Transition from College to Work: Lived Employment Experiences and Perceptions of
College Seniors and Recent College Graduates with Physical Disabilities Seeking
Employment Opportunities

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Dedication

The author wishes to dedicate this dissertation to her late father, Willie Coleman, a gentle, brilliant and loving man who provided her with the foundation to become the person she is today. She and her twin sister Linda were his pride and joy. Her father's favorite Bible verse rings loudly in Brenda's soul today, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Brenda has always had faith that if she believed in her father's counsel, her mother's love, and in the Creator's mercy and grace, her life would be rewarded and she would finish this journey. Brenda humbly submits this body of work in her father's name and in his loving spirit.

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"Alone, all alone, nobody, but nobody can make it out here alone."
Dr. Maya Angelou

Abstract of Dissertation

Transition from College to Work: Lived Employment Experiences and Perceptions of College Seniors and Recent College Graduates with Physical Disabilities Seeking Employment Opportunities

The purpose of this qualitative study was to reveal and understand how college students with physical disabilities perceive their disability and how the disability influences their ability to obtain employment after graduation. A phenomenological research design was used, and data was gathered through intensive repeated interviews with eight student participants enrolled at a private urban four-year university in the Mid-Atlantic Region of the U.S. A convenience and purposive sampling participant selection process was used. The participants were seniors in the selected university or recent graduates with various physical disabilities.

The analysis of the data used a phenomenological hermeneutic lens (Moustakas, 1994) and the review of four models of disability: (a) the Medical Model of Disability (Parsons, 1975); (b) the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1995); (c) the Nagi Model (Nagi, 1965); (d) and the International Classification of Functioning (Strucki et al., 2002). The Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1995) used a social interpretive perspective, to understand complex situations and the world we live in (Creswell, 2003). The Advocacy/Participatory Knowledge Claim (Creswell, 2003; Mertens, 1999) and Critical Social Theory (Calhoun, 1995) were also utilized to analyze and understand the phenomena related to marginalized individuals in the educational structure.

Based on the analysis of the data, the findings emerged within seven thematic areas—(a) Advanced Education Attainment, (b) Accessibility, (c) Reasonable

Accommodations, (d) Barriers/Hindrances, (e) Disability and Impairment,

(f) Discrimination, and (g) Career Services. Moreover, two new assumptions were

embedded within the phenomenon of disability and employment—(a) participants

introspectively searched for ways to improve their employment outcomes using advanced

degrees and credentials, and (b) participants sought graduate degrees to improve their

employability because of the competitive labor market in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Several major findings emerged from the study about college students with disabilities

which include: (a) transition from college to work was not a feasible option or priority

after the baccalaureate degree or graduation; (b) continued higher education beyond

undergraduate education is a priority; and (c) viewpoints about and experiences with

disability and impairment are not monolithic.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The transition from college to work for students with disabilities (SWD)

presented an issue of national importance in higher education. Colleges and universities

across the nation continue to see students with disabilities disproportionately hired after

graduation (Kennedy & Harris, 2005; Leotta, 2003; McNeil, 2001a; Norton & Field,

1998). College students with disabilities are also affected by employment discrimination

after graduation from college. Additionally, researchers make a connection between

employers' negative attitudes and their hiring practices, and these attitudes may lead to

workplace discrimination (Brostrand, 2006; Hernandez, Keys, & Balcazar, 2000).

According to the National Organization on Disability, "36% of employed people with

disabilities report encountering at least one instance of discrimination in the workplace

due to their disabilities" (Frieden, 2003, p. 7). This discrimination permeates all states,

including students enrolled in the colleges and universities in the Mid-Atlantic Region of

the United States.

The study was conducted at a private urban four-year university in the Mid-

Atlantic Region of the United States and intended to reveal how seniors and recent

graduates with physical disabilities perceive that their disabilities influenced their ability

to obtain employment opportunities after graduation. In addition, this study examined

barriers to employment and the available programs that improved employment outcomes

of college students with disabilities. Students with disabilities within three years of

graduation are no longer students. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, they will be

referred to as recent graduates with disabilities (RGSWD).

The significance of this study was to provide insight into the phenomenon of disability and employment in four ways. First, the research from this study sought to increase the awareness of administrators, educators, and policy-makers in higher education of the disparities and barriers to employment for college students with disabilities. Second, the research from this study serves as an impetus of change in career services programs by improving career services programming and providing a framework for the review and/or creation of appropriate policies and services specifically targeted for students with disabilities. Third, there was credible evidence of a gap in the literature that proves an investigation of this topic is necessary, as there are limited numbers of qualitative studies on this topic because most employment studies are data-driven. Fourth, this study provided a *voice* for the students and allows researchers and practitioners in the field to hear from a disenfranchised group of college students (Frieden, 2003).

For years, much has been written about the employment disparities of people with disabilities, but virtually no research exists on the self-perceptions of college students with disabilities regarding employment. In order to empower college students with the disabilities to "regain their voice" (Hill-Collins, 1991, p. xi) and tell of their experiences in their quests for employment, it is critical as a researcher to *go to the source* for clarity and understanding of the dilemma using a "self-defined standpoint" (p. xii) as a mechanism to give meaning to a social predicament. Many quantitative studies generalize empirical data about people with disabilities, but few researchers have conducted qualitative studies that allow students with disabilities to give their own accounts of their

experiences. As such, I conducted a phenomenological study that went to the source and revealed the experiences of students with disabilities. Therefore, the approach of this study provided a means to listen to the *voices* of college students with disabilities. Finally, the study provided students and their parents with practical information about how their perceptions of the job search process impact employability.

This chapter includes the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, paradigm of inquiry, theoretical framework, a brief description of the methodology, delimitations and limitations of the study, and definition of terms related to the study.

Chapter II provides a review of the literature, including critical analyses of several major themes relevant to the topic. The literature review is organized according to topics about major challenges students with disabilities face, job preparedness, programs to improve employability, and the perceptions of students' and employers' attitudes about hiring people with disabilities. Chapter II also includes a review of studies highlighting disability employment approaches, concluding with a summary of the chapter.

Chapter III provides (a) an overview of the research methodology, (b) research design, (c) research questions, (d) research method, (e) site and participation method, (f) data collection method, (g) data analysis method, and (h) ethical and political considerations. It concludes with a chapter summary. Chapter IV provides a presentation of the results. Finally, Chapter V reports a discussion of the findings, limitations, recommendations, implications for future study, and conclusions.

Statement of the Problem

Postsecondary students with disabilities are the most underemployed and legislatively protected groups in America (Anue & Kroeger, 1977; Leotta, 2003; Werner, 1992). Corroborating data compiled by the University of Tennessee (UT), Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) asserts that the unemployment rate for college students with disabilities is more than their non-disabled peers (Leotta, 2003). "The unemployment rate for college students with disabilities is estimated to be over 30%" (Cornell University, 2003-2007; Lamb, 2007; Leotta, 2003; U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy [U.S. ODEP], 2003) as compared to the overall unemployment rate of 4.7% for the general population (Leotta, 2003; U.S. Department of Labor [DOL], 2006). Hernandez et al. (2000) conducted an employment study of 37 quantitative studies and indicate that there are an estimated "34.6% of people with disabilities employed versus the employment rate of 79.8%" for those without disabilities (Hernandez, p. 1; Lamb, 2007). This data highlights the magnitude of challenges confronting college students with disabilities upon graduating from college. This employment disparity is a national trend among two- and four-year higher education institutions, with "over 1.5 million or 6% of all undergraduates reporting having a disability in colleges and universities across the United States" (Horn, Berktold, & Bobbitt, 1999, p. 1; Johnson, 2006; Justesen, Stage, & de la Teja, 2007; Werner, 1992). This data illuminates the growing enrollment of students with disabilities.

The U.S. Department of Labor's unemployment statistics strongly suggest that higher education administrators prepare students with disabilities to be marketable in

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order to give them a competitive edge. While college prepares most students for transition to work, students with disabilities continue to be underemployed after graduation from college (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Frieden, 2003; Kim-Rupnow & Burgstahler, 2004; Leotta, 2003; Norton & Field, 1998). This disparity is of great concern and validates the need for further study. As such, I employed a phenomenological research study to reveal the issues surrounding the perceptions of college students with disabilities and their employment opportunities after graduation from a four-year university in the Mid-Atlantic Region of the United States.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to reveal and understand how college students with physical disabilities perceive their disability and how the disability influences their ability to obtain employment after graduation. In addition, this study examined barriers to employment and the available programs that improve employment opportunities of college students with disabilities.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the *lived employment experiences* of seniors and recent graduates with physical disabilities?

2. What are participants' perceptions of how their disabilities influence their ability to obtain employment opportunities after graduation from college?

3. How do seniors and recent graduates with physical disabilities perceive the contribution of career services in their preparation for the employment process

in terms of the job readiness skills such as interviewing, resume writing, disclosure of disability, and how to request reasonable accommodations?

Significance of the Study

This study increases the awareness of administrators, educators, researchers, and policy-makers in higher education of the disparities and barriers to employment for college students with disabilities. This study served as an impetus of change in career services programs targeted for students with disabilities. There was credible evidence of a gap in the literature such that an investigation of this topic was necessary, as there were limited numbers of qualitative studies on this topic. Most employment studies were driven by numbers and are quantitative in nature. This study provided a *voice* for an otherwise disenfranchised group of college students that is not adequately represented through their lived experiences.

Paradigm of Inquiry

The knowledge claim and epistemological perspective appropriate for this study is the *Advocacy/Participatory Knowledge Claim*. The advocacy/participatory knowledge claim emerged in the 1980s to address marginalized individuals and groups (Creswell, 2003; Mertens, 1999). This paradigm provides a *voice* for the marginalized through a phenomenological study on college students with disabilities and recommends social and political change in higher education, and its proponents posit that more thorough measures are needed to liberate those that remain disenfranchised. This knowledge claim relates to issues of "change and empowerment" (Creswell, 2003, p. 6). Researchers subscribing to this school of thought assert that the process needs to be grounded in

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politics and include actions for reform that positively change the lives of the marginalized and disenfranchised (Creswell, 2003). This paradigm of inquiry is appropriate in studying people with disabilities who are referred to in the literature as *disenfranchised*. This approach is germane to the current study, and the paradigm is aligned with a pragmatic approach to the main research questions.

<div align="center">Theoretical Framework</div>

The models of disability and critical social theory help to define the targeted population of this study and frame the study. There are four theoretical models of disability that have evolved over the past 40 years that are used to describe, define, and explain *disability* (Altman, 2001; Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997; Mitra, 2006): (a) the *Medical Model of Disability* (Parsons, 1975); (b) the *Social Model of Disability* (Oliver, 1995); (c) the *Nagi Model* (Nagi, 1965); and (d) the *International Classification of Functioning* (Strucki et al., 2002). However, no one model or theory is all-inclusive to explaining and defining disability. Theoretical models of disability show a positive progression and currently portray people with disabilities as capable (Mitra, 2006), whereas the medical-oriented models portray people with disabilities as sick or ill. In addition, the Critical Social Theory (Calhoun, 1995) is strongly aligned to the aforementioned theoretical models of disability and enlightens the study on people with disabilities by addressing "social constructivism," cultural diversity, or multiculturalism (p. 2). Furthermore, the critical social theory is aligned with the paradigm of inquiry and the models of disability. These theories and models are discussed further in Chapter II.

Research Methodology

This study utilized a phenomenological approach to examine students with disabilities and how they perceived their disability influenced their ability to obtain employment opportunities after graduation by revealing their *lived experiences* of searching for employment (Creswell, 2003). Phenomenology is used in research studies to ascertain knowledge about how people think and feel (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). Phenomenological research is a strategy associated with the "essence" of human experiences dealing with particular phenomena that is expressed or described by participants in a research study (Creswell, 2003; Moustakas, 1994).

The work of Moustakas (1994) defines empirical phenomenology as "a return to experience in order to obtain far-reaching descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (p. 13). Moustakas refers to the work of Giorgi (1985) as a descriptive, two-level phenomenological research process. Level I involves obtaining data with intensive repeated interviews using open-ended questions; Level II describes experiences using reflection, analysis, and interpretation of the participant's story (cited in Moustakas, 1994). A discussion of the research design for this study recognizes the work of Husserl (1931), who is considered a critical force in the realm of transcendental phenomenology (cited in Morrissette, 1999, Moustakas, 1994). Knowledge is viewed as a perception and the real meaning of things as they emerge from the interviews (Moustakas, 1994). All knowledge is based on the experiences of participants, and what is revealed from those

experiences is considered the *phenomenon* (Moustakas, 1994). A complete description of the research methodology is provided in Chapter III.

<p align="center">Delimitations</p>

College students with physical disabilities were identified because these participants were germane to the study and more visible on college campuses. In order to make this study more controllable, I narrowed the focus to interviewing eight students with physical disabilities in a private urban four-year university in the Mid-Atlantic Region of the United States.

The types of participants I recruited for this study are students with physical disabilities. A physical disability is defined as "resulting from congenital conditions, accidents, or progressive neuromuscular diseases" (Montgomery College, 2005, p. 1). These disabilities carry a multiplicity of characteristics: wheelchair users; students using assistive devices, such as canes, crutches, scooters, and electric wheelchairs; low back problems; amputations of upper or lower extremities; spina bifida; spinal cord injuries; multiple sclerosis; muscular dystrophy; severe rheumatoid arthritis; orthopedic impairments; cardiac conditions; cystic fibrosis; polio; and sensory disabilities, such as hearing impaired, deaf, and persons who are blind. While this is not an inclusive list, it is very representative of many physical disabilities found on college campuses.

Furthermore, in phenomenological research studies, maintaining a *homogenous* population of participants is important (Creswell, 1998, 2005; Glesne, 1999). Participants that share similar disabilities or the same experiences allowed the researcher to describe the essence of experiences and the phenomenon as it relates to one disability group.

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Purposive focused sampling was used for this study. For these reasons, only students with physical disabilities were examined, and the findings may not be generalizable to other disability types.

