressed attitudes about and perceptions of SWD and students with LD. A shared positive attitude was evident in the accommodations, extra services, and general care and concern faculty described when discussing these students. Much of what they reported pointed to using forms of disability etiquette (DE), despite the fact that most faculty were not familiar with the tenets of DE in any formal sense or consciously practicing it when interacting with students.

In general, interviews revealed genuine regard for SWD and students with LD, especially in describing the ways in which they attempt to build trust and comfort. For instance, after emphasizing the importance of respecting student privacy, Vivian added, "Just to make sure to respectfully, responsibly, and with a sense of strong values teach all students, including our students with learning disabilities, with a sense of focus and integrity." In commenting about confidentiality, she noted that she reassures students about their privacy "because that gives them a sense of comfort, I think" that they will not be "put on the spot."

Oliver and Yvonne both mentioned providing respectful treatment of SWD and students with LD. Oliver echoed this positive respect saying, "They are human beings, so you have to treat every student with respect, treat every student, as an individual… especially, you know, if I had a learning disability, I wouldn't want to be embarrassed in the classroom." In a similar vein, Yvonne commented, "[I] try not to say demeaning things or help make people feel excluded…or point them out…I don't know, call attention to their disability." Camille focused on building relationships with students who approach her for accommodations, saying, "I think once a rapport is established and I

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have been confided in…I consider an honor to be confided in that way." Vivian

expressed a similar opinion of interacting with SWD and students with LD when she

said:

> I think I have a warm sense of being very proud of students who, with disability,
>
> realized that what they are not *dis-abled* but are very *able* to push themselves and
>
> to be right there and that they should always know that they deserve the extra, if
>
> so needed. You know? And that… it would be helpful to provide it.

Ben explained more concretely how he establishes a comfort level:

> You know, I'll make it as easy as possible for them to advocate for themselves
>
> and I always emphasize that…this is nothing new to me, it's like "Oh yeah, I've
>
> seen this list and I do this all the time."

He explained an understanding of what SWD and students with LD need, saying, "[I'm]

just accommodating them and meeting with them to go over the items

[accommodations]…making them comfortable, asking for what they need."

Fran and Zoe touched upon the value of flexibility. Fran said, "I try and be

accommodating, I try and be encouraging and accommodating as much as I can if they

are handing in something late." Zoe told me, "They would try to do the work, even if the

work was super late. So, I bent over backwards to help these students relax."

As noted earlier in this chapter, Camille is unique among English department

faculty in that she herself had a disability during her career. This led her to identify the

importance of developing rapport and trust. Camille felt that her own visible disability

informed her approach and the level of student comfort with receiving accommodations

in the classroom. She described how her experience has influenced her interactions with SWD and students with LD in a significant way:

> I've been on both sides of the coin. I think about what I have offered as faculty member with a disability and at one point in time, a very noticeable disability. I have found that my rapport with students with disabilities has gotten even better…they are able to approach me and to speak about their concerns and their vulnerabilities.

Not only is Camille able to develop rapport with students with disabilities, but she believes her approach has enabled her to gain the trust of SWD and students with LD. In the absence of ongoing training at FCCC, Camille, like other faculty, has experimented with various approaches to getting SWD and students with LD acclimated to the curriculum, navigating her interactions with SWD and students with LD on her own with little guidance from the college.

Other faculty offered insights into how they help SWD and students with LD. Debbie mentioned experimenting with various approaches, which was echoed by others. Zoe added, "[For] faculty who have [been] entrusted with both physical problems and learning disabilities, we share our approaches and our strategies." Camille said, "I find that I'm making my way with students on really gathering how they process things, in terms of reading and writing and how I can better serve them." Similarly, Yvonne mentioned that she "can recognize patterns in writing." Fran also made inferences regarding student disabilities after reviewing student writing samples. She has sent many students to tutoring in the hope that other college staff will realize that the student has a learning disability. Fran said, "Their writing is poor…so I try and work with the students,

I encourage them to go to tutoring, but it's difficult." Samantha builds a check on student comprehension into her teaching, explaining, "[I] make sure they are following along…[I] call out… 'Is that clear?… Do you have any questions?'-- things like that." Samantha added to this in-class check, when she said, "And if necessary, also at the end of class, if they needed to see me, I would spend extra time with them." She went on to explain, "If I wasn't being clear and not meeting their needs, then they should talk to me. Or if they had any problems following syllabus or the course."

Taking extra time was commonly mentioned. Like Fran, Oliver spoke of encouraging those not identified as SWD or students with LD to seek tutoring to remedy difficulties he suspects may be SWD- or LD-related. He said, "I can talk to the student and say, um, 'we have tutoring center to help you,' I can [say] you know, 'we have a writing center if you need help with writing papers.'" Like Samantha, he offered after class assistance and made himself "available to help them during my office hours." Ben saw using regular after-class conversations as opportunities to alleviate the pressure on students by encouraging them to become involved in class:

> Someone that has the disability, if I get the feeling that they're uncomfortable, I'll say later on, I'll take them aside and say "I want you to practice talking in class… and it seems like you don't like it" or you know, "I'm not picking on you…. I want you to be able to talk like everyone else."

As stated earlier, Zoe conducted weekly meetings with SWD and students with LD, whom she refers to as "special students."

Ben expressed some uncertainty about managing encounters with SWD and students with LD, attributing that to the minimal DSS training he had. As stated earlier,

he found it possible to learn from sign language interpreters in his classroom. He said, "I think I've [been] learning just a little bit from them in case you have someone who's an expert."

Some faculty reported monitoring the success of SWD throughout the semester. Debbie said, "So what I've sort of…learned to do is to just kind of keep checking in over the semester, like, 'How, is this still okay? Do you need extra time?' that kind of thing." Vivian displayed her attention to student needs when she said:

Experiences made me to be mindful of them in the classroom, to be mindful if they have assistance, and to let them know that, you know…you have their back, by simply paying them the attention they need so that they can learn alongside the other students.

Two other faculty members showed somewhat more confidence about their interactions than their colleagues. Becky explicitly noted using her graduate school education to help her in interacting with SWD and students with LD. She said, "When I was in graduate school for teaching, I took classes [for interacting with SWD and students with LD]." She expressed general pride in the creativity of her teaching methods, allowing her to make attempts at ensuring student success. Becky completes this by scaffolding her curriculum, building on the prior experiences of students in the course. She said:

It's been difficult in some cases…trying my best to kinda answer the questions. I'm scaffolding in the sense that I'm always trying to teach multiple learners and their learning style. So visuals, I'll show a clip of something, I've played an audio recordings of news for them.

Also referencing her college years including some SWD education, Samantha reported feeling comfortable teaching SWD and students with LD and described herself as respectful of their challenges. She said, "I have an Italian certification and a degree in education."

Another topic faculty raised was making a point of involving classmates in ensuring the success of SWD, regardless of the amount of help received from DSS. Fran mentioned how she encourages the entire class to help those who can benefit. She said:

> I would just encourage the class to be helpful, you know, hold doors open, whatever. So, I would look at it as a learning experience for the whole class and help them to know better, how to interact with this classmate, so that the classmate will be a part of the whole class instead of just off with just their interpreter.

Camille felt uplifted by the way in which students without disabilities could interact with SWD and students with LD. She was complementary about students without disabilities:

> Students, on the other hand, particularly this generation, have much more of a sense of inclusivity and maybe just the nature of being young, of being fair-minded in eradicating prejudices and that might also be because so many of our students are immigrants and, and people of color that it's easier for them to understand, as I did.

Some faculty mentioned feeling rewarded for their work with SWD and students with LD. For example, describing emails from SWD and students with disabilities, Vivian said, "I'm always so thankful to see the simplest things, like, you know, 'Thank

you for explaining again' or 'for resending my email.'" The email described by Vivian made her feel her actions were appreciated.

   Disability etiquette (DE) as implicit practice. A major foundation of disability etiquette is discretion and a sincere and caring approach to physical and social interactions and to accommodations (Alliston, 2010; Cook, 2007; Cook et al., 2009; NCAU, 1995) for people with visible and invisible disabilities (Hill, 1996; Murphy, 2007; Stodden et al., 2002; Wessel, 2016; Worthy, 2013). Disability etiquette is not rigidly prescribed but can occur in many ways when a faculty member respectfully interacts with SWD and students with LD (Hill, 1996; Murphy, 2007; Stodden et al., 2002; Wessel, 2016; Worthy, 2013). In particular, for students with LD entering higher education, faculty use of disability etiquette can reduce pressures and barriers.

   In the above discussion, talk about establishing comfort, using discretion, and respecting students, as well as taking time to work with students, are examples of DE. As a rule, however, these practices were not linked to DE but were more related to common sense or common courtesy. When asked about DE, Fran said:

   As far as proper etiquette goes, I think it's between the student and you, and it's like grades. You don't tell somebody what other people's grades are, so you don't tell the rest of the class, if somebody in the class has accommodations.

Asked about DE, Zoe responded simply, "Is there a disability etiquette?" and said DE is "completely…in the dark zone" to her. She was also adamant about receiving further information on DE. Ben, too, inquired about DE. He said, "I'm interested now in the disability etiquette ideas, I think that would be useful."

Camille was the only faculty member who had a clear knowledge of DE and the ability to discuss the topic without hesitation:

Disability etiquette….oh, God….it's something that we are in dire, dire need of… there is a huge amount of ignorance in our culture. One of the first things that is a gigantic mistake is that people will think that they have etiquette when they put people with disabilities on the pedestals...when they speak of them as being "inspirational", when they look at very minor accomplishments and are patronizing and clapping and saying "great job that you actually came outside today." So, in order to teach the etiquette, we first have to really secede the problems and the ableist thinking that is so prevalent. In addition, that ablest thinking can be present in a person with disabilities. He or she might have been indoctrinated by the society.

Although Camille rightly introduced ableism in her responses, this study was not designed for analysis of interview discussion or documents on this topic.

Camille was able to elaborate further on DE and its absence amongst colleagues. She was disappointed with hearsay regarding SWD and students with LD, amongst faculty, saying, "I don't want to hear this…later the student [will] share this with me, but this is not a conversation that the faculty member should have had with me….gossip." Camille added, "Being an object of gossip is something I'm familiar with, it's just demeaning."

Camille explained another negative situation involving a colleague and their lack of DE. When speaking of fellow faculty, she mentioned how she self disclosed her

disability to the colleague at the changeover of classes. Camille was being candid with a colleague, but felt hurt by this colleague. Camille said:

> The first time I told a faculty member, who I was changing rooms with, I would go in and [colleague] would come out, and it was the end of my semester. I had completed the semester. I told [colleague] "[…] we had [high scores]… I disclosed [my disability] to [colleague]. The first response was "how are you going to be able to teach?" I [said], "you've seen me all semester, and now it's December."

Camille also felt that students were very helpful in helping her overcome the challenges brought upon by her disability when she said: "Students, frankly, were marvelous. They were supportive. They were…allies…99.9% respectful. Others? Not so much." Camille implied that students expressed greater DE to her than her colleague.

Summary. All faculty demonstrated a credible desire to assist SWD and students with LD. This positive attitude was the basis for their use of disability etiquette with students. Almost all faculty practiced DE but had never heard of the concept or its application to SWD and students with LD. Once I explained DE, it became clear that all faculty understood it as related to their efforts to make their classes a positive experience. Faculty wanted students to feel comfortable in their surroundings and reported specific attempts to extend that feeling to SWD and students with LD. Faculty also spoke positively about how students without disabilities were inclusive of SWD and students with LD. Faculty interviews yielded many concrete examples showing how their general attitude translated into positive interactions with and helping SWD and students with LD, inside and outside of class.

Theme 3: Policy not fitting circumstances. The FCCC *Faculty Handbook*

includes a description of this institutional policy for Disability Support Services that

faculty are bound to observe:

> [FCCC] is committed to providing support to students with disabilities
>
> through its Disability Support Services at [number removed]. To take
>
> advantage of these services, students voluntarily disclose pertinent
>
> information to the Center for Academic & Student Success (CASS). The
>
> Coordinator of Disability Support Services will then schedule a
>
> confidential appointment with the student to review documentation and
>
> arrange instructional accommodations, as appropriate. Faculty members
>
> may not recommend or refer a student to Disability Support Services,
>
> unless the student independently requests referral. A complete guide
>
> (ACCESS) for students, faculty and staff can be obtained on the Faculty
>
> Advising portal page.

All study participants seemed aware that students are to initiate DSS services at their own

discretion and that faculty may not suggest DSS services or refer any student to DSS

without a student request. It is faculty prerogative to make alternate suggestions, such as

tutoring, so as not to imply that they notice a possible disability.

While no faculty mentioned the existence of this faculty handbook, four faculty

stated their own interpretations of the policy without mentioning it. Oliver said, "We're

not allowed to ask them, you know, they have to self-identify to us. [Asking them] that's

not allowed." Debbie expressed the same awareness of student responsibility to disclose,

"It's up the person who has a disability to disclose." Quinn plainly stated, "I know you

can't say anything to the students" and Zoe put it this way, "[We're] not really allowed, if that's the right word, to ask." This data suggests that although faculty did not mention the policy, some were aware of what was not permitted during interaction with SWD and students with LD.

Some faculty raised the issue of student behavior and privacy. There are occasions when students self-disclose but have no paperwork. While Zoe was aware that some students had difficulty asking for accommodations. She said, "I had a student…she failed the first semester and so we worked together… I think she had a learning disability but she didn't give me a letter and she never said 'I have a learning disability…I have some problems.'" Debbie recounted a similar experience:

> I had a student once who had…[a] prosthetic leg…and she didn't have
>
> the form from the office…I don't know whether she was being honest or
>
> not but she would constantly have these doctor's notes that would excuse
>
> her from class ….I was like "If you don't have a note for me,
>
> from…DSS, I cannot treat you differently from other students.

When referring to a student with dyslexia, Fran said, "I have students who also say they have something documented but don't have the form. So, that makes it even more problematic if they tell me they are dyslexic but they don't have a form." She was not sure how to handle accommodations with those students. Fran also raised a particular concern that reflected uncertainty about the categorization of disabilities. "I've also had students with mental illness, I don't know if that falls under the disabilities umbrella. But students with mental illness, that is really difficult… [because they] don't give me a form, they self [disclose]."

The examples provided show the challenges faced by faculty regarding the policy and maintaining the privacy of each student. The policy prohibits faculty from asking questions of SWD and students with LD regarding disabilities. Regardless of the policy instituted by FCCC, faculty generally told me they respected the rights of SWD and students with LD with regard to confidentiality.

Respect for confidentiality. A number of faculty explicitly mentioned students' right to privacy. Oliver simply said, "That's the student's own private business." Vivian also noted that SWD and students with LD rely on faculty to assist them and respect their needs. She also stated that she encourages students to use DSS, noting her practice of reassuring them about confidentiality:

> Remind them that it is a private issue, that even when they do go and
>
> they get a letter, it's between just their instructor, themselves, and the
>
> Disability Office…that gives them a sense of comfort…I always like to
>
> remind them of that because I think they would feel a little bit put on the
>
> spot.

Becky also appreciated the student perspective when she said, "You know, people don't want to be singled out, you try to treat everybody the same as much as possible…with them still feeling like they're getting the help they need." When talking about SWD and students with LD who do have DSS accommodations, Fran referred to respecting confidentiality in her classroom practices:

> Don't tell the class, (laugh) "This kid gets extra time." Try and be as
>
> subtle as possible, I would never say something in front of the whole
>
> class, I would go up to a student or I'd pull them out into the hallway

and say "You know, we're having an exam next week, do you want

your extra time?"

There was one faculty member who did not seem completely committed to

respecting the privacy of students. Although she understood the essence of

confidentiality, Samantha questioned the constraint on faculty created by the privacy.

Samantha said she is respectful towards students with LD and is willing to take extra

steps to ensure they are not singled out or embarrassed because of their learning

disability, but thought that SWD privacy is unnecessary, since it is obvious to everyone in

the class:

> With the physical disability…they know they are in that condition.
>
> Okay? And it's pretty hard to hide it… So, I don't think we have to
>
> dance around…all these euphemisms, right?...visually impaired, blind,
>
> can't see…they all mean the same thing and I don't think anything is
>
> insulting. I think a lot of times...that ethically correct position has us
>
> kinda going in the whirlwind, you know?.... Respect should be the main
>
> principle.

Samantha made it clear that she knew to not invade the privacy of SWD and students

with LD but added, "We're not talking about how you became blind or…the deep dark

secrets…we're stating an obvious fact here. I don't think we need to run around the room

and have a cloak behind it." She considered attempts at hiding the obvious and using

discretion when providing accommodations for SWD, as unnecessary. Yet, there were

other examples of faculty who questioned the viability of the confidentiality policy at

FCCC and described how it created complications in the faculty-student relationship.

Faculty with their hands tied. Many faculty members had distinct ideas about how the prohibition against raising the topic of disability with a student affected their ability to reach out. Some felt it tied their hands. As Yvonne said, "I mean I kind of feel like there's not much [we can do]…if they don't self-disclose, I can't do anything about it…I can't." Debbie made a similar comment. "It's very frustrating if I suspect that a student may have a learning disability…I can't say anything…feel like that's not my place to say something, you know? … I'm not a licensed professional who understands what they need." Fran felt held back by not being able to ask a student if they have a disability, when on some occasions she has inferred that a student has some type of learning disability. She said, "I don't think I would be so bold to ask a particular student for a form, although sometimes I've wanted to [laughing]…. This kid has gotta have something going on."

Quinn felt the inability to tell a student to approach DSS was problematic for both faculty and student. She spoke about one student who visited her office on a weekly basis for concerns that could have probably been addressed by DSS through accommodations:

> I had an older student…a vet…that whole semester he was in every
>
> single office hour, and he never had any disclosed disability…it was the
>
> same questions every single time…and he wasn't getting it and he
>
> wasn't able to really put it together…just trying as best as you can
>
> patiently to work with that student, sometimes that doesn't work. Again,
>
> suggesting going somewhere else, like the tutoring center. He also spent
>
> some of his days and time there.

Quinn realized this student needed help. However, she was held back by the confidentiality policy from directly asking them about having a learning disability. In the end, she abided by college policy.

Similar to when faculty found workarounds to address potential disabilities in the face of insufficient training as noted in Theme 1, faculty identified positive, somewhat subtle practices they use to work around the "don't ask" prohibition. Faculty discussed their interactive practices, sometimes meant to convey that a student needs extra assistance. Becky, for instance, said, "Have conversations, like 'how are you doing?'… 'are you feeling that like you are grasping everything that's occurring in the classroom?' …it's tricky." Ben mentioned his ability to extract information regarding the past use of accommodations, without implying the student has a disability. Ben mentioned a similar approach, adding, "I can talk to the student and say, 'We have a tutoring center to help you.' I can [say], 'We have a writing center if you need help with writing papers.'"

Two faculty members expressed uncertainty about the specifics of what can and cannot be said during interactions with students. Becky expressed respect for confidentiality but added, "I'm not even sure if you are allowed to say, "Did you receive accommodations in high school?" You're running around a little circle trying to get them to tell you something, so that you can make a suggestion." Becky also raised the legal issue by commenting that she does not want to be held liable for saying anything against campus policy to her students. Debbie implied an uncertainty similar to Becky's, saying about one student interaction, "I'm not supposed to be direct about it."

However, Debbie was the only faculty member who said that she might have violated the confidentiality policy. On the last day of class, Debbie reported, she asked

the student about his experiences with accommodations in high school. She waited until the end of the course because she knew he was going to fail:

And I wound up asking him at the end of class, because he didn't pass the class…"Did you ever have like an IEP in high school?" I don't know if I'm allowed to do that. If I'm not allowed to do that, don't put this in your report (laugh). I said, "Did you have an IEP in high school." He said "Yes." And I said, "Did they ever do anything for you that you thought was helpful?" and he said "Yes." And he told me that got extra time and I said "Oh, well did you know that we have an office here that does that too?" and I said, "The information is on the syllabus…you could go contact them if you think that'll help you."

The "need" to know. Several faculty identified another troubling aspect of confidentiality. When a student presents an accommodation letter, their diagnosis for needing the accommodations is kept confidential. There is no information about diagnosis noted on the accommodation request letters presented to faculty. Faculty are not entitled to know the diagnosis. Fran explained the issue this way:

Well, the problem is they don't tell us on the form what the disability is. So, the student gives us the form usually first, second week of class saying that they have been diagnosed with something and telling us what we need to do [for accommodations]. But we are not told what the problem is…unless the student discloses, I have no idea what the issue is.

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Similarly, Camille noted not knowing why a student receives a certain accommodation, "So, I would imagine that some professors…could be in the dark as to what this accommodation, you know, the reason for this accommodation unless the student confides."

Some faculty were simply curious and some believed they would be more effective teachers if they knew the diagnosis. Oliver wished for greater transparency with affected students, saying:

> If the student's in a wheelchair or a student has trouble, they can't write, they had a stroke, or some medical problem, you generally can see that. On the other hand, with learning disabilities, it might take a while for me to realize that this student has cognitive impairment, the student has some type of learning disability…You won't know it on the first day of class, is what I'm trying to say. As with the physical disability, most of the times it's visible, so you can see it.

Fran also expressed curiosity towards specific information on disabilities. She said, "I wish I knew what the disability was." Ben also felt it was important to know the specific disability of each student when they present a letter for accommodations. Ben said, "It's not always easy to tell students will be [LD]…cause the letter doesn't say it [which disability], right? And you just have to infer…or the students sometimes will volunteer or sometimes they'll just show you this letter, right?"

Yvonne also stated that she has no knowledge of what type of disability affects each student with LD. She said, "I don't ever know though what…. They don't disclose to me what disability they have." Still, Yvonne reported providing accommodations to

visually impaired students who required larger font on notes and handouts and many accommodations to students with LD.

Becky believed that not knowing the specific disability of the student was affecting her approach to teaching. She said, "It's been difficult in some cases, trying to help people when I'm not quite sure what's going on, but trying my best." Zoe felt the same. "Those students have really special needs and sometimes I felt like I was in the dark (laugh)…Am I giving them the right information? Am I telling them things that are really going to help them?" Debbie also expressed frustration with having no knowledge of the disabilities when she said, "I'm not licensed, I don't know, I can't diagnose."

Some faculty reported making assumptions or inferences about the diagnoses of their SWD and students with LD. Yvonne was frustrated that specific disability information was denied her, even though the law states that students do not have to disclose their disability to the public. Yvonne made an assumption that one of her students had multiple disabilities. She said, "[The student] also, I think, also had in her request, extra time on exams. But I also don't know because they don't tell us what their disability is, they just tell us the accommodations. I don't know if she had another disability as well, or if that was related to…her first disability." Yvonne maintains a cautious approach to interaction with all students; compliance is her leading motivator. Although she makes inferences, Yvonne indicated reluctance to say so:

> I feel like I'm a little cautious about saying anything that would be
>
> interpreted as me diagnosing. I mean I can recognize patterns in writing.
>
> In the past few years, it seems like more students are coming in with
>
> accommodations.

Ben encouraged greater transparency between SWD, students with LD, and faculty. He suggested that students should speak of their disabilities openly. But he also observed that confidentiality might be something ingrained from prior experiences. Ben said:

> I think it would be good for students …[to] talk about whatever their own disabilities are and what they need but maybe it's been instilled in them not to change [their process of receiving help]…or they learned from experience not to.

An example reported by Camille affirms a similar point of view:

> I've had students with physical disabilities who disclose to the class or who were just visibly disabled…one student in particular, who was an amputee…her approach was to discuss…she wanted to…once she felt comfortable…take the questions that students might have. And that's the…young woman she is.

As stated earlier, Debbie took it upon herself to engage in a conversation with a student regarding their disability. Debbie said she is supportive of giving accommodations to students but is frustrated by the inability to speak candidly with those she thinks may be SWD or students with LD.

Summary. The college has a policy that prevents faculty from referring SWD and students with LD to the DSS office, unless the student self-identifies. Almost all faculty were aware of this policy. Faculty were aware of the basic tenets of confidentiality regarding SWD and students with LD. However, there were some faculty who felt it was unnecessary to hide from the obvious physical disabilities of some students. Some faculty felt knowing the disability of each student would somehow elicit a more customizable

faculty effort towards student success. Others expressed a more selfish, need-to-know stance on the disability of each student. Situations where faculty felt the need to know the disability of each student raise questions about values of teaching, learning, and respectful interaction. These aspirations to know have superseded the silence brought about by the injunction to practice strict confidentiality about SWD and students with LD.

Theme 4: Experiences with DSS. Of 11 English faculty in the research sample, five out of the 11 made positive comments about the administration or staff of DSS. Two out of the five reported overall satisfaction with the service provided by the Director of the DSS office, while two others out of the five faculty singled out specific staff members. One faculty member out of the five had praise for both the Director of DSS and the staff. On the other hand, three faculty out of the 11 were only critical of the Director of DSS, and two others had difficulty only with the staff members. Out of the six faculty who expressed overall negative opinions about DSS, one was unhappy with services provided by both the Director of DSS and the staff members.

Director of DSS. Quinn, Oliver, and Yvonne praised DSS and the overall service the office provided. Quinn had praise for the administration of DSS, saying "[The Director] did a good job in locating those interpreters." Oliver summarized it this way, "We have a Disability Support Services center that does their best in giving the students some accommodations, such as giving extra time on exams, giving them extra time to complete their assignments." Yvonne gave an example of how clear DSS accommodation instructions are, making it easy for her to fulfill the needs they outline. She said:

If [the Director] says they need the accommodation, whether it's having a note taker in my class or they need everything to be in really big font, then I make everything in really big font; if [student] has a test, I'll give extra time on the test.

Four faculty felt there was room for improvement in the administration of DSS. In addition to the concerns about training and policy addressed in themes above, they expressed specific concerns regarding the interactions with the Director of DSS. Faculty brought up situations in which they sought help and advice from DSS. In each case, they reported feeling no more confident about handling special circumstances than they had before their conversations. For example, Fran had an in-class challenge with a disruptive student who had requested accommodations. Insofar as the student handbook clearly prohibited disruptive action in class, she sought assistance from DSS on how to respectfully handle this situation. The result, she said, was that DSS offered, "Very little help. I don't want to say no help, but [there] was very little help" leaving Fran to figure it out "on my own." She added:

> I had to look at him, focus him at the beginning of class…."Don't call out. If you want to talk, raise your hand. If I don't call on you, you can't say anything." And then again, an hour in, I had to do that again. I was kind of floundering there. I had to figure it out by myself.

Recounting an experience of seeking advice, Zoe found the DSS director somewhat brusque:

> Umm—what's the word. It wasn't that [the Director] wasn't courteous….[They] knew the terminology, [they] would explain something to me, but it was like 'Okay, this is how it's done, the students have to

contact you'…and you never got the feeling that [there] was flexible. Okay,

that's my perspective, probably other people say 'Oh, [they] made you feel

like you could call [them] and whatever.'

Zoe added, "I don't know how to run an office like that, I just know that to me, that it

was very impersonal, and you are working with students." She also had some

reservations about how well DSS prepared students:

Sometimes I felt the students didn't know what they were supposed to do

but not because they weren't given the information, because they were

simply *given* the information, and not really allowed, if that's the

right word, to, you know, ask…. (Sigh). I don't know what is it...If there

was support, there was support that was very traditional in the sense that

"This is what you have to do, here are the, you know, guidelines," that's it.

Samantha talked about a negative encounter with the DSS office on an occasion

when a reader did not come to class to assist a visually impaired student. The student

turned out to be in the wrong class. On the way to figuring that out, however, Samantha

called on DSS twice, at the start of class and again during break, reporting that the reader

had still not come. Samantha thought she had done the right thing when she contacted

DSS on the student's behalf. The DSS director had another focus:

[The Director]…needed to point out to me that I was not supposed to do that. I

was not supposed to mention…. I felt that [the Director] was being a little

ridiculous because I wasn't exposing anything that wasn't pretty obvious.…

[They were] admonishing me because I asked if his reader was in the

classroom…how else was I going to identify?

Samantha was frustrated because, instead of a positive response to being courteous and accommodating for her student and helping her with a solution, she was reprimanded for violating college policy regarding privacy of accommodations.