Limitations

Three limitations occurred in this study. The first limitation was the challenges and hurdles associated with access. The initial intent of this researcher was to conduct a study at one public and one private four-year university. However, the difficulties associated with access to the public institution did not allow this researcher to gain access. As such, I had to limit the study to a private four-year urban university in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The inability to gain access at both institutions limited the opportunities to make any assessment about any differences or similarities shared in the experiences about employment and disability for students at a public and private university. Second, there were challenges encountered with access to participants at the selected site. The "gatekeeper" (Creswell, 2005) was the principal individual who gave permission to enter the research site. The gatekeeper also identified all students for the study. The gatekeeper was critical in gaining access and in the selection of participants for this study. The gatekeeper determined the types of disabilities and the year in college. Due to the gatekeeper's selection of students, two students were seniors and six students were recent graduates, which created a disproportionate number of seniors and students who were recent graduates. Third, findings in this study represented a small sample at one private urban four-year university and are not generalizable to a larger population.

Definition of Terms

Americans with Disabilities Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990,

otherwise known as the ADA or Public Law 101-336, is a federal statute that serves as

the most recent civil rights legislation for people with disabilities. The law provides

protections for qualified persons with disabilities in all aspects of basic life to include

employment, higher education, state and local governments, public accommodations,

transportation, and telecommunications (Kaplan & Lee, 1995; Raines & Rossow, 1994;

Woodatch, 1990).

Career Services Center. This is the designated office at a university that provides

services to students to enhance students' job search, such as "job-related resources,

experiential education opportunities, career counseling, career exploration, career

assessments, resume, interviewing assistance, and job leads using electronic software"

(David, 2006, p. 8). Career services open up opportunities to college students to assist

them with, ". . . career interests, values, and skills. Students also learn about current labor

trends, identify potential careers, create effective resumes, practice interview skills, and

develop a personalized career action plan" (Montgomery College, Career/Transfer

Center, http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/studevrv/transfer-center.html,

2007, p. 1; Norton & Field, 1998).

Cooperative Education. Cooperative education is work-based experiential

learning located at employer worksites that provide job skills and employment experience

for college students. Cooperative education programs also provide additional supports,

such as mentoring, assistive technology, job readiness skills, resume writing, and

interviewing skills, to enhance employability (Burgstahler, 1995).

Disability. According to the ADA (1990), a person with a disability "(1) has a

physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,

(2) has a record of such impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment" (p.

7; EEOC, 2006c, p. 1; Kaplan & Lee, 1995)**.** A Glossary of Disability Terms is provided

in Appendix F, which includes terms and phrases germane to the disability community.

According to the Jobs Accommodation Network (JAN), a federal disability agency, it is

important to use proper disability etiquette

(http://www.jan.wvu.edu/links/disres.htm#Etiquette) when writing or speaking about

people with disabilities.

Disability Support Services (DSS). This is the office designated on any two-year

or four-year college campus to provide the expertise and services in the area of disability-

related accommodations. The DSS Office has full authority as deemed by the institution's

Board of Trustees or the President to determine eligibility of qualified students with

disabilities and serves as an advocate and liaison for students with faculty and staff

(Association on Higher Education and Disability [AHEAD], 2005). This office

coordinates and provides reasonable accommodations, promotes an inclusive campus

environment, encourages student independence, and provides assistive technology

(University of North Dakota, 2004).

Discrimination. The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

(EEOC) (2005) defines discrimination as any practice that includes any form of unjust

employment practices based on race, color, sex, national origin, disability, and age; any

retaliation against a person that filed a charge of discrimination; or any employment

decision made based on stereotypes about the abilities or performance of a person based

on that person's protected class.

DO-IT. This is an acronym for Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and

Technology—an influential program offered at the University of Washington for college

students with disabilities in science and technology (Burgstahler, Wild, & Smallman,

2000). The prototype is used to improve career success in science and technical fields for

high school and college students with disabilities.

Employment. According to the Social Security Administration, employment is

viewed as *substantial gainful employment* or *substantial gainful activity* (SGA) (Social

Security Administration, 2007; Virginia Commonwealth University, 2006). This term is

used to determine the work activity of people with disabilities according to the Social

Security Administration. SGA determines the termination of any disability benefits once

a person with a disability becomes employed. SGA is calculated at $860.00 or above per

month in wages (Social Security Administration, 2007; Virginia Commonwealth

University, 2006).

Job Readiness Skills. These are the soft skills necessary to get a job, stay

employed, and advance (Welfare Information Network, 2000), such as interviewing

techniques, resume writing, how to disclose disability to an employer, and how to request

reasonable accommodations in the workplace (National Center on Workforce and

Disability/Adult, 2005; Schutt, 1999).

Students with Disabilities (SWD). These are qualified students who meet the definition of disability according to the ADA and have been deemed eligible for services and accommodations by the DSS providers of a higher education institution (Connecticut College, 2003; Montgomery College, 2005).

Summary

This chapter presented an introduction and overview of the proposed study. It included the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, paradigm of inquiry, theoretical framework, a brief description of the methodology, delimitations and limitations of the study, and definition of terms related to the study. While there are substantial quantitative studies on employment of people with disabilities at the national and state levels, a substantial gap existed because there was limited qualitative employment studies conducted on the perceptions of college students with disabilities. The essence of this study is to understand students' perceptions about the challenges associated with looking for jobs and to reveal whether or not during the employment search process they felt marginalized or discriminated against due to their disabilities.

Furthermore, this study provided a first-hand perspective of a disenfranchised population of college students in a private four-year university in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Chapter II provides a review of the literature.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Higher Education and Disability

In order to examine the existing literature on college students with disabilities and employment, a discussion of the following topics is provided: (a) historical perspective on disability and higher education; (b) overview of disability employment legislation; (c) national perspectives on disability; (d) students with disabilities in higher education; (e) college students in the Mid-Atlantic Region of the United States; (f) disproportionate hiring of students with disabilities; (g) career services in higher education; (h) programs tailored to improve employment outcomes; (i) students' perceptions about disability and employment; (j) employers' attitudes about employment; and (k) changes in disability and employment approaches. The review of the literature in this chapter is based on empirical studies as well as practitioner-based articles. It also presents a review of quantitative studies to illuminate the enormity of the stated problem as well as qualitative studies demonstrating the theoretical changes and approaches to disability and employment. Finally, a theoretical framework is provided that helps to define and clarify the targeted population. Theory in this context illuminates the challenges of defining what it means to have a disability and the perceptions of society related to this group.

Historical Perspective on Disability and Higher Education

The middle of the twentieth century was the first time individuals with disabilities in the United States were provided training beyond high school (Burgstahler, 1995). College students with disabilities (veterans) appeared in great numbers after World War II with the advent of increased social services, improved medical care, and financial aid

programs such as the GI Bill allowing veterans with disabilities to have access to higher education. As a result, the 1960s was a hallmark for the emergence of individuals with disabilities on American college campuses (Burgstahler, 1995). While the GI Bill of 1944 (Rudolph, 1990) provided access to higher education training for veterans with disabilities, it did not provide civil rights protection. The evolution of more substantial non-discrimination legislation appeared as a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Lazerson, 1987). Consequently, earlier civil rights laws spawned the promulgation of two major laws for people with disabilities: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Overview of Disability Employment Legislation

It is estimated that 6% to 9% of all college students in the United States have a disability, and these students are hired after graduation disproportionately as compared to their non-disabled peers (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Burgstahler & Lopez, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 1996). Despite employment legislation, students with disabilities are still underemployed, and disability discrimination in employment still exists. Figure 1 shows the delineation of college students with disabilities at approximately 6% of the total population in 1995-1996, according to the Department of Education.

Did not report
any disability
94%

Percent
100

Reported
any disability
6%

40

29

23
21

20

16   16

3

0
Learning   Orthopedic   Other*   Hearing   Visual   Speech
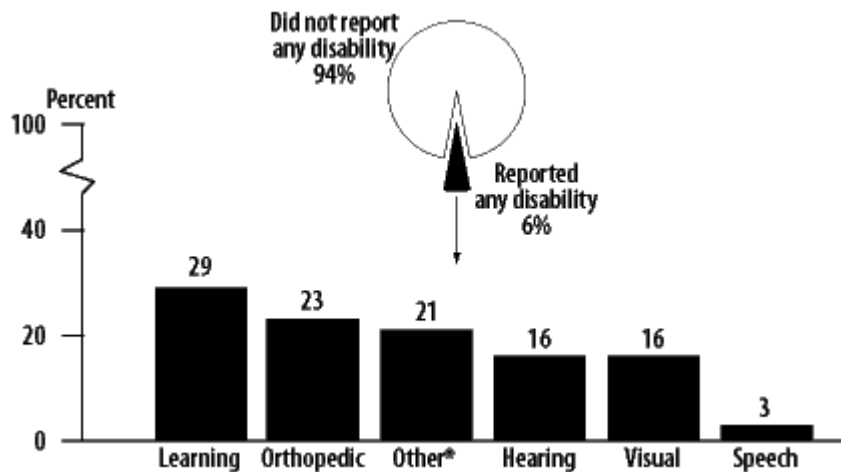
Figure 1. Percentage of 1995-96 undergraduates who reported a disability and, among those with disabilities, the percentage reporting each disability type.

*Any other health-related disability or impairment.

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 because some students reported multiple disabilities.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1995-1996). *National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS: 96).* Undergraduate Data Analysis System. Washington, DC: Author.

    Over the past 32 years, practitioners, clinicians, legislators, and people with disabilities have tried to define *disability*. Legislation has been a critical factor in the definition and treatment of people with disabilities. *Disability,* once called "handicap" during the 1970s, refers to an underlying physical or mental condition (Rothstein, 1998; U.S. Census Bureau, 2004b). The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 used the term "handicapped," portraying a negative connotation for people with disabilities. However, "today, *disability* is seen as a complex interaction between a person and his or her environment" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004b, p. 1), including the development of more comprehensive disability rights legislation. The disability movement (Welch, 2004)

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began with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rothstein, 1998), emphasizing *person first language*. The ADA changed the law to reflect *person first language*; and, today, the word "disability" is the preferred choice. The public perception of disability has also changed over time and with the era of the ADA.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provide civil rights protections for college students with disabilities and impact the manner in which postsecondary institutions in America treat college students with disabilities. Collectively, both laws set forth mandates for higher education institutions (Daddona, 2001; Hernandez et al., 2000; Kaplan & Lee, 1995; Raines & Rossow, 1994; Thomas, 2000). Both statutes are grounded in the *Disability Movement* (Welch, 2004). As a result, institutions are required to provide students with disabilities equal access to all programs and services in mainstreamed settings together with their non-disabled classmates (Burgstahler, 1995; Latham & Latham, 1996). An overview of these laws provides a perspective on the requirements of each law and their impact on postsecondary institutions in the United States.

The first landmark disability employment legislation was The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 94-142) (Kaplan & Lee, 1995; Kennedy & Harris, 2005; Raines & Rossow, 1994; The Rehabilitation Act, 1973; Zames-Fleischer & Zames, 2001). The Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination in employment towards people with disabilities. This law started the disability rights movement in the 1970s (Welch, 2004). Section 504 of the law provides protection and alternatives for students with disabilities in postsecondary institutions (Burgstahler, 1995; Leuchovius, 1994; Raines & Rossow,

1994; Rothstein, 1998; Thomas, 2000) and states that schools may not discriminate solely on the basis of disability. This provision of the statute pinpoints the criteria that are used to establish whether a college student is both disabled and eligible for services (Thomas, 2000). Section 504 also states that schools may not discriminate solely on the basis of disability and must insure that the programs offered, including all extra curricular activities, are made accessible to students with disabilities (Leuchovius, 1994; Thomas, 2000). Specifically, the law states according to Burgstahler (1995) and Kaplan and Lee (1995):

> No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (p. 822).

Section 504 applies to all schools that receive federal dollars (Thomas, 2000). Only private institutions that do not receive federal funding are exempt from Section 504. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has jurisdiction over enforcement of Section 504 (Thomas, 2000). OCR enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. "Practically every school district and postsecondary school in the United States is subject to one or both of these laws, which have similar requirements" (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 1). This section of the law specifically mandates reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities to receive academic adjustments and equal access to all programs and services.

The second major law impacting colleges and universities is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336). The ADA is the first comprehensive civil rights legislation to cover all aspects of the life of a person with a disability (ADA, 1990; Hernandez et al., 2000; Houtenville & Burkhauser, 2004; Kaplan & Lee, 1995; Raines & Rossow, 1994; Rothstein, 1998; Zames-Fleischer & Zames, 2001). The ADA has five titles Title I: Employment; Title II: Public Services, including State and Local Governments, Title III: Public Accommodations, Title IV: Telecommunications Relay Services, and Title V: Miscellaneous Provisions. While the ADA mandated all colleges and universities in the United States to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and to offer equal access, an employment disparity still exists.

These titles impact postsecondary institutions in several ways. In particular, Title II applies to public entities (all community colleges and public four-year institutions). Title III applies to private colleges and universities "wholly owned and operated by a religious organization that does not receive federal funds" (Madaus, 2000, p. 12; Thomas, 2000). The EEOC has regulatory jurisdiction over Titles I and II. Conversely, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has jurisdiction over enforcement for Title III of the ADA (Thomas, 2000). Title I, the Employment provision of the law, requires public and private employers as well as public and private universities with 25 or more employees to provide reasonable accommodations to enable a qualified person with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job (ADA, 1990; Daddona, 2001; EEOC Technical Assistance Manual, 1992; Latham & Latham, 1996; Rubin & Roessler, 2001; Zames-Fleischer & Zames, 2001).

The two most critical sections of the ADA surround the *definition of disability* and *reasonable accommodations*. First, the definition of disability is supported with a three-pronged description stating that an individual with a disability is a person who has "(1) a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities, (2) a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment" (ADA, 1990; EEOC Technical Assistance Manual, 1992, p. I-9; Zames-Fleischer & Zames, 2001). Second, the reasonable accommodation provision is defined in the ADA as "any modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that enables a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity" (ADA, 1990; Daddona, 2001; EEOC Technical Assistance Manual 1992, p. III-2).