As stated earlier, Camille had requested training of the Director of DSS, but a visit was refused. These kinds of negative experiences interacting with the DSS office appear to have compounded problems with inconsistent and uninformative training for working with SWD and students with LD. However, in contrast, some faculty were satisfied with the services provided by the DSS staff.

Staff providing services to students. Quinn, Ben, and Vivian had praise for the performance of DSS staff. Quinn noted how several of them worked to ensure student success. She said:

> Students have had note takers in the classrooms, which I think for some of the students has worked really well. I've also had students who have scribes, so they actually write down what the student says. And I've had students read to students, the exams, and then the students take them.

Quinn also singled out sign language services, when she said, "I've enjoyed working with the sign language interpreters, I think we have really good sign language interpreters, here at the college." Ben said his teaching had benefitted from suggestions made by a sign language interpreter. In addition, he mentioned arrangements of extra time for testing, saying, "They're usually pretty good about it." Vivian explained how discreetly aides and staff maintained their presence while working to assist students with LD. She said:

If [students with LD] were given someone to work with, then that person [note taker would sit] not necessarily next to them either, but sitting in a different way where they would just be taking notes. But, the interaction with me would simply be just as a regular student. Often we would speak after class.

However, not all faculty felt the performance of in-class DSS staff was positive. Three faculty cited different deficiencies. Becky, for instance, discussed a signer providing poor quality signs for a hearing impaired student. Describing the signer as "completely ineffectual," she said, "I had a hearing-impaired student and there was a signer...she was not good. And I knew that and I felt bad for the student."

Note takers were an issue for some faculty. Debbie mentioned a student who needed a note taker but was not provided one by DSS, leaving Debbie to solve the problem. She said:

They did not have a note taker available for her....The solution we came up with was she would just take pictures. I would put notes on the board and give the PowerPoints to her and she would just take pictures of things.... She did fine in the class so it wound-up being OK, but...I sort of felt like "Oh, well maybe you could just hire another person that's available?"

Debbie also noted a concern at the other end of the spectrum. She was troubled by overinvolved note takers, telling me:

The note taker in that particular situation was fine. And my only issue with the note taker [was that he] sometimes forgot that he was a note taker, would become a student in class and start to answer the questions (laugh)....I was [saying],

"Like, this is not for you, it's for everyone else in the class" kind of thing. But otherwise, it went fine.

Debbie also detailed a more profoundly disturbing instance of a note taker exceeding role boundaries:

> They're getting too involved in the work for the student….proofreading the student's essay…helping them write the essay or giving them ideas. In English 101 [College Composition I], they take this Writing Proficiency Exam at the end of the semester…. Once I had a student on this campus who wanted to take it in a separate space, which he was entitled to. There was no proctor that could proctor the exam, but that the note taker would serve as the proctor….The note taker was also the [same person] helping the student throughout the semester, and so I thought that that was a problem…there should have been an outside person proctoring the exam.

Here, Debbie's concern was about a student potentially having an unfair advantage. She added, "I don't know how much extra help that student received."

Fran echoed Debbie with respect to inadequate service to students with LD. Noting sporadic attendance of note takers, Fran gave an example from one of her classes:

> A note taker…showed up in about week five… then maybe week seven…then I didn't see her anymore…it was not consistent and not really helpful. I've never had a note taker come in the beginning and stay the duration of the semester.

Fran was the only faculty member who was critical of both the Director of DSS and the DSS staff.

Summary. Some faculty praised the Director of DSS and the quality of services provided by DSS staff, but there were also concerns about deficiencies. While some faculty felt that the Director of DSS performed their duties well, others felt that they were not easily approachable for assistance or simply fell short of responding in a helpful way. Faculty members were similarly divided about note takers and signers. Some faculty praised their hard work for SWD and students with LD, while others described dissatisfaction with the participation level of those employees, which ranged from overactive to absent.

The documents provided by DSS provided further data regarding the types of accommodations provided at FCCC.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is a stable research method used to analyze specific text data (Yin, 2018). The documents used in this study were supplied directly from DSS at FCCC. However, the documents provided by DSS were not the exact ones originally planned for this study. Originally, DSS was to supply 25 de-identified letters requesting accommodations that SWD and students with LD give to faculty. However, I was informed by DSS that printed copies of accommodation letters are not accessible by any of the DSS staff. The letters are prepared in a process that occurs only once the student asks for accommodations for the first time at the college. These requests are not updated unless the student contacts DSS.

The students' process for obtaining accommodations is straightforward. Disability Support Services meets with SWD and students with LD and reviews their individual needs. The DSS office then inputs this information into the student's portal page. It is the

responsibility of the student to print the letter requesting accommodations for the

individual faculty members, at their discretion. For this reason, the DSS office provided

a de-identified list of SWD and students with LD and their accommodations for the fall

2019 semester.

The DSS Coordinator provided 24 (N=24) de-identified profiles, which were sent

to me via email. The data was assembled onto one spreadsheet containing abbreviations.

The abbreviations were explained in a separate document. The categories for coding

included disability type, accommodation start date by year, and specific accommodation

requests.

Disability type. The frequency of the codes for each disability type were counted.

Figure 2. illustrates the disability types within the sample of students with learning

disabilities in comparison to other types of disabilities. The documentation from DSS

(N=24) revealed there were 14 students with learning disabilities compared to 10 students

with other types of disabilities.
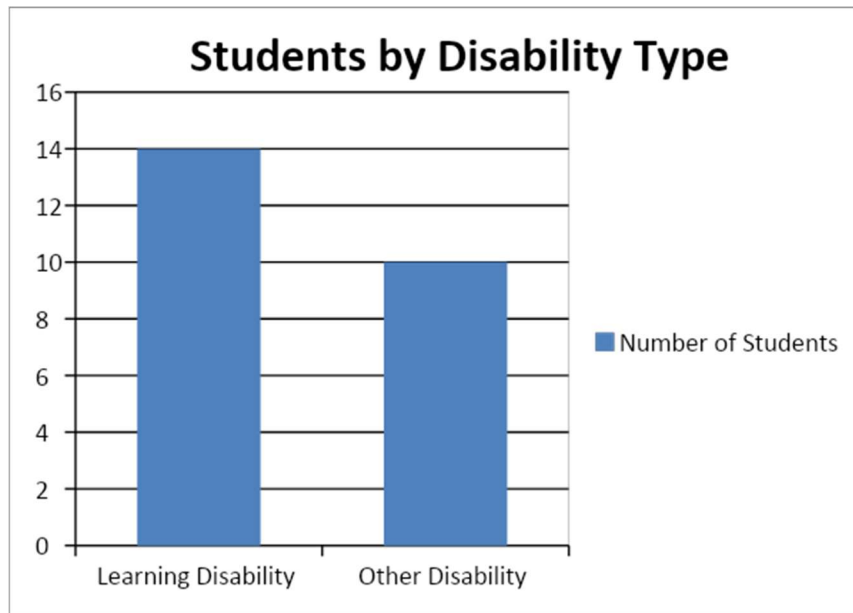
Figure 2. Students by Disability Type

Accommodation requests. The DSS at FCCC prepared a de-identified list of student documentation request letters from 24 students. In addition, there were eleven English faculty interviewed for this study who reported that SWD and students with LD would bring them accommodation request letters. The content of the letters received generally resembled the content stated by English faculty. Faculty confirmed that students presented their letters within the first few weeks of class. Faculty confirmed much of the content from the letters and stated that the letters were generic in nature. Although a student's disability was never disclosed in an accommodation letter, the specific accommodations required were included.

The frequency of the codes for each accommodation was counted. Accommodation requests made in letters presented to faculty are noted in Figure 3. There were 14 standard accommodations requested amongst the 24 SWD and students with LD, which were requested 97 times. The most requested accommodation from the sample was

the "Usage of Calculator", which was requested 19 times. This was an interesting observation as the faculty sample included English faculty exclusively, where this accommodation is of little to no use for their education.

The second highest requested accommodation was the request for "Extended Time on Written Assignments", which was requested 18 times. This accommodation was applicable for students enrolled in *ENG 101-College Composition I*, as students have written assignments as a major requirement of the course. The third highest requested accommodation was "Extra Time on Examinations with Separate Area", which was requested 15 times. This accommodation would require that SWD or students with LD take the exam with the faculty member at a separate time and location or within the DSS office.
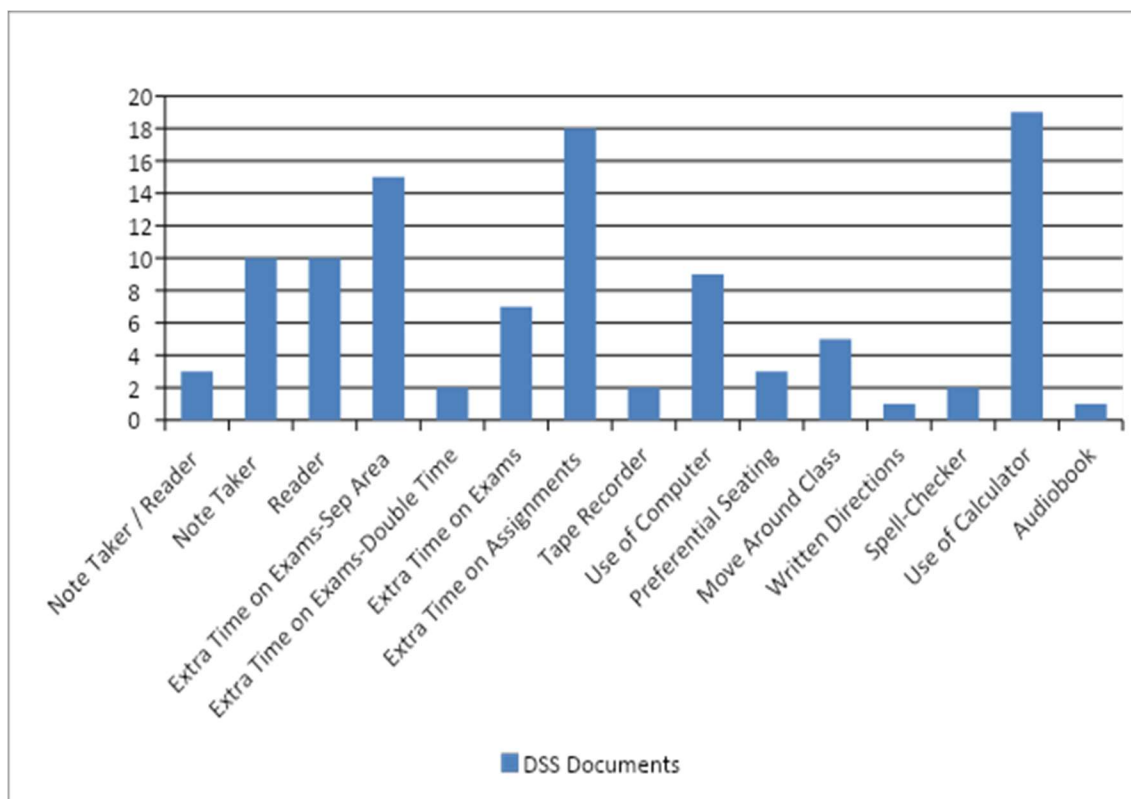
Figure 3. Accommodation Requests Made in Letters Presented to Faculty.

The data analysis occurred when I triangulated common traits of the data between the interviews, document analysis, and my journal entries. The coded interview data was compared to the coded accommodation documents provided by DSS. My journal entries have provided an opportunity to reflect on faculty interviews and the DSS accommodation letters.

Comparison of accommodations. The accommodations listed in the accommodation request letters were compared to those discovered from the interviews. Below is a comparison of the accommodations listed in the letters prepared by DSS in comparison to the accommodations mentioned by faculty during the interviews. Figure 4.

illustrates a comparison of the accommodations discovered in the accommodation request

letters in compared to those mentioned by faculty to SWD and students with LD.
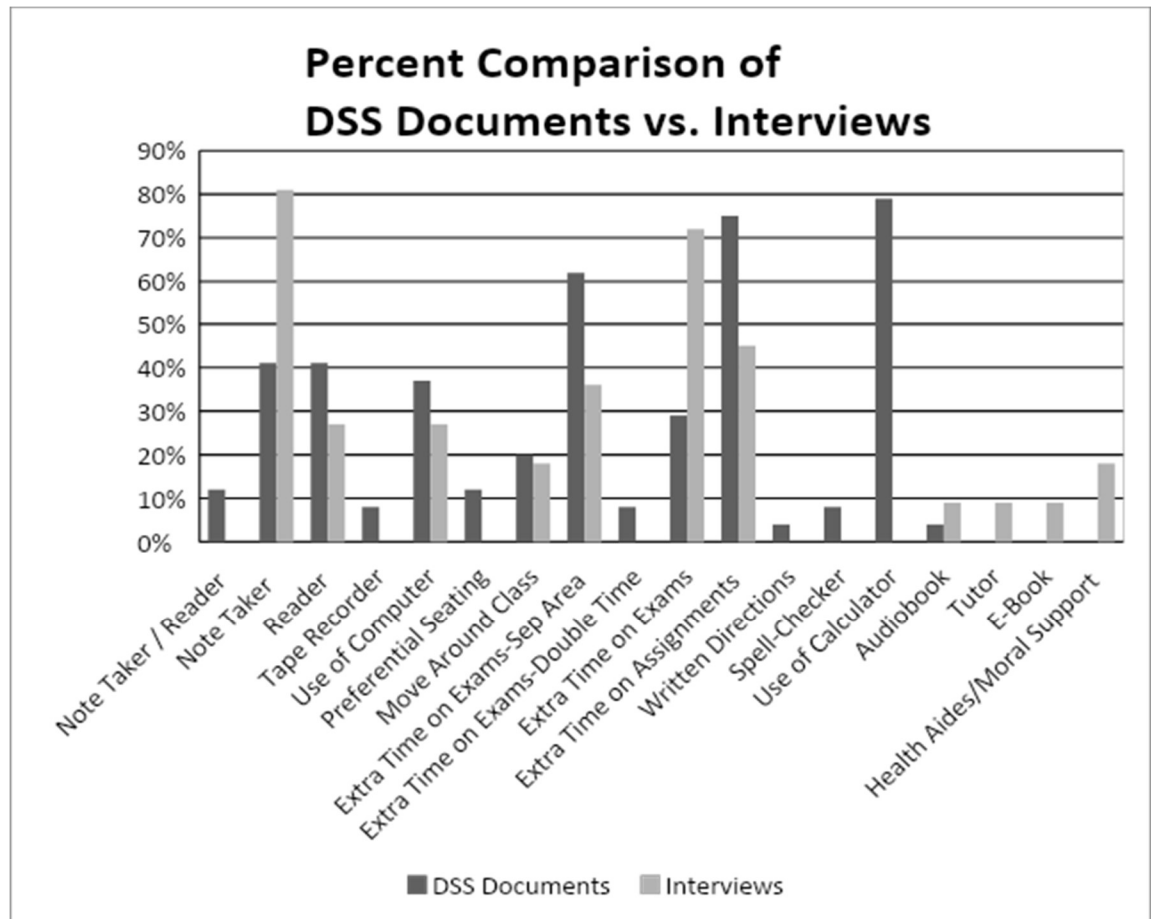
Figure 4. Accommodations Requested by Students vs. Mentioned by English Faculty

Faculty. There were eight accommodations in common between both data

sources. There were six accommodations discovered from the DSS paperwork that were

never mentioned in the interviews of English faculty: combined note taker and reader,

double time on exams, use of a tape recorder, written directions, spell checker, and use of

a calculator. These accommodations were never facilitated by faculty. The latter is understandable as there is no need for a calculator in an *ENG 101-College Composition I* class.