While both of these provisions primarily address the workplace, they are given equal weight and status in higher education under Titles II and III. The same principles apply to determining eligibility for services, classroom accommodations, and equal access. The definition of disability is the same for all persons with a disability regardless of the environment.

The ADA has had a more far-reaching impact on higher education. Under Title II, it requires that public higher education institutions adhere to the standards for compliance set forth to provide equal access to all programs and services (Willis, 2005). Additionally, the ADA requires that all public institutions conduct self-evaluations, "having clearly defined processes for filing grievances for persons with disabilities who feel their rights have been violated. Moreover, under Title II, each institution is responsible for

conducting a self-evaluation of its preparedness and ongoing review of barriers (Willis, 2005).

According to Willis (2005) the barriers under Title II that affect higher education include:

> No exclusions of eligibility based on disability; no discrimination through contact; programs and services offered in an integrated setting, reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures; modifications made to allow the presence of service animals; no discrimination through association of a person with a disability; surcharges to cover the costs of accommodations may not be imposed on the student; and examinations and courses must be accessible (p. 1).

Both the ADA and Section 504 have similarities and one major difference. Both laws are considered civil rights legislation for people with disabilities and prohibit discrimination based solely on disability. Both laws require reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Both laws are critical to the success of students with disabilities receiving equal access to a college education as well as gainful employment. A major difference is that the ADA extends these mandates to private institutions and religious institutions that receive any federal funding (Latham & Latham, 1996; Raines & Rossow, 1994; Rothstein, 1998). Finally, both laws require that students with disabilities are provided free appropriate public education (FAPE) and that students are integrated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) with accommodations to be successful in course work and other educational activities (Latham & Latham, 1996; Rothstein, 1998; Zames-Fleischer & Zames, 2001).

Disability legislation has provided the necessary civil rights for people with disabilities and has structured the way higher education provides programs and services to students with disabilities in the United States. Both of these laws impact the proposed

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study, as students with disability are *empowered* if they have an understanding of the basic tenants of the law. Knowledge of the law will assist graduating seniors and current students to (a) gain access to equal employment opportunities, (b) make requests for reasonable accommodations in the workplace, and (c) understand their rights and responsibilities. Unfortunately, the aforementioned laws have not closed the gap in the disparities of employment of college students with disabilities, leaving this population of students underserved and underemployed.

Disability Discrimination in Employment

Regrettably, "219,890" (EEOC, 2006a, p. 1) ADA employment discrimination complaints were received by the EEOC for the period of July 26, 1992, through September 30, 2005. This type of disability employment discrimination is all too prevalent in the United States today. A total of "39, 182 people with disabilities received $573,904,812" (EEOC, 2006b, p. 1) in monetary benefits as a result of lawsuits for complaints filed under the ADA.

Discrimination, according to the EEOC (2005), is any practice that includes any form of unjust employment practices based on race, color, sex, national origin, disability, and age; any retaliation against a person that filed a charge of discrimination; or any employment decision made based on stereotypes about the abilities or performance of a person based on that person's protected class.

EEOC is the federal agency that regulates employment discrimination complaints included in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352). This law includes the protections for all people with documented disabilities and eligibility under Title I of

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the ADA (EEOC, 1997, 2005; Kaplan & Lee, 1995). Moreover, the ADA prohibits employment discrimination based on disability and provides protection under the Title I employment provisions of the statute.

    While the advent of the ADA helped to create more job opportunities and allowed access to employment for people with disabilities, they still fall behind their non-disabled counterparts in employment rates in the United States (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Brostrand, 2006; Hernandez et al., 2000; Leotta, 2003; Werner, 1992). People with disabilities face employment discrimination due to their disabilities. The reality is that people with disabilities are subject to employment discrimination based solely on their disability (Traustadottir, 1990).

    From July 26, 1992-September 30, 2005 over 200,000 individuals filed charges of employment discrimination based on disability, costing the U.S. government close to $600,000 in monetary benefits (EEOC, 2006b). The data in this section illuminates the horrific problem with employment and disability discrimination in the United States. Inevitably, college students with disabilities will be affected by employment discrimination in their future job searches and during their employment histories. Knowledge of these disability laws will only empower college students with disabilities and offer them the basic skills necessary to protect themselves from workplace discrimination.

National Perspective on Americans with Disabilities

    There are approximately 54 million Americans with disabilities (Hernandez et al., 2000; McNeil, 1997, 2001a, 2001b). Over 33 million of those are between the ages of 16

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and 64 years of age. Of those 33 million, the number employed is approximately 18.6 million. These findings show that 60.1% are men with disabilities, and 51.4% are women with disabilities (DOL, 2003; Hernandez et al., 2000; McNeil, 2001a, 2001b). Statistics regarding people with disabilities and employment are captured through studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). According to statistical report collected by ODEP, while many people with disabilities have been employed and remain employed, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is unacceptably high (Anue & Kroeger, 1977; DOL, 2004b; Leotta, 2003; Werner, 1992).

A profile emerged by type of disability when examining the number of college students with disabilities enrolled in college. Currently, the largest population of college students with disabilities consists of those students with learning disabilities as opposed to previous findings in 1998, which reported that the predominate group found on college campuses consisted of those with visual impairments (Henderson, 2001).

In 2004, the National Organization on Disability (NOD), which was designated to study disability-related issues in the United States, provided an executive summary on several Harris Poll Surveys. In 1986, 1994, 1998 and 2000, the Harris Poll conducted random landmark surveys that provided disparaging facts about Americans with disabilities and the slow progress in the lives of people with disabilities since 1986 (NOD, 2004). For example, in 1998, the Disability/Harris Poll randomly surveyed 1,000 Americans with disabilities ages 18 and older; the findings indicate that generally, there are disadvantages spread throughout the United States for people with disabilities versus

non-disabled Americans (NOD, 2004). Moreover, the study reports that Americans with disabilities continue to lag well behind other Americans in many of the most basic aspects of life (Hendershot, 2001; NOD, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; 2004), including employment. The 1998 study further concludes that underemployment still remains for people with disabilities versus their non-disabled peers and that this disparity does not appear to be improving (DOL, 1999). The 2004 NOD summary indicates that all too frequently, the progress for Americans with disabilities is still moving too slowly and still only approximately 30% to 35% of the population are employed full-time or part-time compared to the 78% of their non-disabled peers (Cornell University, 2003-2007; Daddona, 2001; Hernandez et al., 2000; Leotta, 2003; NOD, 2004; DOL, 2006). These statistics suggest the disparities of people with disabilities and the critical need for further investigation that is proposed in this study. However, the proposed study will take a phenomenological approach to reveal the perceptions of college students with disabilities and their ability to obtain jobs.

The NOD report further substantiates the magnitude of the problem in the 1998 study indicating that "29% of adults with disabilities, ages 18-64 years, worked full or part-time, compared with 79% of the non-disabled population" (Cornell University, 2003-2007; Daddona, 2001; Stodden & Dowrick, 2000, p. 1). The findings support the significance of people with disabilities who are of working age and unemployed. Of this number, approximately 6% to 7% are freshman college students (Horn et al., 1999; Kaye, 1997; Kennedy & Harris, 2005). As such, these studies provide a glaring reality of the continued disparities seen in employment for people with disabilities.

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Disappointingly, 40 years of disability employment laws in the United States have not leveled the playing field for people with disabilities. Repeatedly, there is evidence in the literature that there are copious quantitative employment studies concerning employment rates on people with disabilities, but a gap still remains in the literature providing a plethora of qualitative studies addressing college students, employment, and disability.

The proposal for better job training, transition preparation, and equal access in postsecondary education will improve the rates of employment for adults with disabilities as well as the quality of employment (Kennedy & Harris, 2005; Stodden & Dowrick, 2000). There are "49.7 million people with disabilities in the United States with a ratio of 1-in-5 U.S. residents or 19%" (Interagency Committee on Disability Research [ICDR], 2007; U.S. Census Bureau, 2004a, p. 1). The number of Americans with severe disabilities (unable to perform one or more major life activities) is 24.1 million. Persons between the ages of 16 and 54 are likely to have employment disparities at the level of approximately 22.6% (Kennedy & Harris, 2005; McNeil, 1997, 2001b). Therefore, existing research supports underemployment of people with disabilities as a national issue that also permeates American colleges and universities. Consequently, obtaining a good education and a college degree is critical to the future success for college students with disabilities and a good first step toward self-sufficiency (Leotta, 2003), but the literature suggests that even after obtaining a college degree, students with disabilities are still not hired after graduation. In this study, reference to college students with disabilities

and employment fills a gap in the literature as to what students' perceptions are for this disparity.

On the whole, the literature suggested that nationally, people with disabilities are not prepared for work (Kennedy & Harris, 2005; Stodden & Dowrick, 2000). There is a need for better job training and job transition skills, which will improve the quality of employment obtained by people with disabilities (Kennedy & Harris, 2005; Stodden & Dowrick, 2000). While the quantitative research discussed illuminates the large numbers of people with disabilities in our nation (DOL, 2003; Henderson, 2001; Hernandez et al., 2000; Kennedy & Harris, 2005; McNeil, 2001a, 2001b; U.S. Census Bureau, 2004a), there are limited qualitative employment studies readily available that describe the experiences and disparities of college students with disabilities. Therefore, a phenomenological study provides current data on the perceptions of college students with disabilities and their views on the challenges to obtaining gainful employment after graduation.

Students with Disabilities in Higher Education

Several profiles emerge in the overall demographics of students with disabilities. In 2000, national enrollments suggest that 1.5 million first-time, full-time students enrolled in college (Henderson, 2001; Kennedy & Harris, 2005). Out of the 1.5 million, 6% to 7% self-identified that they had a disability (Henderson, 2001; Kennedy & Harris, 2005, University of Washington, 2001-2004; U.S. Department of Education, 1999). These students represented 11% of all undergrads. The number of college students with disabilities who are of working age and unemployed is supported with findings reflected

in the report entitled *Profile of Students in Postsecondary Education* (National Center for

Education Statistics [NCES], 1987). In the fall of 1986, "12.5 million students were

enrolled in the nation's postsecondary institutions" (NCES, 1987, p. 1). Of this, "the

number of students reporting any disability is 1,319,229, which is 10.5% of the total

population" (p. 1) of college students. Later studies show a drop in the number of college

students with disabilities self-reporting at 6% (Henderson, 2001; Kennedy & Harris,

2005; U.S. Department of Education, 1995-1996).

In a comprehensive national study conducted in 1999 of 21,000 undergraduates,

approximately "six percent report a disability" (Horn et al., 1999, p. iii; University of

Washington, 2001-2004). Of this number, "29 % report a learning disability; 16% report

an orthopedic disability; 16% report non-correctable vision impairment; 16% report

hearing impairments or deafness; and 3% report a speech impairment" (p. iii). This

computes a ratio of "one in five or 21% of all college students having some type of 'other

health-related' disability" (p. iii). These findings suggest that the largest disability group

represented is students with learning disabilities. These numbers show a consistent ratio

of enrollments of students with disabilities in the United States, and they are consistent

with other studies mentioned in the literature.

The study conducted by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)

on college students with disabilities remains the only source of longitudinal data from

full-time, first-time freshmen with disabilities (Henderson, 1992). The report indicates

that the "percentage of full-time freshmen that reported a disability grew from 1978 to

1991, with 2.60% in 1978 and 8.80% in 1991" (Werner, 1992, p. 3). The apparent lack of

current or more updated longitudinal studies is a weakness in the literature. Possibly, there is a lack of interest in college students with disabilities, or they are not seen as a priority in higher education research. The apparent deficiency of current research in this area speaks to how much this population of college students is misunderstood. This current study fills the gap in the literature by providing qualitative research data to stress the urgency of devoting more scholarly research to examine the dilemmas of employment disparities faced by college students with disabilities.

In postsecondary education, the statistical overview presents an increase in the numbers for college students with disabilities with data from 1992-1993. The dada show that 6.3% of college undergraduates and 4.0% of graduate and professional school students said they had a disability (Justesen et al., 2007; Kaye, 1997; U.S. Census Bureau, 2007, p. 3; U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2007) show an increase in the number of college students with disabilities, reporting "2.2 million undergraduates with a disability, as of the 2003-04 school year or 11 percent of the undergraduate population" (p. 3; U.S. Department of Education, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Additionally, 33% of college students with disabilities ages 25 to 64 with a "non-severe disability . . . compares with 43 percent with no disability and 22 percent with a severe disability" (p. 3). The 2003-2004 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) further indicates the characteristics for the student population in terms of gender: "Males at 11.2%; Females at 11.4%; Race/ethnicity: White at 11.7%, Black at 10.7%, Hispanic at 10.9%, Asian at 7.1%, American Indian at 14.8%, Pacific Islander at 9.1%, Multiple

Races at 14.8%, and Other [includes respondents having origins in a race not listed]"

(U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Table 1 presents these characteristics. In analysis

of the data, males are slightly higher than females with disabilities, and American Indian

students with disabilities are the largest population.

Table 1

Percentage of Undergraduates Who Reported Some Type of Disability by Student Characteristics: 2003-2004

Student Characteristic Total (50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico)	Any disabilities
Gender:	11.3
Males	11.2
Females	11.4
Race/Ethnicity:	
White	11.7
Black	10.7
Hispanic	10.9
Asian	7.1
American Indian	14.6
Pacific Islander	9.1
Multiple Races	14.8
Other (includes respondents having origins in a race not listed)	15.0

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). *Profile of undergraduates in U.S. postsecondary education institutions: 2003-04* (p. 1). (NCES 2006-184). Washington, DC: Author.

The U.S. Department of Education, NCES (2003-2004) statistical data indicate,

"10.4% of college students with disabilities are enrolled in private for-profit institutions";

and, "for 4-year non-doctorate-granting institutions, 11.2% with 9.0% for 4-year

doctorate-granting institutions" (p. 159). Private not-for profit institutions report 13.2%

enrolled. The percentages of students reporting an orthopedic disability (physical) make

up 23.6% at private not-for-profit and 30.7% at private for-profit institutions, which is larger than previously reported (p. 159).