There were some accommodations facilitated by faculty that were not listed in the accommodations paperwork provided by DSS: Those three accommodations were: in-class tutor, E-book, and health aides/moral support accommodations. These accommodations were not mentioned in the sample of documents provided by DSS. However, these three accommodations were observed by English faculty in their classrooms.

Conclusion

The participants in this study were all full-time, tenured English faculty who were teaching at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I* in the academic year preceding this study. My goal for this study was to explore English faculty opinions of SWD and students with LD, especially with training, providing accommodations, and disability etiquette. The overall findings of this study indicate faculty are willing to help their students, but face some significant challenges explained through four emerging themes.

Theme one summarized the levels of training received by faculty. Even though more than half of them had received training at the institution, it had occurred on very infrequent basis. With a lack of any training for interaction with SWD and students with LD, they were still knowledgeable with procedures for helping students.

Theme two addressed positive faculty attitudes and disability etiquette. Faculty were respectful and empathetic to the needs of their students. The basis for this positivity

was disability etiquette. The implicit use of DE by all the faculty proved that the entire sample was receptive to needs of students.

Theme three summarized how the college policy is not properly fitting the circumstances of the faculty and student relationship. Faculty felt they should be able to suggest accommodations openly to students who they feel would benefit from them. Some faculty expressed great curiosity in knowing the specific disability of all students, thinking they could teach those students more effectively if they knew this information.

Theme four addressed faculty experiences with DSS. Faculty expressed mixed opinions regarding the director of the department. Some faculty expressed praise for the director while others were critical of the director with regard to their operation of the department and interaction with faculty. Some faculty praised the hard work of DSS staff while others were very critical of their perceived level of service the staff provided students. Overall, faculty felt that DSS could do more for SWD and students with LD. The four themes described faculty perceptions of SWD and students with LD. The findings confirm that faculty have a strong foundation of implied disability etiquette, which has made them realize their relationship with DSS should be evaluated at the institution.

The data analysis incorporated interviews, document analysis, and my journal entries. Coded interview data and coded accommodation documents were compared. Journal entries also allowed me to reflect on faculty interviews and the DSS accommodation letters.

In the next chapter, I further explain my theoretical propositions and rival explanations for each of the research questions. I also address the relation of data to

theory. Lastly, I offer recommendations for a number of areas including further research, for faculty, and for FCCC leadership, while discussing the limitations of this study.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore full-time English faculty perceptions, experiences, knowledge, and practices regarding training, accommodations, and disability etiquette towards SWD and students with LD. A single site, common case design is appropriate for this study as English faculty are commonly found within all institutions of higher education (Yin, 2018). The study included interviews of 11 tenured English faculty employed full time by FCCC for a minimum of five years who had taught at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I* in the prior academic year. *ENG 101-College Composition I* is a for-credit, General Education course required to earn any degree at FCCC. It is one of the most populated courses with several dozen sections running each semester. English faculty in particular teach a high number of matriculated students (Rossman & Rallis 2012). This is the specific sample, part of the common single case study design (Yin, 2018).

Research questions developed out of my review of the literature and my career as a full- time faculty member. These research questions and sub-questions formed the foundation of this study:

1. What types of training do English faculty receive for interacting with SWD?

    a. What is the training regarding students with LD?

2. How do faculty provide accommodations for SWD?

    a. How do faculty provide accommodations for students with LD?

3. What is English faculty knowledge of disability etiquette for SWD?

    a. What is English faculty understanding of disability etiquette when used

with students with LD?

During interviews, faculty participants discussed their experiences with SWD and students with LD. Four themes emerged from coding and analysis of the interview data: training, faculty attitudes and disability etiquette, the fit between policy and circumstances, and faculty experiences with DSS. Chapter 4 used data from the faculty interviews and DSS documents to present key findings relevant to these themes. This chapter further refines that discussion by connecting the data to both theory and the overarching propositions and rival explanations outlined in Chapter 3. This approach enabled analysis that supports the Theory of Justice (Rawls 1971, 2001) and Ethic of Care (Noddings, 1984) which were used to frame this study (Yin, 2018).

The three research questions and sub-questions are answered using data and explained by connecting the data to theory, overarching propositions, and rival explanations noted in Chapter 3. Using data from the faculty interviews and DSS paperwork, key findings were presented in Chapter 4. The key findings provided data for answering the research questions and addressed the propositions and rival explanations. I also explored faculty knowledge of disability etiquette during interactions with SWD and students with LD.

Faculty in this study (N=11) maintained good relations with SWD and students with LD. Most faculty stated their interaction was free of problems, but there were still many instances of unclear moments and doubtful actions. Much of the confusion and frustration could be attributed to a lack of consistent training for interaction with SWD and students with LD at FCCC. Many faculty expressed interest in obtaining more professional development to better serve SWD and students with LD. Faculty did not

hesitate to express their willingness to learn more about SWD and students with LD. The

research questions, propositions, and rival explanations in this study are noted below.

Research Questions with Propositions and Rival Explanations

Research question one. *What types of training do English faculty receive for interacting with SWD?*

Overarching proposition. Faculty have no formal training for interacting with

SWD. However, they are willing to complete professional development at FCCC. The

findings in this study support most of this overarching proposition.

Laws provide equal access to SWD, yet SWD often have trouble transitioning

into higher education (Beale, 2005; Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Jones 2002; Lynch &

Gussel, 1996; Sniatecki et al., 2015; Van Noy et al., 2013). Faculty knowledge of

approaches for working with SWD could reduce the stress SWD experience during this

process. Professional development has been viewed as a way to help full-time faculty

navigate interaction with SWD and students with LD (McCallister et al., 2014). The

ADA does not require that colleges facilitate mandatory training for faculty who will

interact with SWD (Thompson & Bethea, 1997) but the HEOA of 2008 (HEOA, 2008)

does mandate such training based on the idea that if faculty are not aware of what to do

when SWD require accommodations, they are not ready to provide the best experience

for their students.

The data in this study showed minimal attempts to provide professional

development about SWD to FCCC faculty. In fact, most FCCC faculty had difficulty

remembering their last professional development for interaction with SWD. Only four

could recall any training at all. Quinn said, "I remember College Service Day once we

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had…one session with DSS." Yvonne noted, "I think there was at the College Service Day, once there was a workshop from DSS." These faculty had received training only during one College Service Day, a bi-annual event. Seven faculty had no professional development for interaction with SWD. Fran stated this plainly when she said, "I've had zero training," adding that she has "asked for training." Debbie asked her Dean for professional development but was refused. She said, "The division faculty have expressed…wanting to have [a DSS representative] visit our meeting, but a visit was refused." Zoe said, "that [DSS] office has not attempted… even in my division when asked to come and speak to faculty." When faculty communicated willingness to complete training for interaction with SWD, they reported that FCCC either ignored or denied their requests.

Like participants in other studies (Hong & Himmel, 2009; Vasek, 2005), FCCC English faculty believe that they do not have enough knowledge about interacting with SWD but are willing to attend professional development to reduce the knowledge gap and are committed to learning how to provide necessary services for SWD (Noddings, 2013). Faculty felt that professional development for working with SWD could improve their interactive skill (Cook et al., 2009; Donato, 2008). Many faculty reported they wanted to assist all SWD with their needs. Zoe said, "I wanted them to succeed. So, I was willing to help." Debbie said, "I've had to pick things up" and other faculty reported experimenting with different techniques. Like educators in prior studies (Zhang et al., 2010), faculty felt compelled to offer assistance to SWD despite the lack of professional development. At the same time, that prompted faculty to express frustration at FCCC.

These participants were interested in being better prepared to work with SWD. Eight faculty noted their interest in further professional development for interaction with SWD. Zoe said, "I would love to have *any* kind of training …. workshops… something." Quinn also expressed strong interest in professional development when she said, "I wish there was more training, I wish we had more… I don't know…just… someone come in and, and teach us a little bit more about…the Disability Support Services." Debbie commented that "It would be really helpful if there was some sort of strategy that I could share with them, like 'this might help you.'"

Professional development for working with SWD could potentially decrease student hesitancy about self-disclosing and increase student retention. Faculty members have noted that training would create a more welcoming environment for SWD and could reduce potential faculty barriers and fears (Cook et al., 2009). The faculty expressed a high interest in professional development because they cared. Faculty were motivated to care and knew the difference between caring and not caring (Noddings, 2013). Practicing an Ethic of Care means faculty are not simply justified in providing accommodations, but feel personally obligated to do so (Noddings, 2013). If faculty did not care about SWD and students with LD, they would not have been asking for more training.

Rival explanation. Faculty received training to interact with SWD on a yearly, monthly or weekly basis and were welcoming and supportive of professional development. The evidence offered minimal support the first part but fully supported the second part of this claim, as is evident from the discussion above. In some prior studies, professional development was regularly available to full time faculty who were interacting with SWD (McCallister et al., 2014). That was simply not the case at FCCC.

Adequate training has been shown to be a necessity for college faculty (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005). Evidence from this study shows that FCCC English faculty have not had and are not receiving regular training for interaction with SWD. Quinn and Yvonne specifically noted that training was offered "once" during their tenure at the college. Similar to prior research, faculty in this study would like professional development on providing accommodations to SWD (Vasek, 2005). Debbie said, "I think it would be helpful."

Faculty generally expressed dissatisfaction with the content of training FCCC had offered. They wanted to be ready for SWD and students with LD and favored more training for interaction with them. Faculty have not felt themselves to be on firm ground regarding their responsibilities. As Fran observed, "We're really just kind of thrown in there and don't know how best to help them." Further, they thought more education from the college would positively affect their own perceptions about accommodations, a finding supported by other studies (Bourke et al., 2000; Murray et al., 2008), including those that note the importance of faculty being aware of their own expectations during interactions with SWD and students with LD (Chan & Bauer, 2014).

Research question one (a). *What is the training regarding students with LD?*

Overarching proposition. Faculty professional development concentrated on interacting exclusively with SWD, which may prevent faculty from learning how to identify, guide, and assist students with LD. My findings largely refuted this overarching proposition. While faculty were never prevented from identifying, guiding, or assisting students with LD, their training for interaction with students with LD was lacking, at best.

Although only two faculty members could recall receiving professional development about working solely with SWD, six had training on working solely with students with LD. Three of those faculty had done their professional development with external sources. Five faculty members had no training for interacting with students with LD.

Many faculty insinuated that students with LD had more difficulty at FCCC in comparison to SWD. This feeling was largely due to the invisible nature of disabilities for students with LD. Participants generally responded that they cannot tell the difference between SWD and students with LD unless there is some sort of equipment or DSS staff present in the classroom. Faculty noted that they could not assume a student had a LD and were held back from raising the possibility directly for fear that they might have misinterpreted the mannerisms of students. The fear of incorrectly assuming a student has a disability left faculty feeling especially helpless in assisting students with LD.

Based on evidence, faculty are not completely prepared for interaction with either SWD or students with LD. Although Ben had received professional development from the DSS office, he was challenged by his experiences with both sets of students. Ben said, "I think in some cases I've learned, informally like in the case of students who were deaf or who had sign interpreters and there…you learn [on] the job." Specific encounters with SWD and students with LD were not addressed during his training. Debbie also expressed uncertainty about interacting with students with LD when she said, "I'm not licensed, I don't know…..I can't diagnose." The invisible disabilities were simply not immediately apparent, as Clark (2017) has noted.

A complicating factor is that all students with disabilities must self-disclose their need for accommodations to the college (Clark, 2005; Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Despite reluctance of some students to disclose and their own uncertainty, faculty were able to identify students in need of accommodations. For example, some took action based on writing samples from their students. Knowing they could not directly mention DSS to students with LD, faculty suggested tutoring, for instance or, as Oliver said, "We have [a] writing center if you need help with writing papers." Yvonne also recognized a potential learning disability from a writing sample when she said, "I mean, I can recognize patterns in writing." Similarly, Debbie explained how she discerned the need for additional assistance: "It seemed to me that there was something [a possible disability]…he wasn't writing more than a paragraph, …he was not able to do that." Upon reviewing these writing samples, the English faculty were able to refer students to tutoring while avoiding asking students with LD about accommodations, most likely because of the college policy forbidding such discussions.

Rival explanation. Faculty received professional development for interacting with students with LD. Faculty were prepared to ensure an equal education for all students. My findings confirm the former and only partially support the latter.

The positive findings regarding preparation are that faculty discussed accommodations and their commitment to helping all students to the entire class on the first day of each course. Seven faculty mentioned the inclusion of the DSS paragraph in their syllabi. This made it clear that faculty identified this as a way to offer accommodations to SWD and students. For example, Quinn mentioned her attempt at including all students when she said, "When you read that Disability Support Service

statement in your syllabus on the first day, [you] make sure that you don't alienate anybody in the class."