While all of the data presented in this section provide a detailed overview, the reliability of the data is questionable, as the data collected in higher education is based on a voluntary self-report by the students that enroll, and colleges and universities collect data differently (Burgstahler, 1995; National Science Foundation, 2003). As such, the data may show factual errors. Moreover, according the NCES (1999), there are no "nationally representative data available from postsecondary institutions about the enrollment of students with disabilities or the services and accommodations they provide" (p. 1). Because records are not uniformly maintained, it further complicates the ability of the federal government to determine the degree to which colleges and universities can make information available about these students and reinforces the necessity of regularly collecting data (NCES, 1999), which only strengthens the idea that the available data have inaccuracies.

College Students in the Mid-Atlantic Region and Employment

The Mid-Atlantic Region consists of six states: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Pennsylvania (DBTAC Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, http://www.adainfo.org/state/, 2007). According to Cornell University's 2005 Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics (Stats RRTC) report on the numbers of people with disabilities employed in those states between the working ages of 21 and 64, there were "36.4% in the District of Columbia,

42.8% in Maryland, 36.1% in Pennsylvania, 40.7% in Virginia, 25.5% in West Virginia, and 43.4% in Delaware" (p. E).

Accordingly, the U.S. Department of Education's, NCES 2003-2004 statistical data sets are provided every four years. The 2003-2004 study data were collected from a sample of about 80,000 undergraduates representing 19 million undergraduates (including 25,000 community college students) within the 50 states (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2003-2004, p. 7). In a sample survey entitled *Profile of Undergraduates in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions: 2003-04, With a Special Analysis of Community College Students*, an overview of college students with disabilities in universities for the Mid-Atlantic Region shows the numbers of college students enrolled as 10.6% and 2.3% reporting difficulty working at a job (U.S. Department of Education, 2003-2004).

The NCES 2003-2004 study in terms of "work" while enrolled reports, "13.1% of students with any type of disability did not work; 10.2% worked part-time; and 11.3% worked full-time"](p. 160) at 35 or more hours/week. Stoddard, Jans, Ripple, and Kraus (1998) suggest that adults with disabilities look for work through various mechanisms. Over, "50 percent" of adults with disabilities report securing work by using personal contacts (p. 1), while others report finding jobs. "21 percent" (p. 1) indicate they found jobs through help-wanted ads, mainstream employment services, special programs for people with disabilities, or college training/placement programs.

The statistical data in this section illuminate the numbers of college students in the Mid-Atlantic Region in which the study was conducted. The numbers of college

students with disabilities in this region are closely aligned to the total number of college students on the national level at 11%. Moreover, the numbers of students not working does not show a promising overview.

Students Disproportionately Hired

Leotta (2003) discusses theory, practice, and career paths for students with disabilities. Leotta (2003) indicates that a well-rounded education is the principal move towards self-sufficiency in today's society. A college education provides the first step towards independence (Leotta, 2003). The University of Tennessee's (UT) Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) in Knoxville, Tennessee, started with the premise of bringing together disability service providers and career services staff with the hopes of improving employability of college students with disabilities (Leotta, 2003). In 1998, COSD started with coalition building in response to employment disparities for college students with disabilities by creating a model program that would center on career planning (Leotta, 2003).

The UT program utilized a tailored approach to career services for college students with disabilities, realizing there were no other model programs available to duplicate. The effort began with the UT team visiting 20 universities and 23 national employers seeking standards with the hopes of understanding what was necessary (Leotta, 2003). The goals of COSD were to train disability service providers and provide career services as well as outreach to encourage other universities to emulate their efforts (Leotta, 2003). As a result of their initial efforts, the COSD program is a nationally

recognized and federally funded program offering internships and jobs in order to assist students with disabilities in improving their job experiences (Leotta, 2003).

Researchers (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Leotta, 2003; Werner, 1992) suggest that students with disabilities face at least two barriers to employment. First, students with disabilities are disproportionately hired after graduation compared to their non-disabled peers. This gap in hiring is reportedly due to the lack of knowledge, self- advocacy skills, and job-seeking skills needed to secure employment (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Leotta, 2003; Werner, 1992). Thus, students with disabilities are behind in their job-search skills and abilities after college, and they are often rendered non-competitive (Leotta, 2003). Second, it is suggested that career center programs are not adequately meeting the needs of graduating students with disabilities (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Boen, Brown, & Roessler, 1994; Kennedy & Harris, 2005). One solution to improving the employment outcomes for college students with disabilities is through building more cooperative education programs (Burgstahler, 1995).

College students with disabilities are one of the most underemployed legally protected groups in America. There are disparities in the numbers of college students with disabilities in employment. This is not just a problem in higher education; it is much broader. According to the seminal 1998 Harris Poll of Americans with Disabilities survey conducted by NOD, "Americans with disabilities continue to lag well behind other Americans . . . and large gaps still exist" (DOL, 1999, p. 1). The literature suggests that this national problem permeates the higher education system, and college students with

disabilities also lag behind their non-disabled peers in the employment arena

(Burgstahler, 1995; Cornell University, 2005; Leotta, 2003; NOD 2004).

Finally, the disparities in employment between students with disabilities and their

non-disabled peers are substantiated in government-supported statistical reports. The

Urban Institute, using information from the National Interview Survey with a grant from

the Department of Labor, conducted an employment study entitled *Why Adults with*

Disabilities Have Difficulty Finding Jobs (Loprest & Maag, 2001). The study examined

employer practices in response to employment provisions of the ADA and barriers to

employment for adults with disabilities. The study surveyed 16,000 Americans with

disabilities and asked adults about their disabilities, their jobs, and requesting reasonable

accommodations. Self-reports provided their exact experiences with restrictions in

defining disability in the "11.3 million working age adults between the ages of 18 and

64" (Loprest & Maag, 2001, p. 1). The study reports that 37% were working in 1994-

1995 (Cornell University, 2005; Loprest & Maag, 2001). The sample was divided into

two categories: (a) those with a high likelihood to work and, if provided reasonable

accommodations, would have a better chance in working; and (b) those with a low

likelihood of not working or retired or could not perform work-related tasks even with a

reasonable accommodation. The findings suggest that more than 50% of those not

working had problems in several areas: (a) no appropriate jobs available; (b) family

responsibilities as a problem at 34%; (c) lack of transportation; (d) limited information

about jobs; (e) inadequate training; and (f) fear of losing health insurance or Medicaid

benefits (Loprest & Maag, 2001, p. 1). Conversely, when examining reasonable

accommodations in the workplace, Loprest and Maag (2001) found that 33% of people

with disabilities who were working and those not working required workplace

accommodations. The other two-thirds in this group could not perform work-related job

tasks without requesting workplace accommodations or were not even aware that they

had a legal right to request accommodations from their employers (Loprest & Maag,

2001). The accommodations most frequently reported in the workplace were "accessible

parking or an accessible public transit stop nearby, an elevator-accessible building,

adaptations to work stations, and special work arrangements" (Loprest & Maag, 2001,

p. 1).

Bruyere (2000), at Cornell University, conducted quantitative studies to examine

employer practices according to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. A random

sample of human resource professionals and EEO staff from the private and public

sectors were surveyed by telephone and asked about their employment practices in

relation to Title I employment provisions of the ADA. The categories reported on by the

study were divided in to the following categories: (a) accommodation and access needs of

applicants and employees with disabilities; (b) types of access provided to people with

disabilities; (c) barriers to employment; (d) effective reduction strategies; and

(e) difficulty with workplace change (Bruyere, 2000). The study reports that in terms of

accommodations, 82% of private employers made facilities accessible as opposed to 93%

of public sector employers (Bruyere, 2000).

The study's findings also indicated there were seven barriers to employment that

exist for people with disabilities, which include "lack of job-related experience, lack of

required skills/training, supervisor knowledge of accommodation, attitudes/stereotypes, cost of accommodations, cost of supervision, and cost of training" (Bruyere, 2000, p. 3). Out of the seven barriers, the lack of job-related experience dominates, and the lack of skills and training is the next highest reason reported with lack of experience. Specifically, "49% reported lack of experience for the private sector and 53% for the public sector" (Bruyere, 2000; p. 3; DOL, 2004b; Hernandez et al., 2000). Conversely, "39% of the private sector versus 45% of the public sector" reported lack of required job skills as a barrier to employment (Bruyere, 2000, p. 3). The research in this section revealed that there are disproportionate numbers of people with disabilities who are unemployed; there are specific reasons why persons with disabilities have problems securing work; there are problems with requesting specific workplace accommodations and they are unaware of their legal rights to request these accommodations; public sector employers provide accommodations 10% more than private sector employers; and, finally, there are predominate problems with barriers to employment such as lack of related experience, lack of required skills, and job training. Unfortunately, this problem is also prevalent among college students with disabilities looking for employment immediately after college graduation.

Career Services in Higher Education

A career is defined as "the multitude of experiences and interactions throughout the lifespan that shapes one's career path" (Silver, Strehorn, & Bourke, 1997, p. 520). Therefore, the role of career centers in higher education is to provide practical information and services to augment students' career goals and plans to transition to the

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workplace (Schutt, 1999). Career education provides services to assist in the preparation

for work and is a lifetime process (Fonosch, Arany, Lee, & Loving, 1982; Friehe, Aune,

& Leuenberger, 1996; McKinnon, 2002; Silver et al., 1997). Career development for all

college students to include students with disabilities is a crucial first step towards

employment (Anue & Kroeger, 1997), and challenges are presented for college students

with disabilities (Friehe et al., 1996; Silver et al, 1997).

The role of the career center is to "support and empower individuals to create and

use personally meaningful career plans (Schutt, 1999). In years past, vocational

rehabilitation state agencies (OSERS, 2004) were closely aligned with secondary

schools' career services (Peterson & González, 2000). In the 1970s and 1980s, a

relationship existed where vocational assessments could be requested before a high

school student with a disability graduated to assist them with career planning (Peterson &

González, 2000). To some extent, a relationship of this nature needs to be extended to

higher education. While it may not be necessary for vocational evaluations at this level of

a student's academic career, it is conceivable that state vocational rehabilitation agencies

should become partners with career center staff to promote employment of college

students with disabilities after graduation.

Silver et al. (1997) conducted a descriptive statistics study using a survey of 47

recent graduates with disabilities. The study examined areas in employment history,

experiences with faculty, service providers, and recent employment experiences. The

findings suggested that the graduates showed differences between students with

disabilities in their selection of majors and the level of career services they received. The

results of the study show, "63.8% had part-time jobs, 65% had full-time jobs, and 32.6% had volunteer work"; and 31.9% of the students in the survey indicated that they were discouraged from pursuing a particular career by faculty (p. 522). More importantly, this study revealed that students were discouraged from selecting a particular career due to their disabilities, which provides major challenges for college students with disabilities in their attempts to choose career fields of interest. The indications for this study are principal to college students with disabilities, as they show direct alignment to disability, career choice, and employment outcomes. Silver et al. suggest that recent graduates with disabilities need to be encouraged by college career counselors to select careers due to interest and desire and not based on disability and/or limitations imposed by the disability. The lack of use of the career services in universities is another problem noted and, according to Silver et al., is an implication for further study. Silver et al. also suggest in their final discussion that more studies need to be conducted using different research methods such as case study and interviews to continue a dialogue on the issues of career development, which is in direct support of my choice of a phenomenological study on college students with disabilities and their transition to work.

In a qualitative study conducted by Anue and Kroeger (1997), a case study method was used. The sample included 13 university students and 9 staff in career services, student employment, and advisory services. Their goal was to identify the major problems of students and the alignment of services. The study indicates that career services providers are not adequately equipped to advise college students with disabilities because of their unique needs (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Fonosch et al., 1982; Silver et al.,

2001). As a result, career service providers often refer students with disabilities to the disability services providers. The findings further suggested that career services for students with disabilities can be improved by examining the external factors as well as students' personal issues to understand their needs and consider tailoring current programs and practices (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Fonosch et al., 1982).

In order to improve employment outcomes, college students with disabilities need to be able to transition from college to work with the required job preparedness skills (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Fonosch et al., 1982; Frieden, 2003). Job preparedness skills, such as the ability to write a good resume, interview with confidence, and articulate their abilities before graduation, are critical to the employment process (Anue & Kroeger, 1997, Fonosch et al., 1982; Norton & Field, 1998). Due to the lack of tailored programs, students with disabilities are not as prepared for the employment search process. They often lack job goals, employment experience, and other critical cooperative work experience or on-the-job training, which are necessary "education building blocks, unfairly rendering them non-competitive versus their counterparts without disabilities" (Leotta, 2003, p. 1). Improvements in employment outcomes for students with disabilities take deliberate practice with a job coach and work with career services counselors (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Boen et al., 1994; Leotta, 2003).

Previous studies (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Boen et al., 1994; Friehe et al., 1996; Fonosch et. al, 1982; Leotta, 2003) indicate that all too frequently, students with disabilities attempt to transition from college to work with little work experience, few employment contacts, and limited experience with the employment process (Anue &

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Kroeger, 1997; Boen et al., 1994; Fonosch et al, 1982). While the literature indicates that these problems are genuine, based on statistical data, these studies fail to mention how college students feel about the employment process. A major gap in the literature is that employment studies fail to provide information on college students' perceptions about employment opportunities or their abilities to compete for jobs after college.

Another important issue is that college career services do not fully understand the unique career development needs of students with disabilities (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Boen et al., 1994; Friehe et al., 1996; Leotta, 2003). Many students with disabilities do not utilize the university career services available to them because of their perception of the lack of ability to assist them due to their unique needs, while most non-disabled students report using these services (Anue & Kroeger, 1997). Furthermore, current career programs are less likely to stress pre-employment planning and specific orientation for college students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities do not feel confident that they will get the tailored and specialized services that include their unique issues (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Fonosch et al., 1982). Researchers Fonosch et al., suggest that a critical component is the training of career counselors. They suggest that career counselors are not empowered with knowledge of the special needs of students with disabilities as much as their disability services peers, resulting many times in unsuitable employment referrals or notifying employers about accommodation needs on the job. The solution, according to Fonosch et al., is to provide these professionals with in-service training, disability awareness training, more disability-related resources, professional development opportunities,

disability legislation training, along with labor market trends and experience with job accommodation training to enhance their comfort level in working with a special population.

In summary, the literature on career services in higher education does not include the perceptions of students with disabilities or their experiences with career centers, which might provide insight into the reason that they are hesitant to engage in career counseling as often as their non-disabled peers. Furthermore, limited research exists on the career development needs of college students with disabilities (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Horn et al., 1999), and further study is necessary.

Programs Tailored to Improve Employability

In most cases, a college degree facilitates securing employment after college (Riconscente, 2004). However, the same opportunity for acquiring a college degree typically does not enhance employment opportunities for students with disabilities, and they often find themselves underemployed after graduation (Riconscente, 2004). The infrequent use of tailored *adjustment-oriented* services designed for students with disabilities needs to be addressed (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Boen et al., 1994; Norton & Field, 1998). Adjustment-oriented programs are a critical link to encouraging students with disabilities to utilize career service centers.

The reasons given for the discrepancies among college students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers are (a) lack of previous work experience, (b) lack of job skills, and (c) lack of "functionally oriented curricula" (Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997, p. 197). Therefore, researchers Phelps and Hanley-Maxwell offer several ways that

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students with disabilities can improve their employability. Programs that improve employability are (a) cooperative education, (b) work-based learning, (c) career services programs tailored for students with disabilities, and (d) workforce recruitment program.

First, the concept of cooperative education has been in practice for over 80 years (Jones, 1994) and is widely recognized by business leaders. Cooperative education, often referred to as work-based learning, applied learning, experiential learning, apprenticeships, occupational learning, and formal education, is found in many colleges and universities. These programs can have an enhancing effect on the outcomes of employment for students with disabilities in their transition from college to work.

Applied learning is also a course of study that applies in-class and on-the-job training where the students are typically paid to work both part-time and full-time. Colleges often provide college credits for cooperative education experiences (Jones, 1994). Most offer an array of services in addition to real work experiences, such as career counseling, resume writing, interview preparation, field experience courses, and seminars (Jones, 1994). Jones describes four cooperative education models that students may choose:

> (1) Parallel: part-time work and part-time study; (2) extended day: full-time study and part-time work or part-time study and full-time work; (3) alternating: full-time work and full-time study in alternating patterns; and (4) internships: structured, out-of-class learning experiences that include a work component. They may be taken either full-time or part-time, with an academic program of study. (p. 2).

Second, the practice of work-based learning, also known as on-the-job training, allows students to work in real employment situations (Gramlich, Crane, Peterson, & Stenhjem, 2003; Jones, 1994; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997). This model uses

"shadowing, informational interviews, workplace tours, as well as intensive training

including workplace mentoring, apprenticeships, and paid employment" (Gramlich et al.,

2003, p. 1). There are benefits for college students with disabilities if they can take

advantage of work-based learning. The benefits according to Gramlich et al. (2003) and

Jones (1994) are as follows:

> Postsecondary benefits of work-based learning for youth while they are still in
> school are identification of career interests, skills, and abilities; exposure to job
> requirements and responsibilities, employer expectations, and workplace
> dynamics; development of critical workplace skills and a solid foundation for
> developing good work habits (p. 1).

Work-based training programs contribute to the improvement of employment

opportunities, and this is repeated throughout the literature. This type of training provides

students with disabilities with more experience and, thus, lends itself to better

competition for job interviews.

Third, Burgstahler (1995) provides researcher-based literature supported on

practice in a paper presented at the California State University in Northridge (CSUN)

conference examining the barriers to employment for students with disabilities in the

areas of science and engineering. Burgstahler established the Disabilities, Opportunities,

Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT) cooperative education program. This program

utilizes assistive technology extensively in helping students with disabilities become

more independent. The program provides job-related skills necessary for students to

compete in the labor market after graduation. The DO-IT program demonstrates its

effectiveness through student testimonials. As such; the DO-IT program uses students'

stories to discuss program successfulness. According to Webster's (1996) dictionary,

success is the "favorable or desired outcome or the achievement of something desired" (p. 673). Therefore, DO-IT success seeks the stories of their students to describe their experiences with the program.

A seminal researcher in this area, Burgstahler, at the University of Washington, indicated in an e-mail communication that stories or anecdotal snapshots measure student success (S. Brugstahler, personal communication, January 22, 2007). To this end, Dr. Burgstahler offered a Web link that provides a plethora of success stories of students' experiences with the DO-IT program, which can be accessed at http://www.washington.edu/doit/Snapshots/2005/. The success and effectiveness of the DO-IT program was further measured by receiving grant dollars from the National Science Foundation in 2002 as the lead agency. A press release dated December 1, 2002, regarding the success of the University of Washington's DO-IT "award-winning" (University of Washington, 2004, p. 1), addresses the collaborative work with the Northwest Alliance for Access to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) with DO-IT and the successful participation of people with disabilities in the $4 million grant program (#HRD-0227995). This in and of itself provides a strong showing and support for the program.

While the DO-IT program is a valuable model used to improve employment outcomes, it is limited to students in the sciences and engineering. Conceivably, this model, if replicated across all curricula, would benefit all students with disabilities across the country. Regrettably, limited numbers of students with disabilities are involved with experiential work programs (Anue & Kroeger, 1997). Burgstahler's DO-IT program

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provides insight into the concept of experiential work as a mechanism to improve employment for college students with disabilities.

In a 1994 survey of Income and Program Participation, "the data show that 73.9 percent of people with severe disabilities" are unemployed (Burgstahler et al., 2000, p. 1), and one of the most prevalent barriers to employment for students with disabilities is the lack of technical skills. As such, the transition from high school to work often requires computer experience (Burgstahler et al., 2000), enabling college students with disabilities to be empowered with technical skills and, thus, improving employability. Assistive technology is one of the mechanisms that students with disabilities transitioning from high school to college and then to work need in order to be marketable after college (Burgstahler et al., 2000). While this presentation is important to the body of literature in this area of employment of SWD, this paper appears narrowly focused on students in the state of Washington and students that major in science and engineering.

The employment philosophy of career services is to mainstream students with disabilities in all aspects of employment preparedness (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Boen et al., 1994), but a distinctive strategy needs to be employed to bridge this gap and enhance the abilities of students with disabilities to secure jobs after college graduation. For example, the University of Arkansas' Project Career conducted a three-year study in 1994 designed to help the university to plan career education, career counseling, work experience, mentoring, and placement of students with disabilities.

The Arkansas program includes a work experience course to demonstrate how students with disabilities could be served in a mainstreamed program. The program

incorporates work experience opportunities, placement, employer recruitment, student preparation, supervision, and evaluation. The Arkansas study provides a positive approach to enhancing the employment opportunities for students with disabilities as previous studies recommended (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Boen et al., 1994). The study adds richness to the literature that is missing in more traditional employment data-driven studies. However, the Arkansas study does not include the perceptions or experiences of students with disabilities regarding the integration and mainstreaming services offered to improve their employability.

Finally, the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), a national summer job program for college students with disabilities spearheaded by the U.S. federal government, is used to improve employment outcomes. In 2004, the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (2004c, p. 1) reported that "1,500" college students with disabilities applied to participate in the WRP employment experience through the summer federal jobs program. The 2004 WRP indicates that a record "368 college students and recent graduates with disabilities were placed into summer and permanent jobs" (p. 1). The workforce recruitment program's effectiveness can be measured with empirical data provided in a telephone conversation with the program director on January 23, 2007. The program director indicated that in 2005, 1,904 students were in the database, with approximately 220 colleges and universities participating. Of the 1,904, 350 were placed in summer federal employment (B. Kravitz, personal communication, January 23, 2007). In 2006, 1,900 students with disabilities

were in the database, with 359 job placements reported (B. Kravitz, personal communication, January 23, 2007).

According to U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao, WRP provides most college students with disabilities a benefit necessary to begin their careers (DOL, 2004c). College students with disabilities who take advantage of the summer WRP have increased job skills, increased experiential work, and self-assuredness, which make them more attractive to employers (Burgstahler, 1995; DOL, 2004c; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997). A powerful quote from a student at the University of Tennessee describes his/her perceptions of WRP: "The interview with the government arranged by the Disability-Careers program was the greatest opportunity I have received from UT. It provided a paid internship and an opportunity for a permanent position after graduation" (Leotta, 2003, p. 1). Clearly, this program, if offered nationwide, would resonate loudly among other college students if given the opportunity to have real work experiences. While this program is obviously successful, it is not a campus-initiated program, but one originated by the federal government with strong ties to many colleges and universities in the United States.

All of the programs mentioned in this section add to the body of literature on employment of people with disabilities, particularly college students with disabilities. Each program supports the development of specific programs tailored to address the special needs of people with disabilities and is critical in supporting this study. Each program measures success either through practice-based literature on students' stories and testimonials or measurable data. A lack of students' experiences or what they think

about their participation in these programs or what is needed to improve their

employability suggests a gap in the literature.

<p align="center">Disability Employment Approaches</p>

Customized Employment

The business community and federal government are moving toward a holistic

and more personal approach to job development and job placement of people with

disabilities. The federal government has recently instituted the Customized Employment

Initiative in the Office of Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP), a small branch in

the Department of Labor. This initiative provides individuals with disabilities the ability

to customize their employment search with the assistance of employment professionals.

The uniqueness of this program is that job skills, interests, and abilities once determined

by vocational evaluations and other assessment tools are now determined with anecdotal

information from the consumer as well as family and friends. This process meets the

individual where they are and does not try to fit them into the traditional way of looking

for employment (DOL, 2004a). This approach allows individuals with disabilities to

engage in non-traditional, job-search techniques. The program enables the consumer with

a disability and the employer to develop a *customized* relationship that meets both

parties' needs.

Another approach common in the employment arena for people with disabilities is

the One-Stop Centers (Gramlich, Luecking, & Cuozzo, 2006), where people with

disabilities receive a number of employment services. The collective collaboration among

employers, job seekers, and employment professionals is the pinnacle of all other

<p align="center">50</p>

employment approaches for people with disabilities. People with disabilities receive comprehensive services through One-Stop Centers. Also, people with disabilities "can identify mutually beneficial ways to use blended funds and resources" (p. 1) to accommodate their customers. The methods of customizing employment take a holistic approach to employment, and this is a substantial contribution to the field of employment for people with disabilities.

Transition from School to Work

Transition from school to work for students was described in a three-week qualitative study of high school students with developmental disabilities conducted in 2004 (Kamens, Dolyniuk, Dinardo, & Rockoff, 2004). This study examined the experiences of high students with developmental disabilities (cognitive impairments) and college students without disabilities to determine how their joint interaction improved employment readiness. The personal perspectives and experiences provide a viewpoint on how joint collaboration with non-disabled peers influences vocational and social outcomes (Kamens et al., 2004). The collaborative experience of the study allowed the students to have a *voice* and express their experiences as they related to securing employment and to successfully transitioning from school to work. In this study, high school students with disabilities are paired with non-disabled college students, which are rarely found in disability employment studies.

The findings indicate that there were distinct benefits for public school students, the community college, and the larger outside community. The findings are presented through the personal perspectives about experiences "through the voices of the

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participants" regarding job sampling on a college campus (Kamens et al., 2004, p. 1).

One student is highlighted to give meaning to the findings. Jessica, age 19 with a

developmental disability, was one of the participants. Jessica speaks about her

experiences working in a snack bar at the university and intermingling with college

students without disabilities. She reports that they were "very helpful and nice . . . and

that working at the campus was fun" (p. 3). Moreover, the findings reported that several

components were necessary when developing a successful job-sampling project. First,

working out the transportation for the students to get to the campus was important.

Second, coordinating schedules of the students and the university work scheduling was

the next big hurdle. Third was the cooperation from faculty members and their ability to

build service learning job sampling projects into their curricula to support the project.

This study provided insight into the phenomena of employment of people with

disabilities, as it offers new ways to address job readiness and preparedness.

Perceptions of Students with Disabilities about Employment

What college students with disabilities perceive as their challenges in obtaining

employment opportunities after graduation is the essence of this study. Discovering

whether or not they perceive that disability has any bearing on their ability to obtain

gainful employment was the focus of the research. Therefore, a discussion surrounding

students' perceptions is critical to the study.

In a quantitative study conducted by Silver et al. (1997) suggests that "47 college

graduates" (p. 520), participated in a telephone survey. The researchers examined how

students with a wide range of physical, sensory, and learning disabilities responded to

employment history, experiences with faculty and service providers, and their employment status (Silver et al., 1997). The findings revealed that there was a difference in choices of courses of study for students with disabilities and the quality of career counseling services they received as compared to their non-disabled peers. More importantly, there were a substantial number of respondents who felt they were not provided with as much assistance as their non-disabled peers. Silver et al. (1997) noted that earlier studies failed to examine the "experiences of students with disabilities after they left the college or university setting" (p. 521). Disappointingly, this finding is still present in disability studies in higher education and was the core of the proposed study. Few of the previous studies report on disability and employment of college students; therefore, the proposed study on college students with disabilities and employment disparities is justified, as it fills the gap and presents a current-day perspective regarding this dilemma.

A quantitative study, entitled *Perceptions of College Students with Disabilities and the Value of Technology-based Support on Postsecondary Education and Employment* (Kim-Rupnow & Burgstahler, 2004), investigated the effects of technology on the transition of students with disabilities from high school to employment or college. The study used a survey method to examine the perceptions of 173 students and how they believed technology training affected their "self-determination, social college, and career skills" (p. 43). Students were asked in questionnaires and electronic mail messages questions about their perceptions of the impact of the DO-IT scholars' cooperative education program. Results suggest that when students were asked what was most

important to them during their time in the program, they expressed that their ability to access assistive technology, the Internet, and computers (Kim-Rupnow & Burgstahler, 2004) was important in their training for college. While this study supported the need for adequate training to prepare for college, the study provided limited results on the perceptions of students with disabilities and their perceptions and experiences with technology-based support and the ability to enhance their employment outcomes, which is implied in the title of the study. A weakness of the study appears to be that researchers failed to ascertain students' thoughts and ideas or the real essence of their experiences.