Including this paragraph not only announced the presence of accommodations through the DSS on campus but also offered additional information such as the contact number of the Director of DSS, who spearheads all accommodations on campus. Faculty who completed these two addressed their own concern that SWD and students with LD may not supply the accommodations letter on the first day of class. Camille said, "I know that some students might have received that letter but sometimes it can be delayed, it seems, so that I'm not getting it until maybe two or three weeks into the semester." Oliver added:

> Usually the letter happens, they give me the letter usually in the beginning of the semester. It doesn't necessarily happen like that though. Sometimes a week or two into the semester, the student will present me the with the letter. But, usually by the second week of school, most students who have a learning or physical disability [give] me a letter from the Disability Support Services Center.

In addition, these students may not know of services on campus if it is not announced to them. It is unclear if students are receiving this information during their orientation. Regardless, there is no guarantee that announcing the presence of DSS on campus will reach all students who really could benefit from accommodations.

The positive environment exhibited by faculty practices allows them to facilitate equality in the classroom (McKenzie 2016). This research generally supports studies showing that faculty appreciate the presence of students with LD in the classroom because it allows them to use different teaching styles (Burgstahler et al., 2000) and tends

to promote diversity of instructional techniques (Berry & Mellard, 2002). Assistance such as one-on-one meetings with students after class, as noted above, helped FCCC faculty ensure that students do not feel isolated. Ben said, "I think I've gotten better at just accommodating them and meeting with them to go over the items on their…making them comfortable asking for what they need."

Not all faculty felt as positive as Ben about their preparation to offer an equal education to students with LD. Vivian summarized this lack of preparedness when she said, "Because we are not trained specifically to necessarily meet the needs…I find that to be a little bit sad sometimes." She was not alone in wanting better preparedness to assist students with LD. Becky felt the challenge of conversing with students she suspected of having a learning disability. She reported saying to them, "'How are you doing? Are you feeling that like you are grasping everything that's occurring in the classroom?' You're running around a little circle trying to get them to tell you something, so that you can make a suggestion." The issue was trying to maintain the required confidentiality in the classroom.

The responsibility to self-disclose the need for accommodations in higher education includes communicating with both faculty (Hoffman, 2010; Lock & Layton, 2001) and DSS, as defined by the law (Cole & Cawthon, 2015). The fact is, a student may avoid self-disclosure altogether (Hudson, 2013). The process of self-disclosure and requesting institutional support amounts to a role reversal from what students were used to in the K-12 setting (Newman et al., 2009). If a student does not self-disclose and faculty do not feel entirely certain of their ability to identify and bring the need to light

with discretion, they will not be confident that they can ensure an equal education for that student.

Research question two. *How do faculty provide accommodations for SWD?*

Overarching proposition. Faculty provided accommodations for SWD in accordance with the accommodation request letter and did so without restrictions. Accommodations include extra space to move around, untimed testing, use of a note taker, and recording of lectures, among other things. Faculty interviews and DSS documentation support this proposition. Findings on specific accommodations were partially confirmed from documentation supplied by DSS.

The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), which was designed to make it easier for SWD to receive accommodations (AHEAD, 2012; Heffron, 2013), retained the ADA requirement that students self-identify their disabilities. This study found that FCCC students must initiate the request with DSS, which begins a process that continues with faculty through the receipt of accommodations (Wright & Meyer, 2017), such as note takers and extra time, which are facilitated by the institution (Heffron, 2013). Students must furnish faculty with documentation for accommodations received from DSS, and they agree together on arrangements for those accommodations (Cory, 2011; Nee, 2012). This study confirmed that students with LD brought accommodation letters to all faculty on a regular basis. However, some faculty had difficulty recalling when they received accommodation requests from SWD. Other faculty explained the accommodations process and were well versed in the steps to giving students the help they need. Faculty were generally knowledgeable about the process for providing accommodations to SWD and students with LD. However, there were relatively few

SWD students; most faculty could not recall the last time they had interaction with SWD. On the contrary, all faculty were able to provide many details when asked about interacting with students with LD.

When they reported positive experiences interacting with SWD, faculty included providing accommodation, much in line with other research (Hong & Himmel, 2009; Sniatecki et al., 2015). Yvonne noted several types of accommodations to SWD when she said, "If they need everything to be in really big font, then I make everything in really big font, or you know, if she has a test, I'll give extra time on the test." Fran offered, "I'd pull them out into the hallway and say, 'You know, we're having an exam next week, do you want your extra time?'" These findings evidence faculty understanding that they have different responsibilities when interacting with SWD (Dona & Edminster, 2001; Jones, 2002; Leyser et al., 1998; Lundeberg & Svien, 1988; Rao, 2004). Many faculty provided extra help in the classroom and additional assistance meeting with students in their offices, explaining how they offered extra help and made special efforts to ensure success for students who needed more. In these ways, faculty maintained their professional obligation of ensuring equal opportunity for all (Adams et al., 1997).

Faculty mentioned other instances of facilitating accommodations for SWD. They mentioned having readers, note takers, signers, and aides attending classes with the SWD. These accommodations were similar to ones found in prior studies, especially use of note takers and extended time on exams (Smith, 2015; Zafft, 2006). In fact, some English faculty made accommodations in addition to the traditional ones. Faculty were meeting with students during and beyond their office hours to help ensure their success.

The DSS at FCCC provided de-identified documentation requesting 15 different accommodations for SWD. Untimed testing, use of a note taker, and recording lectures posited in this overarching proposition were all in the documentation requests supplied by DSS. One accommodation was not mentioned in the DSS paperwork: providing extra space to move around. This request was also missing during the faculty interviews.

My findings also pointed to faculty appreciation of time sensitivity. The timing of self-identification affects SWD success. Students who self-disclose earlier have higher completion rates than those who do not self-disclose (Abreu-Ellis et al., 2009). Faculty at FCCC reported that SWD provided accommodations letters during the first few weeks of the course. Ben was explicit about the fact that accommodations would be arranged only after a student self-disclosed her disability, "The student has to self-identify to me." Becky was also aware of student self-identification when she said, "It's complicated because they don't have to identify." Faculty provided accommodations to SWD immediately upon receiving the request letters.

All faculty agreed that accommodations should be provided to all SWD to help ensure their success. This finding contrasts with studies documenting faculty unwillingness to provide accommodations to SWD, which have shown that faculty indifference towards accommodations can be a barrier for SWD (Leyser et al., 2098). Such studies found that not all faculty approve of accommodations for SWD, as there is a belief that accommodations can create a distraction or unfair advantage in the class (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Cook et al., 2009; Gibbons et al., 2015; Guzman & Balcazar, 2010). In addition, faculty may not always facilitate accommodations, though legislation mandates it (Dowrick et al., 2005). Such faculty carelessness can generate complaints

against faculty and the institution (OCR, 2011). All faculty in this study unanimously felt that SWD should receive all the accommodations they have requested and as a result, they provided accommodations for SWD in accordance with the request letters and without restrictions.

None of the accommodation requests caused confusion for faculty. However, faculty were surprised as to why SWD requested use of a calculator for the *ENG 101-College Composition I* class. Debbie said, "I'll see like a student can use a calculator or something like this, which doesn't apply to me." This seemed like an unnecessary accommodation. Additionally, faculty also found the request for use of a computer surprising. Ben said, "These days, that [computer] doesn't feel like an accommodation." Faculty observed that having a computer is not an accommodation, but a necessity for both SWD and students without disabilities.

Rival explanation one. Faculty provided only partial accommodations for SWD. This was due to fear of having to excessively modify coursework. The findings refuted this rival explanation.

As shown above, all faculty were supportive of providing all accommodations for SWD. Even though many faculty could not remember the last time they provided accommodations for SWD, they were positive about providing necessary help to students. Debbie said, "That was so long ago, like that was one of my first semesters teaching here and I can't remember." Vivian provided a similar response when she said, "Those students, as I said what happened a long time ago I really haven't had any recently." There was an absence of negativity and little perceived undue advantage for SWD in faculty comments.

Faculty did not seem disappointed about offering accommodations to SWD for reasons of modifying coursework. The topic of changing assignments or making changes to reduce the work of SWD were not mentioned during interviews. No faculty ever used modification of assignments as a rationale for not giving accommodations to SWD. No faculty noted denial of full or partial accommodations to SWD.

Rival explanation two. Faculty did not provide accommodations to SWD for two reasons. The first was not knowing how to provide accommodations. The second was lack of support for the process of providing accommodations. The findings refuted the first part of this rival explanation and supported the second.

While faculty never mentioned denying accommodations to SWD and expressed their support for providing accommodations, they did feel that the process for procuring accommodations could be crippling for both SWD and faculty because of the necessity of waiting for SWD to self-disclose. As Debbie said, "I couldn't say to him, 'do you have a disability, maybe you should go check this out?'"

An accommodation request letter is the only thing that a faculty member needs to see in order to facilitate. Therefore, my findings support this component of the rival explanation that faculty do not support the existing process of providing accommodations to SWD on the grounds that they wanted more personal student information than they received in the letters. Nonetheless, while they do not like the process, they provide the accommodations.

Faculty were frustrated at not knowing the disability affecting the SWD. As Fran observed, "Well, the problem is they don't tell us on the form what the disability is." Yvonne said, "I don't ever know though what… they don't disclose to me what disability

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they have" and Debbie commented, "I'm not licensed, I don't know...I can't diagnose." A college cannot inquire what disability a student is experiencing unless they request accommodations (Worthy, 2013). Faculty felt that knowing the student's disability would better help them provide accommodations.

The data also included comments about requests being too generic and lacking specific directions. Debbie described this as, "They were, you know, standard, and sort of vague in the kind of like 'more time, more time' sort of way." All faculty were able to understand the specific accommodations. As mentioned earlier, most accommodation requests were easy to understand but sometimes seemed irrelevant. Although peculiar requests were made, such as the use of a calculator or computer for the *ENG 101-College Composition I* class, faculty fully understood how to provide the accommodations noted in the accommodation request letters.

Research question two (a). *How do faculty provide accommodations for students with LD?*

Overarching proposition. Faculty provided accommodations for students with LD in accordance with the accommodation request letter. Examples of accommodations are providing untimed testing, freedom to get up and move around frequently, use of a note taker, or recording of lectures, among others. The findings supported this proposition, as evidenced by the faculty interviews and DSS documentation.

This study confirmed a finding by Gitlow (2001) that faculty do not mind providing accommodations for students with LD. FCCC faculty described facilitating accommodations for students with LD in accordance with the accommodation request letters. Fran said, "The student gives us the form usually first, second week of class

saying that they have been diagnosed with something and telling us what we need to do about it in terms of extra time for exams." Ben said, "We'll talk to students at the beginning of the semester."

The data also revealed that requests for students with LD occurred earlier than the requests from SWD, as faculty members stated that students with LD provided letters during the first few weeks of courses. Four faculty stated that students with LD supplied the accommodations letter on the first day. Ben said, "They get the message, they show me the letter of the first day." Four other faculty reported letters presented on the second day of the course. Debbie, however, said, "Most often, I would say like maybe third week of the semester." Regardless of timing, faculty provided all accommodations to students with LD, without restrictions. Almost all faculty agreed that accommodations should be provided to all students with LD to help ensure their success.

Oliver characterized the nature or many accommodations to students with LD when he said, "Giving extra time on exams, giving them extra time to complete their assignments." Yvonne said, "It's mainly extra time on exams and assignments…" Quinn echoed and expanded on that, "More time on exams, note takers...those are usually the main ones…sometimes being able to be in a secluded place to take the exam." Camille also mentioned, "more time to complete assignments, more time to complete exams, and possibly, if the student chooses, a separate exam area."

As with SWD, faculty noted specific instances of facilitating accommodations for students with LD, without restrictions. They helped facilitate the presence of note takers, provided extra time on assignments and exams, allowed students to get up and move around the class frequently, and made arrangements for students with LD to take exams

in separate areas of the college. Accommodation request letters confirmed the presence of these accommodations as options for students with LD.

   Rival explanation one. Faculty provided only some of the accommodations for students with LD. This was intentional because of a perceived advantage over students without disabilities. The findings of this study found one instance of support for the second aspect of this rival explanation.

   Students can experience bias from faculty who may feel their requested accommodations provide undue advantage over students who do not have a disability (Cory, 2011; Rocco, 2001; Thomas, 2000). There was no evidence that faculty in this study provide partial accommodations for students with LD. However, one faculty member felt that students with LD could have an unfair advantage over other students. Debbie thought that the use of one staff member for multiple responsibilities jeopardized the integrity of her course. On one occasion, she perceived a student gaining from this advantage. She said, "The note taker serve[d] as the Proctor. The note taker was also the one helping the student throughout the semester, I thought that that was a problem, like there should have been an outside person proctoring the exam." Debbie allowed the accommodation for the exam to happen but was not satisfied with the way DSS provided help for that student.

   Although she had never prevented SWD nor students from LD from receiving accommodations, Debbie was hesitant about the wisdom of providing extra time on assignments to some students with LD. Debbie said, "What can sometimes happen that I think is…actually harmful to the student is that...once they get backed up on one

assignment, the next assignment comes…then now…they're backed up." She felt that extra time on assignments caused greater harm to those students instead of helping them.

Faculty have been concerned that students without disabilities would be distracted by accommodations provided to students with LD (Gibbons et al., 2015). Previous research points to faculty withholding accommodations out of concern for the experiences of students without disabilities (Murray et al., 2008; Nelson et al., 1990). FCCC English faculty reported students without disabilities were respectful of the needs of students with LD. Camille said, "Students, on the other hand, particularly this generation, have much more of a sense of inclusivity and maybe just the nature of being young…fair-minded in eradicating prejudices."

Rival explanation two. Faculty do not provide accommodations to students with LD because they do not know how to provide accommodations. Faculty also may or may not support the process for providing accommodations. The findings refuted the first component of this rival explanation and partly supported the second.

No faculty expressed confusion over accommodations for students with LD and all fully understood how to provide the accommodations. But, as was the case with SWD, faculty pointed out that requests for use of a calculator for the *ENG 101-College Composition I* class and use of a computer were not accommodations, but in the first case irrelevant and in the second a norm for all enrolled students.

According to one study, faculty reported experiencing the most difficulty when providing accommodations to students with invisible disabilities in comparison to students with visible disabilities (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006). My findings contradicted this perception of difficulty. For example, Ben explained creating a comfortable

environment for students with LD when he said, "If I get the feeling that they're uncomfortable, I'll take them aside and say 'I want you to practice talking in class' or 'I'm not picking on you... I want you to be able to talk like everyone else.'"