Employer Attitudes about Persons with Disabilities

Employers' attitudes have been studied since 1987 (Hernandez et al., 2000). Unfortunately, just like the definition of disability, "attitudes" are equally difficult to delineate (Olson & Zanna, 1993). Attitudes are "a combination of the beliefs and feelings that dispose a person to behave in a certain way" (Noe, 2002, p. 108). Nonetheless, employers' attitudes and perceptions are critical in shaping hiring practices in the United States.

Attitudinal barriers create a dilemma within the business community that can often lead to workplace discrimination and job disparities (Brostrand, 2006; Hernandez et al., 2000). In fact, the attitudes held by those in positions to hire workers with disabilities are readily the most troublesome issue in promoting employment of people with disabilities (Brostrand, 2006). Researchers Brostrand (2006) and Hernandez et al., (2000) suggest that the success of the ADA relies heavily on the positive or negative employer attitudes. As such, a discussion about employers' attitudes is paramount in a study about

college students with disabilities and their prospective employment outcomes. The perceptions of employers prove to have mixed reviews. Hernandez et al. (2000), provide a review of the data on 37 quantitative attitudinal studies, including Fortune 500 senior managers. The findings reveal that employers had both positive and less than enthusiastic attitudes about workers with disabilities (Hernandez et al., 2000). The study suggests that those employers with a previous positive history with hiring workers with disabilities were more likely to support future employment opportunities.

Conversely, the study indicated that employers had pessimistic attitudes about hiring workers with severe disabilities. In contrast, 11 of the 37 studies show negative employer attitudes. The issues expressed centered on the ability of workers with disabilities to be promoted and the costs associated with reasonable accommodations (Hernandez et al., 2000). To understand and clarify whether any of the 37 studies discussed hiring college students with disabilities, Hernandez indicated that her study did not include any employers' attitudes regarding hiring practices of college students with disabilities, which was germane to the proposed study (Hernandez, B., personal communication, January 24, 2007).

A federally funded study in 2000 conducted by Cornell University (Bruyere, 2000) provided insight into type of disability and employers' hiring practices. The Cornell study examined employer practices in response to the employment provision, Title I, of the ADA. Findings indicate, "Sixteen thousand individuals with disabilities were asked about their disability and their need for accommodation. The researchers used self-report from people with disabilities on specific work activity limitations" (p. 2). The

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results indicated that there were 11.3 million working-age adults (18 to 64) with

disabilities, of whom 37% were working in 1994-1995 (p. 2). The profiles of these

individuals were studied by type of disability. Table 2 depicts types of access provided to

people with disabilities by type of disability.

Table 2

Types of Access Provided People with Disabilities

Types of Access Provided People with Disabilities	Private Sector Percentage	Public Sector Percentage
Wheelchair Access	82	95
Time Flexibility in Test-taking	45	39
Communication Access for Hearing Impaired	43	91
Communication Access for Visually Impaired	37	77
Removing Volatile/Scented Substances	32	48

The findings indicate that people with physical disabilities had higher rates of

successful employment access and accommodations in the workplace than those with

sensory disabilities, such as hearing, vision, and chemical sensitivity (Bruyere, 2000). It

is conceivable that students with disabilities will face yet another barrier to

employment—their type of disability. Research suggests that the people with more severe

disabilities are hired less than other disability groups. Perhaps employers could benefit

from more disability awareness training to understand that functional limitations do not

preclude abilities, and then they may be less hesitant to hire those with the more severe

disabilities.

In sum, employers' attitudes can be framed as attitudinal barriers to employment for many workers with disabilities, including prospective college graduates with disabilities. It is also noteworthy that type of disability influences access and hiring practices and attitudes of employers as seen in the Cornell study (Bruyere, 2000). While this seminal and very comprehensive study is in its own right valuable, it is now dated, and newer studies on employer attitudes are warranted.

<div align="center">Theory for Contextual Understanding</div>

Paradigm of Inquiry

The paradigm of inquiry appropriate for this study is the Advocacy/Participatory Knowledge Claim (Creswell, 2003). The advocacy/participatory knowledge claim emerged in the 1980s to address marginalized individuals and groups that lack a sense of advocacy, and its proponents posit that more thorough measures are needed to liberate those who remain disenfranchised (Creswell, 2003; Mertens, 1999). The advocacy participatory knowledge claim relates to issues of "change and empowerment" (Creswell, 2003, p. 6).

Through this paradigm of inquiry, I was able to address the disparities in employment of college students with disabilities after graduation. In addition, I was able to understand the social phenomenon of disability and employment with collection of the data and, through interpretation of the data, provide a voice for the marginalized.

The advocacy/participatory knowledge claim is also aligned to the significance of this study, which is to argue for policy and curricular reforms in career services programs in colleges and universities that address employment disparities of college graduates with

disabilities. Models of disability and critical social theory are addressed in the theoretical framework section that follows.

In this study, a theoretical framework was used to provide a global perspective explaining, defining, informing, and describing a theoretical viewpoint to study college students with disabilities. Moreover, a theoretical framework was used to set the stage for discovering the phenomena of disability and employment of college students with disabilities. As such, the use of the grand theory, Critical Social Theory (Calhoun, 1995), while not a disability model, lends itself to the discussion about change, justification, and empowerment of college students with disabilities. There are four mid-range theoretical models of disability that have evolved over the past 40 years that are used to describe, define, and explain disability (Altman, 2001; Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997; Mitra, 2006). Mitra posits that no one theory can define disability. This section concludes with a situation to demonstrate the application of the theory.

Models of disability. Theoretical models of disability have, over the years, shown a positive progression and currently portray people with disabilities as capable (Mitra, 2006). The models of disability are as follows: (a) the Medical Model of Disability (Parsons, 1975), (b) the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1995), (c) the Nagi Model (Nagi, 1965), (d) and the International Classification of Functioning (Strucki et al., 2002). Each of the aforementioned models was used in attempts to define disability and suggest a positive progression that moves towards a positive *inclusion* of people with disabilities.

Medical Model: The Medical Model is grounded in medical sciences or biomedical considerations (Mitra, 2006). This model places the issue of disability with

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the individual and posits that disability is a direct cause of a medical condition or disease (Mitra, 2006). The individual is considered *sick or ill* (Parsons, 1975; Pfeiffer, 2001). The Social Model (Oliver, 1995) places disability at the hand of society and the environment. Mitra presents the seminal work of Nagi (1965) and his model, also known as the functional limitations paradigm*,* which describes disability in terms of medical pathology and impairments that are physiological in nature.

Nagi Model: Nagi (1965; Cornell University, 2003-2007) postulates that medical conditions result from "infection, metabolic imbalances, traumatic injury, or other causes" (p. 101). Nagi refers to these conditions as the "pathology or disease process of disability" (p. 101). As a result of the medical pathology, there are functional restrictions and limitations that are imposed on the individual. These restrictions affect the ability of the individual to work (Mitra, 2006). This model is similar to the medical model, but does not view the individual as sick. Rather, the individual is viewed as limited. Individuals with disabilities move through four stages in the Nagi (1969) framework: pathology, impairment, functional limitation, and disability. The pathology stage represents the medical or mental conditions; the impairment stage is viewed as the physiological, anatomical or mental condition that limits the person's ability to function; functional limitation is a restriction in a person's ability to perform an activity; and the final stage of disability is viewed as the limitation in performing roles and tasks that are socially expected (Cornell University, 2003-2007).

International Classification of Function: The International Classification of Function (ICF), which was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the

1980s, brings together the medical and social models of disability. An integration of the two suggests that while a disability may have its origins in a medical condition, there are certain conditions under which the medical condition causes the individual to be limited in an activity (Strucki et al., 2002; Cornell University, 2003-2007). The ICF model provides a classification system of individuals with disabilities and their abilities to work, which is directly linked to the proposed study on disability and employment.

Social Model of Disability: Oliver's (1990, 1995) Social Model of Disability is central to this study because it takes a social constructivist view with an interpretive perspective, thus allowing the researcher to understand complex social situations and the world and society we live in (Creswell, 2003). This model viewed people with disabilities as able, not disabled. Oliver (1995), in *Understanding Disability: From Theory to Practice*, discusses several concepts germane to people with disabilities in England. Oliver identifies two types of models: (a) the individual model of disability and (b) the social model of disability. The individual model places the problem of disability on the person and views the cause of disability as a result of residual problems due to the disability that are thought to be a direct result of that disability (Oliver, 1990, 1995). The individual model is not suitable for this study, as it does not present the perception of people with disabilities as capable and places blame on them for having restrictions. The social model of disability, however, subscribes to the idea of disability existing and positions the problems of disability on society, not on the individual with a disability. Perhaps the lack of access to services and programs is the problem, and society is the cause of inadequacies this group has had to suffer (Oliver, 1995).

Regrettably, the disability community is still trying to distance itself from earlier models that denote a perception of illness or inability and continues to move towards a model of inclusion (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997; Mitra, 2006). To this end, the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1990, 1995) will be used in this study. This model views society's perceptions of disability as the problem. However, given the appropriate services and programs, individuals with disabilities will thrive (Oliver, 1995). Individuals with disabilities have natural talents, and they can make contributions to the workplace if society provides adequate programs and services (Oliver, 1995).

The Social Model of Disability presents people with disabilities with a more positive perspective, depicting them as capable and productive. Moreover, the Social Model of Disability empowers people with disabilities, and this model is in direct alignment with the paradigm of inquiry to be used in this study. All other medical-based models of disability cited present this population as sick, ill, and limited in their capabilities, which are what the disability community is trying to distance itself from (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997; Mitra, 2006).

Critical Social Theory: The Critical Social Theory [CST] (Calhoun, 1995) provides an additional lens to understand the disenfranchised. To this end, a discussion about critical social theory examines change and the need for emancipatory actions. Critical social theory will help to further enlighten this study on how college students with disabilities perceive their disability and how it influences employment opportunities.

The importance of theory is explained with the inspection and development of knowledge (Calhoun, 1995). As such, critical social theory examines the "knowledge

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about social life" (p. 4) that lends itself to the examination and understanding of college students with disabilities and how they perceive that their disability influences their job search. Critical social theory examines the "social world" and the sociological, psychological, economic, legal, and political arenas and how social theory investigates the basis for criticisms of practices of institutions (Outhwaite & Chitty, 2001, p. 1). Therefore, the social world of college students with disabilities is important to this researcher as it relates to their psychological, economic, and legal welfare.

Critical social theory in an educational setting helps to shed light on the "relationship between social systems and people . . . and ultimately how critical social theory can contribute to the emancipation of both" (Leonardo, 2004, p. 11; Merriam, 2002), many times looking at the political issues surrounding a social issue that shapes the way in which people deal with their own reality (Merriam, 2002). Simply put, critical theory is "grounded in the social awareness, political, and cultural problems of the age" (p. 13), thus making it very appropriate for a study on college students with disabilities critically linked to the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1995).

There are similarities and differences between the social model of disability and critical social theory. Both are useful, as each has a perspective that embraces the social dilemmas of disenfranchised groups. Both are aligned with the paradigm of inquiry. Both look at potential legal political social problems in our society. Critical social theory and the social model of disability are associated with empowerment, change, and emancipation. Finally, the social model of disability and critical social theory helped me create interview questions and understand the experiences of students with disabilities

regarding their feelings of being either disenfranchised or marginalized due to their disability when trying to find a job after graduation.

However, there are subtle differences in the social model of disability and critical social theory. As such, the social model of disability looks to society bearing the responsibility for the shortcomings of access and available programs and services for people with disabilities, which is key to their feeling "disabled" (Oliver, 1995); whereas, critical social theory looks at political issues surrounding a social situation that shapes the way in which people deal with their own reality (Merriam, 2002). Critical social theory has direct links to educational settings, and the social model of disability looks at the more global societal issues, including employment of people with disabilities. Furthermore, critical social theory explains "phenomenological experience, reflective judgment, and practical action" (Calhoun, 1995, p. 4), which is explicitly implied in the purpose of this study. The social model of disability is not grounded in phenomenology or reflective judgment (Oliver, 1995).

The paradigm of inquiry, the models of disability, and critical social theory are all aligned to support my viewpoint as a researcher. As such, I search to understand the social and political problems associated with the disproportionate numbers of college students with disabilities hired after graduation in higher education institutions in America, particularly in the Mid-Atlantic Region. By conducting a phenomenological study, my hope was to provide a voice for the disenfranchised and seek empowerment and change. The Social Model of Disability and Critical Social Theory framed the study in a positive manner. It is not my intention as a researcher to continue the negative

stereotypes of people with disabilities as sick or ill, but to view them as *capable* and *able* through the empowerment of employment.

        Theories in practice. The aforementioned theories were explained to describe their current-day application to elucidate the phenomenon of disability and employment. The theories will be discussed in four stages. In Stage I, the Medical Model (Mitra, 2006) and Nagi Model (Nagi, 1965) view a person with a disability as a "patient" who is ill. In this model, a person may be in the initial stages of their physical medicine and rehabilitation in a rehabilitation hospital. In the first stage, a male with a spinal cord injury is transferred to a rehabilitation hospital after sustaining injuries that rendered him a paraplegic. He is still considered to be in a semi-acute state physically, requiring the full realm of physical medicine and rehabilitation services. In Stage 2, the patient is actively engaged in his physical medicine and rehabilitation protocol to include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, recreational therapy, as well as vocational rehabilitation (http://www.nrhrehab.org/About+NRH/default.aspx). In Stage 3, the vocational rehabilitation counselor treats a patient. Vocational rehabilitation services are initiated under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), as mandated by Congress, which is the principal entity to oversee the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The primary purpose is to make programs of vocational rehabilitation available for individuals with disabilities by coordinating services, such as physical and psychological evaluations and treatment, career exploration, education and training to improve employability, independence, and integration into the workplace or

the community (Lamb, 2007; OSERS, 2004). These services are passed down to individual state as well as private facilities.