As with SWD, faculty felt hampered by a confidentiality process that restricted free communication between faculty and student. Faculty felt that both they and students with LD were inhibited because the student self-disclosure requirement. As was the case with SWD, faculty resented not knowing the disability affecting the student because knowing it would enable them to better assist students.

Research question three. *What is English faculty knowledge of disability etiquette for SWD?*

Overarching proposition. Faculty generally understand the concept of DE towards SWD and can define DE and explain its definition. Findings from the interviews minimally supported this proposition. Even though faculty had difficulty identifying and explaining DE, they implicitly practiced it in their teaching.

Disability etiquette refers to considerate actions, words, and thoughts when interacting with SWD (Cook, 2007). It also includes maintaining a respectful approach to people with visible and invisible disabilities (Hill, 1996; Murphy, 2007; Stodden et al., 2002; Wessel, 2016; Worthy, 2013). These actions can include having patience, empathy, and compassion when interacting with SWD and students with LD.

Although faculty were respectful and caring of SWD, most of them were confused with the concept of DE. Ten out of eleven faculty interviewed had no prior knowledge of the concept. Some faculty had a sense of DE because they described it as an implicit practice. Other faculty had never heard of DE. Zoe asked, "Is there a disability

etiquette?" Becky asked, adding, "And what do you mean by disability etiquette?"

Yvonne expressed knowledge of basic etiquette when she said, "I feel like I want to

believe that…we all want to [have respect] and have etiquette." She also said, "I

mean…try not to say demeaning things or help make people feel excluded…our point

them out…I don't know, call attention to their disability." After I explained disability

etiquette, faculty provided details of their treatment of SWD and students with LD,

usually explaining their actions as general etiquette.

It is clear that faculty implicitly practiced DE without naming their actions as DE.

Many described attitudes and practices that implicitly adhered to DE. Yvonne expressed

knowledge of basic etiquette when she said, "I feel like I want to believe that…we all

want to [have respect] and have etiquette." She also said, "I mean…try not to say

demeaning things or help make people feel excluded…or point them out…I don't know,

call attention to their disability." As stated earlier, Becky said she would not want any

SWD identified from students without disabilities, a positive attitude towards protecting

the confidentiality of SWD. Vivian said, "Encourage them to go to Disability [Support

Services] but also to remind them that it is a private issue…it's between just their

instructor…themselves, and the Disability Office."

One faculty member was able to vaguely explain DE. Camille, who had

experienced DE herself due to a physical disability, said, "I've been on both sides of the

coin" and observed, "Disability etiquette...oh God...it's something that we are in dire, dire

need of…there is a huge amount of ignorance in our culture." Camille also was positive

about DE when interacting with SWD, "Rapport is established and I have been confided

in, which I consider an honor to be confided in that way." She also said:

A gigantic mistake is that people will think that they have etiquette when they put

people with disabilities on, on the pedestals. when they speak of them as being

inspirational, when they look at very minor accomplishments and are patronizing

and clapping and saying 'great job that you actually came outside today'. So, in

order to teach the etiquette, we first have to really secede the problems, and the

ablest thinking that is so prevalent. And that ablest thinking can be present in a

person with disabilities. He or she might have been indoctrinated by the society.

The only faculty member who had previously heard of the concept of DE, Camille, was

grateful it was being explored in this study.

A major part of DE is a positive attitude toward the process, which was supported

by this study's data. Ben was positive and receptive about learning the concept of DE. He

said, "I'm interested now in the disability etiquette ideas, I think that would be useful."

Zoe also expressed positivity for learning about DE when she said, "It's interesting. If

this has been around, this information… we haven't been given that information as

faculty…that's important…for us to know, as well, oh wow."

The faculty in this study reported a willingness to ensure the success of students

with disabilities, a finding similar to previous research (Austin & Pena, 2017;

Burgstahler, 2007; Gibbons et al., 2015), which provides a rationale for faculty practicing

DE without explicit knowledge of it, understanding that proper behavior and respect are

related to student success. Although faculty were positive and respectful with SWD,

some were in favor of breaking a major covenant of DE, which is confidentiality.

As discussed above, several faculty were interested in knowing the specific

disability of each student. Inquiring about a disability is something that faculty should not

consider. The knowledge gained by knowing the disability of each student will not strengthen the faculty approach to teaching SWD and students with LD. Disability etiquette involves respecting the confidentiality of all students. Therefore, asking about a specific disability is intrusive and an invasion of the student's privacy.

Samantha was frustrated that an obvious physical disability could not be discussed in front of the class. She practiced DE with SWD but felt it was not necessary, saying "I don't think we need to run around the room and have a cloak behind it." She felt that trying to maintain confidentiality with a student who had a physical disability was meaningless because the entire class could see it.

Rival explanation. Faculty were not aware of the concept of DE for students with visible disabilities. Also, they had little to no knowledge of the term DE. The findings supported this rival explanation for a number of reasons.

Faculty attempted to provide general definitions of etiquette but had difficulty providing concrete examples of DE for SWD. Some explanations of DE involved the term "respect" as when Vivian said, "We have to still remain very respectful" and Samantha said, "Respect should be the main principal." However, these kinds of characterization of DE included everyday interactions that can occur between any faculty and all students, with or without disabilities.

Another finding that supports this rival explanation is that faculty hesitated in defining DE. They could not explain the concept correctly without being given clues. Some faculty delayed their response to the questions regarding DE and waited for me to better explain it before answering.

There was no need for faculty to avoid discussing DE, as they were already taking a positive approach regarding interaction with SWD. Although they did not realize it, all faculty in this study were already facilitating DE in some form on a daily basis. Almost all faculty were maintaining confidentiality while being considerate and respectful to SWD. Faculty were doing so without understanding the formal definition of DE.

Research question three (a). *What are English faculty understandings of disability etiquette when used with students with LD?*

Overarching proposition. Faculty understood how DE applied to students with LD. They knew DE from experiences of students self-disclosing to DSS and presenting faculty with accommodation request letters. The findings almost entirely refuted this proposition.

As stated earlier, Camille was knowledgeable about the concept of DE for SWD and students with LD. As was the case with SWD, faculty hesitated and could not explain the concept without clues. Aside from Camille, faculty were only able to point to respectful treatment of students with LD in their responses. Beyond providing respect, they were unclear about how DE applied to students with LD.

Faculty did not learn of DE based upon prior experience of self-disclosure or accommodation requests from their students. No faculty mentioned receiving information on DE through training, accommodation requests or DSS. The documentation DSS provided for this study did not include information on DE. However, faculty maintained a positive approach to students with LD as they did with SWD.

Prior research has noted that the process of using DE allows faculty to facilitate interaction with students with LD (Alliston, 2010; Cook, 2007; Cook et al., 2009; NCAU,

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1995). My findings are that some faculty knew about DE. Faculty were aware of DE even though they had not received formal professional development for it.

     Rival explanation. Faculty did not know how to apply DE to students with LD, did not fully understand their duties when students self-disclosed and presented accommodation request letters from DSS. Faculty also did not know the duties involved in providing accommodations. The findings confirmed the first component of the rival explanation but refuted the remaining ones.

     In interviews, faculty did not know how DE could be applied to students with LD. However, many faculty expressed great interest in learning more about using DE in the LD context. As with SWD, faculty had a positive attitude towards learning more about DE for students with LD.

     My findings verified that faculty knew how to process accommodation requests from students with LD. Vivian emphasized, "I…realized that what they are not *dis-abled* but are very *able* to push themselves and to be right there and that they should always know that they deserve the extra… it would be helpful to provide it." Faculty knew how to abide by the accommodation requests. These findings refute the first component of the rival explanation.

     As previously mentioned, my findings were that faculty understood their role in providing accommodations to students with LD. Additionally, faculty knew their duties in facilitating accommodations for students with LD. Faculty gave accommodations to all students without questioning the students.

Relation to Theory

The Theory of Justice (Rawls 1971, 2001) and Ethic of Care (Noddings, 1984) formed the theoretical framework of this study when analyzing faculty interviews and documents (Adams et al., 1997; McKenzie, 2016; Noddings, 1984). The theory has equality as its main component, suggesting that people should come together for the common good instead of working independently in order to shun marginalization of SWD in all aspects of education (McKenzie, 2016). The Theory of Justice is also a process of inclusion, whereby everyone is able to exercise her rights to equality of opportunity (Rawls, 2001), while also maintaining the social obligation of ensuring the same ability for others (Adams et al., 1997).

An institution can facilitate an inclusive environment for all students through fostering social justice (Evans et al., 2017; Myers & Bastian, 2010; Rawls, 1971, 2001; Scott, 2009) with its mission, vision, and goals. Faculty at FCCC were supportive of the concept of social justice and were actively ensuring the utmost care and assistance for their students. Faculty had positive attitudes about working with SWD and students with LD. Positive attitudes can be a foundation for social justice insofar as they help regulate faculty interaction with all students (Dona & Edmister, 2001; McEldowney-Jensen et al., 2004; Salzberg et al., 2002). The findings about positive faculty attitudes and disability etiquette explained in Theme 2 of Chapter 4 and the discussion above support this theory. Although faculty were obligated by law to provide accommodations, their positive attitude in doing so may have alleviated a lot of the pressure that SWD and students with LD face when attempting to approach faculty for accommodations.

Faculty participants in this study had limited training for interacting with SWD and students with LD. Faculty wanted training so that they could provide the necessary resources for SWD and students with LD. All faculty maintained positive attitudes towards SWD and students with LD. Some of them felt that college policy was not necessary to protect the confidentiality of students. All of them had experiences with DSS which verified their commitment to ensuring equality through providing accommodations.

Without a full understanding of how to execute their responsibilities, faculty managed to maintain a core value of the Theory of Justice (Rawls 1971, 2001): equal opportunity. Faculty acted in accordance with equity and fairness when they provided all accommodations to SWD and students with LD (McKenzie, 2016). The student use of accommodations allowed for equity, as some students needed more resources than others to equalize opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects citizens with disabilities (ADA, 1990), establishing that they receive accommodations as needed. The legislation has opened a space for SWD to have a better experience in their pursuit of education. Rawls (1971, 2001) posited equality of opportunity for all students. The ADA mandates this opportunity for all students, regardless of their situation. Faculty felt all students should have the opportunity to succeed. Faculty intended for all students to learn and be able to understand concepts and theories.

In higher education, students have to self-disclose their need for accommodations, which is something all faculty in this study were aware of. Rawls (1971) notes that social justice involves collaboration amongst people who willingly work together for the betterment of everyone's situation. Faculty in this study provided all accommodations to

SWD and students with LD who asked for them. All faculty were willing to provide accommodations, extra help in the classroom, and additional assistance within their offices. If further assistance was needed, many faculty explained how they would offer extra help and would make extra efforts to ensure student success. No faculty denied accommodations for students. Faculty maintained their social obligation of ensuring equal opportunity for all (Adams et al., 1997). Equality of opportunity can be defined as providing equity for SWD and students with LD, because each student's needs must be met in different ways, hence the need to practice social justice.

Another finding from this study was that the process for providing accommodations, after a request has been made by students, begins with DSS and continues with faculty. The institution provides available resources and accommodations to the students (Heffron, 2013). This process begins with the actions of the DSS office and continues through the student's receipt of accommodations (Wright & Meyer, 2017). Students must furnish documentation to faculty requesting accommodations, and together agree on arrangements for those accommodations (Cory, 2011, Nee, 2012).

Faculty were knowledgeable of the process for providing accommodations to SWD and students with LD. Faculty knew that students provided letters requesting accommodations from the DSS office. However, there was a marginal number of SWD requesting accommodations at the institution. Most faculty could not recall the last time they had interaction with SWD. On the contrary, all faculty were able to provide many details when asked about interacting with students with LD. This study confirmed that all faculty were being approached by students with LD on a regular basis with accommodation request letters. However, some faculty had difficulty recalling when they

received accommodation requests from SWD. Other faculty explained the process and were well versed in explaining the steps to giving students the help they need.

Prior studies show that faculty believe accommodations give SWD an unfair advantage (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Cook et al., 2009; Gibbons et al., 2015; Guzman & Balcazar, 2010). One study participant thought accommodations could provide an advantage to students with LD. However, this was tied into her frustration with lack of resources provided by DSS, which resulted in a note taker also proctoring an exam. Other faculty cited insufficient services and execution from the DSS office, such as missing note takers or a lack of training, but this indicates a commitment to providing accommodations that equalize opportunity for success.

Even though all faculty provided accommodations without hesitation, some were frustrated because they were not allowed to know the disability of each student. Some faculty felt their ability to help was limited because they could not decipher the disability of each student. The ADA protects the rights of SWD and students with LD. Institutions cannot ask for details of a disability unless the student requests accommodations (Worthy, 2013). Part of that protection is not denying accommodations once they have been requested. However, the ADA protects students only after they have self-identified and begun the process of asking for accommodations (Pardeck, 1998).

Positive attitudes can be a foundation for social justice as they help regulate faculty interaction with all students (Dona & Edmister, 2001; McEldowney-Jensen et al., 2004; Salzberg et al., 2002). Faculty adopted DE practices of respect and confidentiality, even though there was very minimal training for interaction with both SWD and students with LD. The spirit of disability etiquette was also present when faculty maintained a

positive approach to people with visible and invisible disabilities (Hill, 1996; Murphy, 2007; Stodden et al., 2002; Wessel, 2016; Worthy, 2013) and also guided faculty interaction with students with LD (Alliston, 2010; Cook, 2007; Cook et al., 2009; National Center for Access Unlimited [NCAU], 1995). When initially asked about disability etiquette, most faculty did not understand the concept or had never heard of it. Faculty provided details of their treatment of SWD and students with LD when I explained disability etiquette. Faculty explained their actions as general etiquette but had very little knowledge of DE and its application to SWD and students with LD. Even as faculty were obligated by law to provide accommodations, their positive approach to do doing so may have alleviated a lot of the pressure that SWD and students with LD face when attempting to approach faculty for accommodations. They were generally willing to ensure all students had an equitable chance to succeed. Many faculty were implicitly using the Ethic of Care as a specific form of social justice during their treatment of all SWD (Kittay, 2011; Noddings, 1984). However, many faculty did not want to compromise the integrity of their assignments or exams.