In a medical environment, vocational rehabilitation services assist the patient in becoming successful, with a return to work or reintegration into the community in a meaningful activity that promotes independence. For example, a patient may be treated at the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Washington, DC, because this facility specializes in treating persons with physical disabilities caused by spinal cord and head injuries, stroke, arthritis, amputation, multiple sclerosis, post-polio syndrome, and other neurological and orthopedic conditions. A patient may receive services to achieve self-sufficiency and independence and return to work (http://www.nrhrehab.org/About+NRH/default.aspx; Lamb, 2007). Vocational rehabilitation services are those services that provide comprehensive vocational services to those with illnesses or injuries to enable them to successfully return to work (RTW) or school by defining realistic vocational career goals (http://www.nrhrehab.org/Patient+Care/Programs; Lamb, 2007). Finally in Stage 4, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors work with patients to facilitate their reintegration into the community or become gainfully employed.

The International Classification of Functioning (ICF) is a classification of the health categories of functioning and disability (Mitra, 2006). ICF can be applied to practice as a mechanism to give uniformity to the classification of disability around the world for people with disabilities. The World Health Organization represents the international community in its efforts to understand functioning and disability as a

multifaceted interface between the disability of the individual and the related factors of the environment as well as personal factors (Mitra, 2006). If an individual with a disability relocates to the United Kingdom (UK), the ICF would then be able to categorize the disability in the same manner as diagnosed in the United States and apply a similar physical rehabilitative treatment regime. ICF categories help the international community simplify the disability identification process worldwide and make connections with the individuals' health conditions and employment (Mitra, 2006).

Finally, Oliver's (1995) Social Theory can be applied to current-day practice through the same anecdote. Oliver infers that the programs and services available to people with disabilities are not always readily apparent. If the same individual with spinal cord injury is fully rehabilitated and desires reintegration into the community as a productive employee, then the ability to thrive is based on the services and opportunities provided by local government programs and services. Oliver (1995) suggests that it is the societal attitudinal barriers to employment that limit employment opportunities. Accordingly, if there are limited activities or a lack of structured programs, employment success is hampered.

Summary

This chapter presented a discussion of the following topics: (a) historical perspective on disability and higher education, (b) overview of disability employment legislation, (c) national perspectives on disability, (d) students with disabilities in higher education, (e) disproportionate hiring of students with disabilities, (f) career services in higher education, (g) programs tailored to improve employment outcomes, (h) students'

and employers' attitudes about employment of people with disabilities, and (i) disability employment approaches. Finally, it provided a theoretical framework that helped to define and clarify the targeted population of the study. The theoretical framework is further explained with detailed anecdotal circumstances to explain the phenomenon of disability and employment using applications to everyday life.

A review of the literature indicated that there are employment disparities in the numbers of college students with disabilities hired after college graduation. There are limited programs at colleges and universities that include special career assistance for students with disabilities. While the studies examined enhance the body of literature and the field of disability and employment, they do not particularly focus on the needs of college students with disabilities or provide first-hand personal accounts of their employment experiences. Nonetheless, an unanswered research question surrounding the employment dilemma of college students with disabilities still remains. Moreover, a significant gap in the literature is reflected in the limited numbers of qualitative research employment studies reflecting the employment disparities of college students with disabilities; thus, the need for the proposed study. The body of literature is not inclusive of this population as it relates to employment and disability specifically for college students (Burgstahler, 1995). Chapter III provides a detailed account of the research methodology.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Design

This chapter covers the research methodology, including the assumptions about

phenomenological research, a rationale for using phenomenology for my study, research

questions, and how I collected and analyzed the data. There is also a discussion on the

reliability and validity of the research, the site and participant selection, sampling, as well

as ethical and legal considerations. This study intended to understand students'

perceptions about the challenges associated with looking for jobs, how they viewed the

contributions of career services, and whether or not they felt marginalized or

discriminated against due to their disabilities.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the *lived employment experiences* of seniors and recent graduates
   with physical disabilities?

2. What are participants' perceptions of how their disabilities influence their
   ability to obtain employment opportunities after graduation from college?

3. How do seniors and recent graduates with physical disabilities perceive the
   contribution of career services in their preparation for the employment process
   in terms of the job readiness skills such as interviewing, resume writing,
   disclosure of disability, and how to request reasonable accommodations?

The Assumptions about Phenomenology

Van Manen (1990), in his text *Researching Lived Experience*, states that "phenomenology is the study of lived experiences, and the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the meaning of everyday experiences" (p. 9). Researchers in social sciences attempt to glean understanding of the way we view the world and explain those experiences descriptively (Van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology is used in research studies to ascertain knowledge about how people think and feel (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998), with a focus on kindheartedness and compassion. Phenomenological research is a strategy associated with the "essence" of human experiences dealing with particular phenomena that is expressed or described by participants in a study (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 2002; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990). In other words, phenomenology "is initially concerned with the description of a particular phenomenon" (Edwards, 2001, p. 1). Moustakas defines empirical phenomenology as looking back on pervious experiences in efforts to return to an experience in order to achieve descriptions that supply the basis for a thoughtful examination of one's self that represents the essences of the experience.

A discussion of the research design for this study recognized the seminal work of Husserl (1931), who is considered the father of phenomenology (Merriam, 2002; Morrissette, 1999; Van Manen, 1990) and a critical force in the realm of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl viewed "knowledge as intuition and essences of things as they appear" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). Phenomenology is a philosophy in and of itself that makes use of participants' experiences and gives human

meanings through an interpretivist perspective (Brownell, 2004). The purpose of

phenomenology in research is to concentrate on the way things appear to the participants

through their experiences. A phenomenological researcher's goal is to collect thick and

rich descriptions of the lived experiences (Finlay, 2005), and the researcher asks what

and how questions. There are two dilemmas for the researcher: "(1) how to assist the

participants (co-researchers) to express their experiences as plainly and openly as

possible and (2) how to assist participants to illuminate these experiences such that the

lived world—the life world—is revealed" (p. 1).

While phenomenology is a philosophy, it also has two schools of thought—

hermeneutic phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology (Creswell, 2003;

Moerer-Urdhal & Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990). Simply put,

hermeneutic phenomenology "is the theory and practice of interpretation" (Van Manen,

1990, p. 179). Transcendental phenomenology gives credence to meaning as the

foundation (Moerer-Urdhal & Creswell, 2004) or a focal point for explaining

assumptions about experiences. This study used a hermeneutic phenomenological

approach; serving to interpret or explain the perceptions of college students with

disabilities that I feel was most valuable. This approach allowed me to understand and be

reflective and interpretive of the true essence of participants' experiences while

discovering perceptions of employment and disability.

Finally, Moustakas (1994) refers to Giorgi's (1985) descriptive, two-level

phenomenological research process. Level I involves obtaining data with intensive

repeated interviews using open-ended questions. Level II describes experiences using

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reflection, analysis, and interpretation of the participant's story (cited in Moustakas, 1994). A modified version of Giorgi's descriptive process was used in this study. A description of the process follows. This researcher began the study with the epoché, followed by transcription of interviews, re-reading the interviews, beginning the coding process, reviewing all other relevant data (journal notes, memos, notes from relevant literature) to begin the triangulation process, and then putting similar data pieces together to create sub-codes and general codes. Finally, general common themes were established, and textural, structural, and textural-structural descriptions were written.

In sum, a phenomenological research inquiry was appropriate and practical to use for this study for several reasons: (a) phenomenology lends itself to providing the true accounts and stories directly from college students with disabilities; (b) this strategy of inquiry provides a "voice" for the targeted population, which has been disenfranchised and marginalized; (c) phenomenology uses a very humanistic approach to research utilizing kindness and care; (d) phenomenology is a philosophy that allows college students with disabilities to express their own ideas and opinions without bias; and (e) using interviews to collect data is a personal strength of this researcher.

Data Collection Method

In qualitative interpretative studies, the researcher's role begins with *bracketing* of their personal experiences in an effort to understand the feelings described by the participants (Creswell, 2003). The *bracketing* or *epoché* (Merriam, 2002; Moerer-Urdhal & Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994) establishes the process of phenomenological research assisting researchers to free themselves of any biases. Bracketing allows

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researchers to free themselves from their own personal biases (Van Manen, 1990) and collect data free from prejudice. This researcher was mindful to use bracketing before the research process began in order to be free from any preconceived notions and biases about the research topic. Finally, the epoché is provided in Appendix E, which allowed this researcher to describe personal biases that could have some bearing on the study.

Methods of inquiry for this study included (a) intensive interviews of students with disabilities, (b) horizonalization, (c) coding, (d) analysis, and (e) interpretation of the data. The critical components of data collection are described below, and a data collection chart is used to illustrate how each of the main research questions and the sub-questions were addressed.

Data collection consisted of semi-structured, open-ended, one-on-one (Creswell, 2005) interviews of eight participants. The number of participants selected in qualitative research is not measured through computation, and sample size is proportional, making use of the researcher's judgment (Sandelowski, 1995). As such, eight participants were selected as an appropriate number for this study. An informal conversational interview procedure was used, which is suitable for phenomenological research studies (Patton, 1980). Informal conversational interviews allowed for the most flexible format. Questions were able to "flow from the immediate context" (p. 199). The informal conversational process allowed participants to tell their own stories and relate their experiences in their own terms (Patton, 1980).

Initial interviews were scheduled during August 2007 and lasted approximately one hour, with one follow-up interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. The

participants were met on campus at the DSS office. The follow-up interviews were provided in a manner most convenient to the participants. Several weeks after the initial interview were completed and transcribed. The second interviews were scheduled according to the participants' availability. All interviews were completed, transcribed, and coded by the end of October 2007. During the second interview, participants reviewed the transcripts checking for accuracy. The transcripts were corrected and returned to the participants electronically. The transcripts in Chapter IV include all corrections. Interviews included semi-structured, open-ended questions. A transcription service was used (Word Master, LTD), which was held to the strictest confidentiality standards. I listened to all tapes and thoroughly read all transcripts for accuracy and analysis of interviews.

Tape-recording the interviews augmented accuracy, as tape recorders capture most aspects of the interview and do not screen out any parts of the conversations or change any aspects of a verbal exchange (Patton, 1980). Facial expressions and gestures were noted in the Notes Instrument provided in Appendix C. Tape recording interviews allows researchers to give participants undivided attention (Patton, 1980). However, the use of a tape recorder will not preclude this researcher from taking notes, which also enhances the capability for accuracy in the experiences of the participants.

Finally, interviews were transcribed verbatim. The verbatim transcription of the interviews is considered the "raw data" (Patton, 1980, p. 249) and should be relayed as accurately as possible. I used a mini tape recorder, which was less intrusive for the participant. All tapes were listened to immediately after each session, and additional

notes were made. Tapes were housed in a safe, secure, and locked location to ensure

confidentiality and to decrease the possibility of the loss of the data. The transcripts were

kept separately and locked in a file cabinet for safety and confidentiality of the data. All

data were de-identified, and each participant was assigned an identification pseudonym.

All software used for transcripts was password-protected. Finally, at the end of this study,

all tapes were destroyed.

As Creswell (2003) recommended, a personal reflective journal was kept during

the research to document data gleaned from e-mail communications, telephone

conversations, and personal contacts to document issues surrounding access. The data

were then reviewed and cross-examined with data obtained from interviews with

participants.

<center>Data Analysis Method</center>

The aim of the phenomenological research method is to establish the essence of

meanings reported by the participants of their particular experiences with the phenomena.

Providing a thorough description of those experiences is an outcome of data analysis.

Data analysis consists of a process that allows the researcher to interpret the data. This

researcher also employed phenomenological techniques such as *textural, structural, and

textural-structural* narratives (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Textural narratives of

the transcripts involve descriptions of the experiences of what happened using the

participants' own words (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994).

Structural statements are those using the researcher's own account of the phenomenon

revealed (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Finally, textural-structural statements are a

combination, reaching the phenomenon by "constructing an overall description of the meaning and essence of the experience" (Creswell, 1998, p. 150). A modified version of Creswell's (1998) data collection and analysis was used for this study; synthesizing and interpreting data for meaning; and a determination of their relevance was incorporated into the findings.

Data analysis consisted of several steps: (a) organizing and preparing data for analysis; (b) reading and reviewing of data thoroughly; (c) writing notes in the margins; (d) open coding of textural data using categories; (e) clustering of similar topics and themes (Creswell, 1998, 2003); and (f) telling the story using textural-structural descriptions (Creswell, 1998). After the coding process was completed, interpretation followed. The codes were reviewed and presented in a manner where I was able to give meaning to the data, establish categories, themes, and then interpretation (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). All data obtained from the participants were cross-referenced with the main research questions and analyzed to reflect commonalities and differences among the participants' lived experiences relating to their perceptions of the employment process and how their disabilities may have influenced their employability.

The data analysis continued with interpretation providing importance and meaning of the data. The interpretation of the data was provided with careful consideration of the confidentiality of the participants' disclosure of any medical conditions or disabilities. My ability to gather the essence of thoughts (Creswell, 2003) with accurate reflection of the students' experiences required deliberate and purposeful listening for understanding their stories and developing themes and patterns. In

accordance with phenomenological procedures, analysis included *textural, structural,*
and textural-structural narrative descriptions of the interview data (Coffey & Atkinson,
1996; Creswell, 1998; Moerer-Urdhal & Creswell, 2004). I reflected on all textural data
by reading the transcripts several times to reveal meaning units, clusters, and themes.

Table 3, presents a list of the three research questions and how the Interview
Instrument Questions are aligned with the research questions. The interview instrument
questions are ordered in a sequence of three clusters that support each research question.
This researcher had to change the order sequence of questions based on the flow of the
conversation. The three clusters of questions deal with the lived employment experiences,
perceptions about disability and employment, and career services.