The Ethic of Care is having the willingness and commitment to care and be of assistance (Noddings, 1984). An institution can be responsible for being the foundation of social justice and the ethic of care by maintaining a culture of care that goes beyond the faculty/student relationship. The institution cannot make people care nor can it fully guarantee ethical behavior from its employees, as the willingness to care has to ultimately come from the individual person (Noddings, 1984). The data from this study showed that faculty were caring and respectful of SWD and students with LD and vice versa. However, the same could not be said about DSS staff at FCCC. Faculty exhibit the Ethic

of Care when they establish an environment where students learn from each other and develop trusting and respectful relationships (Hawk & Lyons, 2008). There were examples of implied disability etiquette, where respect and compassion drove faculty to take action.

Faculty in this study made it a point to explain their inclusivity of all students in class activities. One faculty member mentioned changing the class location to accommodate one student. Quinn moved an entire class of students for the remainder of the semester due to a broken elevator. She sought the assistance of the Registrar who was likely not privy to knowing of the broken elevator. This situation was preventing a SWD in a wheelchair from attending class. Quinn said, "We actually had to have our class change to the bottom floor, we had a room change for the student." This was an attempt at ensuring the success of that SWD by having an entire group of students change their class location. Quinn was able to "eliminate the intolerable" and "filled the need" for this student (Noddings, 2013, p. 35). Quinn had a positive perception of providing accommodations to SWD and exceeded her responsibility, as she did not need to make the request to change the room. That change should have automatically come from the Registrar. Quinn changed her plans and the plans of all other students in the class in order to accommodate one student. Obviously, the accommodation of providing a new class location was not something found on accommodation request letters. The change was something that DSS could have processed for that particular student, but did not. Quinn voluntarily took charge of the situation and exhibited the Ethic of Care. Additionally, Quinn received cooperation from all other students in the class, who also exhibiting the Ethic of Care.

The faculty of FCCC had positive perceptions of SWD and students with LD, which is a foundation for use of DE. Prior studies have shown that positive attitudes are also a foundation for the Theory of Justice as faculty interact with SWD (Dona & Edmister, 2001; McEldowney-Jensen et al., 2004; Salzberg et al., 2002). Faculty were using the Ethic of Care (Noddings, 1984) to practice the Theory of Justice (Rawls, 1971, 2001) at FCCC. Legal responsibility aside, faculty did not have to care about SWD and students with LD and their accommodations. Faculty could have deflected the responsibility of accommodations back onto DSS. However, faculty took measures including having private conversations with students and approaching them if they felt tutoring was needed. Faculty also encouraged SWD and students with LD to participate in class and have an equal opportunity as their fellow students without disabilities. The Ethic of Care (Noddings, 1984) enabled faculty to be motivated with reinforcing the concept of equal opportunity posited by the Theory of Justice (Rawls, 1971, 2001).

According to Noddings (2013), the Ethic of Care involves conflict and guilt. That was evident in this study. Faculty generally wanted to do more for students and often felt held back from providing more assistance to them. Faculty wanted to know the disabilities of students requesting accommodations because they believed it would help them provide the most appropriate accommodations.

Yvonne said that she has no knowledge of what type of disability a student has when she said, "I don't ever know though what…I mean, they don't disclose to me what disability they have." Ben shared a similar viewpoint when he said, "You just have to infer…or the students sometimes will volunteer or sometimes they'll just show you this

letter, right?" There was hesitation on the part of faculty when discussing the topic of self-disclosure.

The college policy disallowing knowledge of specific disabilities, however, played an insignificant role in whether faculty provided accommodations to SWD and students with LD. Even as faculty felt conflicted about DSS processes and services, they still provided all accommodations requested. They also noticed and disapproved when accommodations, such as note takers, were not present when they were supposed to be.

The themes in this study pertaining to the Ethic of Care (Noddings, 1984), especially the willingness to provide accommodations, affirm findings of prior studies. Faculty at FCCC wanted to know more about SWD, students with LD, individual disabilities, and their responsibilities at the college. The mere desire to learn more was evidence of the Ethic of Care, with faculty willingness to help SWD and students with LD succeed.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study examined faculty perceptions, experiences, knowledge, and practices regarding training, accommodations, and disability etiquette. It also examined how well faculty were prepared to interact with students when they self-disclosed and required accommodations. This study was the first to explore the perceptions of tenured English faculty of SWD and students with LD exclusively in a community college setting in the Northeastern region of the United States.

Future research could expand on this study to determine faculty practices, including knowledge of DE, in disciplines other than English within similar institutions. Future studies can fruitfully examine faculty perceptions of and experiences with SWD

and students with LD in the STEM, Humanities, and Social Sciences disciplines. Comparative study would be valuable to identify similarities and differences between faculty in different disciplines within similar community colleges in the region. Additional research within suburban community colleges in the Northeastern region of the United States would enable comparison of data between these two types of institutions.

Recommendations for Faculty

My findings lead to a number of recommendations for future practice. A surprising finding was that almost all faculty had a positive attitude for interaction with SWD and students with LD. Faculty's negative perceptions about disabilities can adversely affect their willingness to provide accommodations (Hong & Himmel, 2009). Students may have unreliable or uneducated faculty assisting them with accommodations (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005). All faculty in this study were willing to work with SWD and students with LD and accommodating their needs, regardless of their confidence in the process.

Although this may justly be considered a best practice, a positive attitude is not sufficient to ensure that faculty interacts with and assist these students as ably as possible. Faculty have reported that their prior experiences and preparedness for interacting with SWD has positive effects on willingness to interact (Hong & Himmel, 2009; Kleinsasser, 1999; Murray et al., 2008). Almost all faculty in this study were not completely confident in their roles as faculty who facilitate accommodations. Better preparedness can heighten the quality of their interaction with SWD and students with LD. Some faculty can be reluctant to provide accommodations even though they are required to provide

accommodations to students who request them (Lock & Layton, 2001). Faculty at FCCC were providing all accommodations to students. They were also ready to complete training at FCCC.

Faculty training was lacking at FCCC. Faculty should be more proactive in advocating for greater professional development. Whether asking DSS or their academic deans, faculty are the point-people who interact with SWD and students with LD the most frequency. Faculty have the most experience interacting with those students at the institution. Faculty understand the academic challenges faced by those students and can help verify the academic benefits to providing greater services for those students.

Faculty should also advocate for better processes and a wider array of services at the institution. The advocacy could begin with the sharing of ideas amongst fellow faculty within the division. Faculty can use monthly departmental meetings to more freely share their own best practices relative to SWD and students with LD. This would be a great way to have an open forum of ideas and can potentially relieve the fears or misconceptions of other faculty.

Another way of advocating for more dedicated services to is for faculty from each division to be a point person for complaints and suggestions to take to DSS on a quarterly basis. Other than students, there is no greater input than a faculty member who can provide insight into the effectiveness of services provided to SWD and students with LD. The unique experiences of the faculty interaction with SWD and students with LD can best be told by faculty themselves. While responsibility for professional development lies with the institution, the readiness and needs of faculty are relevant to shaping training. This research identifies both.

Recommendations for FCCC Leadership

 Change to policy. The college policy forbidding faculty from suggesting accommodations to students, without their self-disclosure, is likely hurting students more than it helps them. One component of the policy that prohibits faculty intervention unless the student self-discloses is the following: "Faculty members may not recommend or refer a student to Disability Support Services, unless the student independently requests referral." Therefore, if the student does not self-disclose, the faculty member can only indirectly offer services other than DSS, such as tutoring.

 There must be greater attention given to the ADA laws that govern how the college reacts to the needs of SWD and students with LD. These laws take precedence to the policy at FCCC and should be used as a basis for revising the current policy governing confidentiality between faculty and students. The laws stipulate that institutions must provide equal opportunity for all SWD. As stated earlier, according to the current policy, faculty currently cannot approach SWD and students with LD to offer accommodations, unless the student self-discloses. This delay could cause unnecessary waiting for students to self-disclose which can therefor cause academic harm. All SWD and students with LD can benefit from changing the FCCC policy and revising it based on the components of the ADA, such as easing the process of self-disclosure (Hudson, 2013).

 Students may not know what to do when they need help, most likely because their K-12 institutions handled all documentation and requests. The college policy is a barrier that should be eliminated. For example, faculty should be trained to approach those students who they feel are in need of accommodations. This approach should be done in

complete confidentiality during office hours, after class, through email, or telephone. In short, faculty should be allowed to suggest DSS to students, in private, regardless of whether the SWD or student with LD will actually use the resource.

The college policy should change to reflect the similarities that can exist between a physician/patient and faculty/student. A physical/patient relationship is based on trust. The faculty student relationship is the same, where a student has enrolled in a class with a faculty member who they feel is trustworthy of delivering a high-quality educational experience. Part of that trust is being approachable to SWD and students with LD when they self-disclose. Modifying the college policy is the overarching factor in creating change at FCCC.

Professional development. Professional development instituted by FCCC can better prepare faculty to understand SWD and students with LD. Many faculty comments identified preparedness as a deficiency and it is one that can be addressed by professional development. Faculty expressed frustration at DSS for not properly explaining why there were so many restrictions when interacting with SWD and students with LD. They felt that the minimal training they had received was largely related to compliance and did not address the challenges SWD and students with LD face. Faculty can be trained to understand why certain steps take place in the accommodations process, such as maintaining confidentiality and flexibility with accommodations.

Professional development should occur for all new and current faculty, every three years. The legal ramifications of providing accommodations should be addressed, including the legal repercussions for neglecting responsibilities. As stated earlier, the ADA does not require that colleges facilitate mandatory training for faculty who will

interact with SWD (Thompson & Bethea, 1997). However, compliance-based training on the rules and accommodation steps has the potential to be done in a way that it shows how each step helps faculty perform their responsibilities. The data showed faculty complained about the current training being only about compliance. The faculty need to be trained on components beyond compliance. An explanation of the challenges faced by SWD and students with LD as they graduate high school and enroll in higher education can help solidify the need for special attention to this group of students.

A commitment to college wide professional development is paramount. Institutions with willing faculty like the cohort for this study should take advantage of the opportunity to prepare them with professional development. However, this professional development should go beyond faculty to include DSS staff and academic deans. It should be mandatory for new hires with annual refresher sessions for incumbent employees. This training should incorporate a number of different components, such as role-playing and videos. Seeing the experiences of SWD and students with LD played out in various media may help enhance faculty perceptions of confidentiality and accommodations.

I would also ensure that leadership of FCCC prepare faculty to know that uniform accommodations may not be enough for some SWD and students with LD to succeed. The latter can be interpreted as faculty treating SWD and students with LD in the way they need to be individually treated. When the leadership provides resources associated with accommodations, SWD and students with LD can be given an equalized opportunity as students without disabilities (McKenzie, 2016).

The faculty in this study were disappointed with the DSS office and college policy forcing confidentiality of the disclosure process (FCCC, 2015). Professional development that addresses ADA components may lead to less resentment over the confidentiality that surrounds interacting with SWD. Faculty would no longer wonder the specific disability of each student. Professional development could reduce the negative faculty perceptions surrounding confidentiality. Additionally, all professional development should be easily referenceable on the FCCC website.

Disability etiquette. Disability etiquette, the core principle of faculty interaction with SWD and students with LD, should be a significant component of professional development. Faculty interact with SWD and students with LD more than any other college employee. They are ambassadors representing the college while in their classes. Disability etiquette connects the empathy, helpfulness, compassion, and assistance that all SWD and students with LD deserve (Hill, 1996; Murphy, 2007; Stodden et al., 2002; Wessel, 2016; Worthy, 2013). If DE becomes the foundation of all faculty professional development, faculty will likely be more understanding and accepting of the challenges faced by these students. Faculty positive perceptions of SWD and students were a strong foundation. However, the leadership of FCCC must leverage those positive attitudes into a comprehensive training program that will ultimately benefit all students.

FCCC faculty value professional development but they also need to understand why it is crucial to protect the confidentiality of SWD and students with LD. Faculty professional development needs to include room for the exercise of discretion when interacting initially with SWD, helping instructors learn to set aside stereotypes and understand fully how to be empathetic to student needs (Wright & Meyer, 2017). Prior

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studies have examined the influence of faculty attitudes on SWD and students with LD (Wolanin & Steele, 2004). When students receive negative treatment from college personnel or fellow students, they may resist disclosing their disability (Berry & Mellard, 2002; Nee, 2012). Faculty who interact negatively with SWD and students with LD can discourage other students from conveying their accommodation needs to the institution.

Additionally, students may feel reluctant to disclose a disability to faculty if they are too proud to ask for help (Kallio & Owens, 2012; Lyman et al., 2016; Murray et al., 2008). Students may avoid self-disclosure for fear of faculty discussing their disability in front of other students (Cook et al., 2000) causing embarrassment. Students who experience embarrassment may retreat into greater privacy regarding their need for accommodations.

The needs of SWD and students with LD have not been as high a priority as other initiatives. A total system change (Burke, 2014) is what FCCC needs. The SWD and students with LD are not receiving enough assistance from the administration.

The Change process. The changes process I outline here emulates the *unfreeze, change, and refreeze* model posited by Schein (Burke, 2014). This change model includes identifying required change, facing some hurdles of resistance, and then institutionalizing that change. It entails eliminating this enduring policy and completely reframing the approach to SWD and students with LD.

The *unfreezing* the process begins with institutional leaders to realize that the college policy is detrimental to student success. Old habits and processes are identified, where the institution can pinpoint and announce what it feels is in need of significant change (Burke, 2014). This step may include learning anxiety, which can derail the

institutional goal of making a change. Once faculty and staff realize that the basis of DE is present in their daily work, this gap will not be a threat to enacting change. A presentation at a College Service Day will bring greater awareness of the issue, encourage leaders not to forgo the opportunity for faculty preparation, and offer support to faculty as they interact with all SWD (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Wright & Meyer, 2017).

Initiating the *change* process will involve a first order change for DSS: introduce modifications to the department that will enable a higher level of service to the entire institution (Burke, 2014). FCCC can identify exactly what changes will have to take place in order for the whole institution to change. Some changes to the way DSS and faculty assist SWD and students with LD would include greater transparency between each other. Faculty in this study wanted to know the disability because they felt it would help them be more effective teachers to SWD and students with LD. I am not suggesting that faculty should be allowed to know the disability of each student, rather I am suggesting the college make it easier for SWD and students with LD to communicate their needs with faculty and staff. The current restrictions placed on college faculty places faculty in a stalemate when interacting with SWD and students with LD because students cannot receive any help unless they self-disclose their needs to DSS or faculty. This change could begin with the English Division and then ultimately occur across all academic divisions, conveying procedures for how faculty will facilitate accommodations requested by SWD and students with LD.

Another component of the *change* process would be the manner in which accommodation letters are prepared. As stated earlier, the letters do not always accurately

portray the situation of each student. FCCC needs to revisit the manner in which accommodation request letters are prepared for students. The letters must be updated regularly and be customizable to each course. With enough professional development, the leadership and staff of DSS will understand that the format of the accommodation request letter has outdated for quite some time. The letters should reflect accommodations relevant to each specific course and should be customizable to the needs of each individual student. A generic letter with a long list of accommodations may not be a strong basis for student success.

The administration may see less resistance from faculty than DSS staff during the change process (Schein, 1999). The data from this study showed an overwhelming support towards changing several components of the faculty relationship with SWD and students with LD. However, the faculty cannot work differently unless DSS changes its manner of providing accommodation request letters.

The *refreezing* process will begin with a public announcement of this change during another major faculty gathering. A third order change occurs when FCCC publicizes the above changes to all constituents (Burke, 2014) and announces frequent and consistent professional development for faculty and staff interaction with SWD and students with LD. The constituents hearing of this college wide shift in practice would be everyone affiliated as a student, faculty, staff, administrator, and board member, leading up to the reflection of these changes on the FCCC website for the greater public. The *refreezing* process is completed when assessment of outcomes and changes to practice occur.

FCCC faculty practiced Disability Etiquette when interacting with SWD and students with LD, showing an implicit grasp of a concept few had been introduced to. Disability etiquette (DE) cannot be completely normalized, however, without first establishing the basis for why faculty should help SWD and students with LD. Faculty professional development should include an exploration of the Theory of Justice (Rawls 2071, 2001) and Ethic of Care (Noddings, 1984). The Theory of Justice speaks to inclusion of all students in equality of opportunity (Rawls 1971, 2001), and practices of social justice can enable an institution to facilitate an inclusive environment (Evans et al., 2017; Myers & Bastian, 2010; Rawls, 1971, 2001; Scott, 2009).

Professional development based on the Theory of Justice (Rawls, 1971, 2001) should incorporate a discussion of the distinction between equality and equity and how it can make the difference between success and failure for SWD and students with LD. Leadership needs to understand what English faculty in this study understand: that uniform accommodations may not be enough for some SWD and students with LD to succeed. Equity requires that not just faculty but also DSS treat SWD and students with LD in the individual way they need to be treated.

My research showed that once a student self-discloses to DSS, the DSS office prepares one letter and posts it on the online portal of that student. It is then the responsibility of the student to print the letter and present it to faculty for each course, as she deems necessary. I recommend a system to remind students about accommodation request letters at the start of each semester. Currently, the accommodations letter is not updated during the tenure of a student.

Accommodation request letters should be updated any time a student re-visits DSS for changes to her accommodations. Leadership needs to find ways to encourages SWD and students with LD to contact DSS at the start of each semester to re-evaluate needs and update the accommodation request letter. Another mandate is updating accommodation request letters to reflect customizable needs for a course. For example, an accommodations request letter for an *ENG 101 - College composition I* class should not request a calculator. The letters should also include a definition of DE at the top to remind the faculty member to exercise confidentiality and respect when interacting with SWD and students with LD. The DSS paragraph, located in all faculty syllabi, is a central way the college can outline the availability of accommodations to all students. At present, SWD and students with LD are not verbally reminded of their responsibilities unless a faculty member implies tutoring. If a student misses the first day of class when the syllabus and DSS are discussed, she may never know that accommodations are available.

Limitations

Many limitations hinder the generalizability of findings to neighboring institutions. Some examples of limitations include sample size, size of the institution, and faculty traits. The sample consisted of 11 English faculty. Another limitation of this study was that only faculty who taught the *ENG 101-College Composition I* were part of the sample. This fact may not seem that limiting. However, this study did not directly involve English faculty who taught Basic Skills courses. The English faculty members in this study were also tenured, employed full-time for at least five years, and teaching at least one section of *ENG 101-College Composition I* per academic year, a course taken by students who have exited basic skills or remedial coursework.

The English faculty were teaching this college-ready, credit-bearing course. This study avoided incorporating other English faculty and faculty from non-English disciplines into the study. This case study design cannot be generalized to other institutions because the single case setting of one unique institution does not apply to all urban community colleges in the same region of the United States (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Therefore, the study was very limited to a specific sample of participants which makes the results harder to generalize.

The reliability of this study could have been hindered by a number of factors. Positionality, sample size, faculty traits, and size of the institution can make it difficult to replicate this study with the same exact sample (Yin 2018). It would be difficult to test the reliability of this study with the exact same sample size (N=11) and faculty traits. These limitations on the sample might also make it challenging to replicate.

Positionality was another concern as the job title of the researcher can affect the information being studied (Acevedo et al., 2015). My personal beliefs as a faculty member could affect my interpretation of data. Additionally, my experience with DSS, SWD, and students with LD could have kept me from reporting findings in an impartial manner. However, as per Tracy (2010), I made the effort to strengthen the rigor of this study by spending sufficient time interviewing the participants. As important, I had participants check the transcriptions and information (Maxwell, 2005; Tracy, 2010). Member checking can help eliminate misinterpretation of data collected. In addition, my interview protocol was vetted by my dissertation committee and I established propositions and rival explanations before compiling the data (Yin, 2018). By combining the interview data from coded interviews, coded DSS paperwork, and theory, I was able

to triangulate the data stemming from various sources (Yin, 2018). These were all attempts to reduce potential bias in this study.

Social desirability bias was also cause for concern in this study. Participants may have been providing responses that seemed cooperative and compassionate, important qualities for faculty members (Collins, Shattell, & Thomas, 2005). Additionally, since I was a community college faculty member interviewing similarly positioned faculty members, perhaps faculty were providing answers that would make them seem like caring faculty of a community college.

However, there was evidence that faculty showed genuine concern for SWD and students with LD, which reduced the likelihood of faculty bias in this study. Faculty actions with students resembled the corresponding positive attitudes portrayed in the interviews. Faculty assisted students with accommodations and other forms of assistance. The faculty were also concerned with not being able to know specific disabilities, because they wanted to be more responsive. These examples reinforced the lack of bias in faculty responses.

This study occurred in a single case setting at one unique institution. The findings may not apply to all urban community colleges in the same region of the United States (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) or to community colleges with larger or smaller enrollments. However, the results may add to the literature of faculty that are exclusively from one department and one discipline within a single institution.

Conclusion

My experiences as a faculty member led me to explore faculty perceptions of SWD and students with LD. I had experience with both groups of students and was

interested in researching the perceptions of other educators from one specific discipline. This study generated two relevant points of reflection for practice.

The first point is that English faculty knew the confidentiality rules for interacting with SWD and students with LD and were aware that they should not make assumptions about students and their disabilities. It was enlightening to learn that many faculty knew a good deal about what to do when interacting with SWD and students with LD despite limited professional development on disabilities. Perhaps faculty have experienced unofficial training from their peers and mentors, which could be full of inconsistency and incorrect information. For this reason, it is up to community colleges to offer consistent and frequent training that fully addresses faculty skills and responsibilities for interaction with SWD and students with LD.

My second point was that all college employees should participate in professional development. It was a positive and uplifting thing to discover that faculty are a willing group of people who were yearning for more professional development. According to the data, faculty do not fully understand disability etiquette as it relates to visible and invisible disabilities, even though they were implicitly practicing it. Institutions can create a positive atmosphere for how faculty and staff interact with SWD and students with LD by educating faculty, academic deans, and DSS on DE. Institutions should heed the requests of faculty for more training. The administrations should be content with knowing that faculty have a positive mindset regarding interactions with SWD and students with LD. Preparing faculty and other college staff for respectful and empathetic interaction with SWD and students with LD should be a foundation of mandatory professional development efforts at community colleges.

Studies have shown that SWD and students with LD experience difficulty transitioning to higher education. Colleges should heed this issue and should take actions to reduce the uncertainties of faculty, SWD, and students with LD. The attention given to these issues would pave the way for greater equity, diversity, and inclusion at FCCC.

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Appendix A

Invitation to Participate

Dear Faculty Member,

      As part of my dissertation research in the Educational Leadership (Ed. D.) program at Rowan University, you are invited to participate in a research study addressing faculty perceptions of students with disabilities and students with learning disabilities. I hope that what I learn from you will assist me in developing a better understanding of the perceptions of faculty as they interact with students with visible and invisible disabilities. There is minimal risk to you and the benefit is that you will have an opportunity to reflect on your perceptions and approaches to students who require accommodations.

      Participation in this study is voluntary. Should you volunteer, you will be notified via email and an interview time will be established. Prior to the start of the interview, you will be asked to complete Informed Consent Forms which will outline the specific components of your participation.

      If at any time you wish to withdraw from the study, you may do so and any data pertaining to you will not appear in any current or future report or publication. Study participants who agree to be part of the study will take part in a face-to-face interview lasting approximately 45 minutes. These interviews will be recorded digitally and you will be asked to verify the accuracy of the transcriptions.

      During the data collection process, all records will be stored on my password-protected personal home computer and any hard copies of data will be secured in a locked filing cabinet at that location. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the research process. Upon completion of the study, all documents will be retained for three years, after which point they will be destroyed.

      If you respond to this e-mail, I will contact you within 7 days to set up an interview. The interview time, date, and location will be at your convenience. Your feedback and participation are valuable to my understanding of faculty perceptions of interactions with students with disabilities and students with learning disabilities.

      Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ara Karakashian
Faculty

Appendix B

Informed Consent & Audiotape Addendum

Principal Investigator: Ara Karakashian

Study Title: A Case Study of the Perceptions of English Faculty Regarding Interactions with

Students with Disabilities

Name of participant:

_____

The following information is provided to inform you about the research project and your participation in it. Please read this form carefully and feel free to ask any questions you may have about this study and the information given below. You will be given an opportunity to ask questions, and your questions will be answered. In addition, you will be given a copy of this consent form.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. If you choose to withdraw, none of your responses will be used in the data collection process.

Purpose of the study: You are being asked to participate in a research study. As an Ed. D. student at Rowan University, I am trying to understand the perceptions of English faculty members regarding interactions with students with disabilities and students with learning disabilities in the community college setting.

Description of procedures to be followed and approximate duration of the study: A qualitative case study approach will be used in this study to understand the experiences of faculty at Hudson County Community College. The study will begin during the Summer of 2019 and be completed by June 2020. The study format is a formal, semi-structured interview that will be digitally recorded. The interviews will be professionally transcribed. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview for content-verification purposes.

Expected costs: To the participant there will be no costs, other than your time. Approximately 45 minutes of your time will be required for participation in the interview.

Compensation for Participation: There will be no compensation for your time and participation in this study.

Description of the discomforts, inconveniences, and/or risks that can be reasonably expected as a result of participation in this study: You may experience time away

from teaching and the office. Questions may pose some emotional discomfort related to perceptions of teaching students with disabilities and students with learning disabilities.

Anticipated benefits from this study: a) The potential benefits the research community are an increased understanding of English faculty member's perceptions of students with disabilities and students with learning disabilities in a community college setting. b) The potential benefit to you from this study is an increased awareness of the accommodations process.

What happens if you choose to withdraw from study participation? You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time. In the event you choose to withdraw from the study, the information gathered from you will not be used in this study.

Confidentiality. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law, as your information will be assigned a pseudonym. The documents connecting your name to this pseudonym will be kept in a locked file in my residence and within a password-protected personal computer. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, these documents will be retained for three years, and at such time will then be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report or publication. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private. Data from this study may be used for future research studies.

STATEMENT BY PERSON AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I have read this informed consent form and the material contained in it has been explained to me verbally. I understand each part of the document, all my questions have been answered, and I freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this study. I also agree to be digitally recorded during the interview. The researcher will provide me a transcript of the interview to verify my statements within three (3) weeks of the interview date.

Date: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Printed Name: _____

Consent obtained by:

Date: _____

Signature:_____

Printed Name:_____

Audiotape Addendum to Consent Form

You have already agreed to participate in a research study conducted by Ara Karakashian.

We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape as part of that research study.

You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used for transcription, analysis, and citation by the research team.

The recording(s) will include everything discussed during your interview.

The recording(s) will be stored in a locked file cabinet and labeled with subjects' name or other identifiable information and will be destroyed upon publication of study results.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE I have read this entire form, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand what has been discussed. All of my questions about this form or this study have been answered.

Subject Name: _____

Subject Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been answered accurately.

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent:

_____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Interview Protocol

1. How many years have you been teaching at FCCC?

2. What has been you overall experience teaching at FCCC?

3. Could you tell me about your experiences teaching students with disabilities?

> Probe: Could you tell me about your experiences teaching students with learning disabilities?

4. Could you describe any professional development received for interaction with students with disabilities?

> Probe: Could you describe any professional development received for interaction with students with learning disabilities specifically?

> Probe: How has the training changed since your last professional development?

5. Tell me about your experiences with providing accommodations to students with disabilities.

> Probe: Tell me about your experiences with providing accommodations to students with learning disabilities.

6. Tell me about the accommodations requested in letters presented to you from students with disabilities.

> Probe: Tell me about the accommodations requested in letters presented to you from students with learning disabilities.

> Probe: Were there any accommodations you could not understand?

7. Could you describe the timing of requests made for accommodations by students with disabilities?

> Probe: Could you describe the timing of requests made for accommodations by students with learning disabilities.

8. How can you tell the difference between students with visible disabilities vs. students with invisible disabilities?

> Probe: What have you done if you have realized that a student could benefit from accommodations?

9. What can you tell me about disability etiquette?

Probe: What can you tell me about disability etiquette on students with disabilities?

Probe: What can you tell me about disability etiquette on students with learning disabilities?