Table 3

Interview Instrument Questions and Cross Reference to Research Questions

Main Research Questions (What do I want to know?)	Cross Reference with Interview Questions (IQ) (How Interview Questions are Related with this Study's Research Questions)	
Main Research Question #1		
What are the lived employment experiences of seniors and recent graduates with physical disabilities?	IQ # 1 IQ # 2 IQ # 3 IQ # 4 IQ # 5 IQ # 9 IQ # 11 IQ # 12	IQ # 13 IQ # 14
Main Research Question #2		
What are their perceptions of how their disability influences their ability to obtain employment opportunities after graduation from college?	IQ # 3 IQ # 5 IQ # 9 IQ # 10 IQ # 11 IQ # 12	
Main Research Questions #3		
How do seniors and recent graduates with physical disabilities perceive the contribution of career services in their preparation for the employment process in terms of the job readiness skills (i.e., interviewing, resume writing, disclosure of disability, and how to request reasonable accommodations)?	IQ # 3 IQ # 6 IQ # 7 IQ # 8 IQ # 9 IQ # 12	

Site and Participant Selection

The data collection site selected for this study was a private four-year urban university in the Mid-Atlantic Region of the United States. The private university was selected because it was approachable and convenient (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005; Glesne, 1999). The DSS director at this private university was the *gatekeeper* who assisted me in gaining access to the site and participants (Creswell, 2005). The gatekeeper determined which participants would be selected and was the first point of contact for my study. The DSS director selected those students who had a good relationship with her and would most likely follow through with the process. The gatekeeper also determined which eight students would be considered for participation in the study based on the criteria developed: (a) a college student with a physical disability, (b) a senior, and/or (c) a recent graduate (graduated within three years). As such, the DSS director selected six students who were recent graduates and two who were seniors.

I obtained permission from the DSS director by completing a cooperative Institutional Research Board (IRB) partnership, which was reviewed and approved by The George Washington University IRB process. The forms included in this process were (a) the Participant Letter, (b) Consent Form, and (c) the Data Collection Instrument: Interview Questions and Interview Notes Instrument.

Sampling

Creswell (2005) noted that p*urposive sampling* is where researchers deliberately choose certain individuals to comprehend the phenomenon. Purposive sampling is used because I deliberately selected certain students with physical disabilities to comprehend

the phenomenon and because I had prior knowledge about the population and personal

judgment in selecting an appropriate group of participants for the study (Creswell, 2003,

2005; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005). Second, convenience sampling was used, as there were

a specific group of students with physical disabilities available for identification by the

DSS providers at each institution. The convenience sampling technique was used because

a group of participants was easily accessible for data collection. Seniors as well as recent

graduates (1-3 years post graduation) were sampled to ensure that I would reach the

sample size limit of eight participants. The DSS director (gatekeeper) at the site contacted

the students to request their permission and provided them with the Participant Letter

introducing the study and, subsequently, asking their permission on the Consent Form to

allow me to interview them for the study. Finally, I made the sample h*omogenous,* which

allowed me to select similar participants (only students with physical disabilities) in an

effort to "describe some subgroups in depth" (Glesne, 1999, p. 28).

<div align="center">Trustworthiness and Validity</div>

Four methods were used to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the research.

As part of the reduction process found in phenomenology, *horizonalization* (Moustakas,

1994) was used to capture and list all relevant expressions critical to the experience of the

participants. Horizons were uncovered and listed in tables for each participant interview

through purposeful probing of an experience, discovering another experience relevant to

the phenomenon (textural meanings). Horizons are "constituents of the phenomenon"

(Moustakas, 1994, p. 97). Tables were developed to depict the relevant expressions

important to the phenomenon. Second, *member checks* were conducted during the second

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interviews for accuracy by taking the raw data, transcribed interviews, and interpretation of the data from interviews. The interviews were then returned via e-mail to the participants for their review (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 2002). Third, as suggested in Creswell (2005) and Merriam (2002), committee members played the role of external auditors to review interview data, preliminary coding, themes, categories, and interpretations (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 2002).

The research methods provided a mechanism to capture accurate, intimate data from participants (college students with physical disabilities) by supplying them with a personal way to account for their own stories as these stories related to their experiences with the employment process and if disability played a role.

<center>Ethical and Legal Considerations</center>

Some of the ethical considerations of this study surrounded the legal confidentiality and disclosure of disability as cited in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the EEOC *Technical Assistance Manual* (EEOC, 1992). The ADA states that there are limits on use of medical information and that all medical information must be "treated as a confidential medical record. Medically-related information such as diagnoses must be kept confidential" (p. VI-11). There are a few exceptions:

> (1) for the purposes of informing an employer of necessary work restrictions in order to make reasonable accommodations; (2) when the medical information is necessary for first aid and safety to the individual or safety of others; (3) when government officials are investigating compliance with the ADA or other state and federal laws; (4) when the medical information needs to be provided to an insurance company if a medical examination is required; or when the medical information needs to be provided to state workers' compensation offices to establish eligibility for a claim (p. VI-12).

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Therefore, a breech of confidentiality could possibly result in legal actions and a liability for the institutions involved as well as this researcher. At no time did this researcher make direct inquiries about any diagnoses, prognoses, treatments, medication regimes, or the nature and severity of participants' disabilities. To do so would be a direct violation of the ADA. All documents and data were destroyed where a participant had freely and optionally disclosed specific disability-related information. Students were advised that I would not identify them in the published document; therefore; de-identification of the data was done to maintain confidentiality of all participants involved in the study. The raw data with the actual names were kept in a secure location in a locked file cabinet to protect the data and the identities of the participants.

Summary

This chapter provided the critical components for conducting a qualitative phenomenological research study (a) research design, (b) research questions, (c) assumptions about phenomenology, (d) data collection method, (e) data analysis method, (f) site and participant selection, and (g) ethical and political considerations. This strategy of inquiry allowed me to begin with reflection (bracketing), collect data, analyze the data, and interpret the data of college students with disabilities, which resulted in thick and rich descriptions using textural, structural, and textural-structural narratives. Chapter IV is presented in two parts: Part I presents the results of the study and Part II presents an interpretation of the findings.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the results, which includes data collection and narratives from this phenomenological study on employment and college students with physical disabilities. The chapter is organized into three sections. Section one consists of (a) an overview of the unit of analysis, (b) the pseudonyms assigned to the participants, (c) demographic data, and (d) populated data tables representing a compilation of responses from the participants. Section two provides an explanation of data collection and data analysis narratives from the raw data, which is a synopsis of the content of the participant interviews. The horizonalization process is explained and includes a cross-participant aggregate identifying themes and patterns developed from coding of the data. Section three provides the raw data using textural, structural, and textural-structural narratives characteristically found in a phenomenological study used to tell the story of each participant's lived employment experiences. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

Results

Section 1: Overview of the Participants

Participants (college students with physical disabilities) were provided with numerical pseudonyms, for example, P_1 for Participant number one and P_2 for Participant number two through Participant number eight to maintain confidentiality. Demographics of the participants were also collected through observation. Data were recorded for all participants who voluntarily disclosed a disability. The demographic composition of the

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participants is categorized by (a) gender, (b) ethnicity, (c) classification of physical disability, and (d) employment status. The demographic composition and profiles of the participants of college students with physical disabilities at a private four-year university in this study is shown in Table 4.

Of the five female and three male participants in this study, three were gainfully employed and five were not employed at the time of the study. The ethnicity of the participants is: five Caucasians, one African, one Asian, and one Indian American. Six of the participants have physical disabilities and two have sensory disabilities. Moreover, two of the participants were College seniors and the remaining six were recent graduates.

Table 4

Participant Profiles

Disability by Type	Gender	Ethnicity	Year in College
Hearing Impaired	Female	Caucasian	Recent Graduate
Little Person (Osteogenesis Imperfecta)	Female	Caucasian	Recent Graduate
Cerebral Palsy (wheelchair user)	Female	Caucasian	Recent Graduate
Cerebral Palsy (electric scooter)	Female	Asian American	Senior
Blind	Male	West African	Recent Graduate
Spinal Cord Injury	Female	Caucasian	Senior
Blind	Male	Indian American	Recent Graduate
Deaf Oral	Male	Caucasian	Recent Graduate

Section 2: Data Collection and Data Analysis Explained

Data analysis begins with the horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms completed for each participant's interview to show all relevant

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expressions important to the "experience" (Moustakas, 1994). Horizonalization began with a listing of all expressions relevant to the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Next, I used a procedure of "reduction and elimination" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 120) to determine a set of qualities of the expressions germane to the phenomenon on disability and employment. I also reviewed the expressions for meanings of the experience to develop themes. The analysis of the data resulted in three narratives: Textural, Structural, and Textural-Structural. The data collected were then aggregated in several tables according to the central research questions. The participant's responses to the questions on the Interview Instrument show similarities and differences across to each participant. Finally, the tables were populated by themes, patterns and categories established after completion of the coding process.

Section 3: Phenomenology Narratives: Textural, Structural, and Textural-Structural

This section provides phenomenological synopses for the data collected, representing salient highlights from the participant interviews. In this study, the participants were selected college students with physical disabilities who attended a private four-year urban university in the Mid-Atlantic Region of the United States. As typically found in phenomenological research studies, all three narratives are recorded in the Findings and present the repeated review of the transcript, reduction, and synthesis that allows the researcher to develop themes (Moustakas, 1994). The synopses begins with a brief researcher overview followed by three narratives according to the phenomenological processes consistent with—textural, structural, and structural-textural. Several tables provide visual depictions of responses by the eight participants selected for

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data collection: (a) horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms; (b) Disability and Employment Common Terms, Patterns, and Categories; and (c) Populated Tables Cross-Referenced by Central Research Questions. Tables indicating the participant knowledge of the lived experience are used that display the symbol ($\sqrt{}$), which indicates an affirmative response. The (X) symbol is used to indicate no experience with the phenomenon. All consent forms and participant letters were disseminated and signed. The participants provided member checks during the second interview, and the study participants reviewed and edited the transcripts electronically for accuracy, and were sent a third time for their review. The data collected as a result of the member checks, was incorporated into the corrected transcripts. Members of the dissertation committee reviewed selected interviews for audit accuracy.

The following narratives provide different anecdotes and stories, with each participant providing his or her own account and experience of the phenomenon. The stories came from a diverse group of participants who self-reported on (a) their backgrounds, (b) where they come from, (c) how they arrived in the United States, (d) how their disabilities have influenced their lives, and (e) their personal perceptions of employment and disability.

Each interview presented begins with an overview. Names of employers, schools and explicatives were deleted in the presentation of the interviews and redacted and highlighted in black to maintain confidentiality of the participants and their relationships with these entities, and to minimize potential offensive language for readers.

Participant #1 (P$_1$)

Overview

Participant #1 is a Caucasian female and a recent graduate with a hearing impairment. The participant was observed wearing hearing aids bilaterally. The student self reported being of Italian decent. Further P$_1$ reported having a hearing impairment that affected her ability to hear high-pitched sounds and inference ability since the age of two. The participant indicated she received a Bachelor of Science in 2003, then began a PhD program in Genetics, but left the PhD program to complete a Masters Degree which was conferred in 2006. At present, the participant is in Law School on the East Coast. P$_1$ had several jobs: Lab Assistant, an unpaid internship, and jobs at national disability associations. The participant told stories about jobs, school, career services, barriers, limitations, internships, accommodations, discrimination, and provided personal reflections about having a disability.

Textural Narrative (Verbatim Text)

> *Current Status:*
>
> I graduated with my BS in 2003. I finished my Master's program in May of 2006. I actually went to a PhD program in genetics and tuition was paid for before my Masters. I hated it because of the location and they were very discriminatory. They lied to me and they said the disability office on campus was available to me, but I found out that the disability office was only for med students, not grad Master's or PhD students, and it was at a location two hours away.
>
> *Feelings on Disability:*
>
> I have a hearing impairment; I was born with it. I was diagnosed at age two and a half; it affected my speech. It affected how I learned to read. So, I have a learning disability associated with it. I learned vocabulary differently. I have problems with inference. I'm not making an excuse for it, but it's harder for that reason. So you always second-guess your rejections.

Current and Past Jobs:

When I worked my first job, the person was very good to me. Your research, technically that's your job. My first job was great. I didn't get credit for it. At my second job, the woman who had a disability was very tough on me. She said," I was tough on you, not to break you, but to make you." She turned me off saying, "I was only hard on you because you don't know how hard it is for us." I left there because my advisor was against me. I worked for a disability organization as an unpaid intern because they did not have the capacity to pay you. I did it for credit and I was going in to the legal field and tie in disability law with science and genomics. I have nothing bad to say about them; they were great to me. There I learned it was easier to work for the government because they are not supposed to discriminate. All of them were working for the government dealing with some part of disability law. I became friends with one of the attorneys who said, "She could make a lot of money at a bigger firm, but you might not get the job because you either need accommodations or need CART." It is expensive proposition, but the government has the facilities to provide for all of that and interpreters and everything. When you look for a job when you finish law school, you might want to focus not on the private sector, but in the government.

I am not going to say where I was, but they lied to me about having a disability office to give you accommodations; it was really hard they didn't want the face known with the person who had a disability which is really, like, harsh. So it was never really taken seriously.

When I worked in the lab, the first person was great, the second one, she was great, but because I didn't need an interpreter, it's much easier. They said we prefer to take interns that have disabilities, and so they were happy to have me, and they were surprised by how well I could write considering I had a hearing impairment.

Career Services:

Career services were not there in law school, and that's because they're not aware of what institutions have in my field of law. I found out about a lot of things through reading materials, I would Google it and send out my resumes to places for summer internships. Googling really helped me. At ▇ we had a Web site and I did go to the career services, but law school when I went to career services, they said, "Here's the book you have to open it up because we have no clue…" They only knew about the ▇ Office. They only knew about government organizations, but they didn't know specific stuff. There is a career fair for law students with disabilities and it has different organizations and different law firms and there are big law firms that are general. So, I guess that is one thing that helped me. My

advisor served more as a career service than the actual career services. The career service did help me with mock interviews and with my resume. The law school career services, they helped me with my resume, very quickly too. They helped me with the cover letter; how to do a resume; they knew patent law and disability law, but they didn't know about bioethics. They were very good to me.

Sometimes I don't feel like I know what I am doing. I feel like I stumble upon it (jobs), like it is pure luck.

Feelings on Barriers:

GPA's could be a help or a hindrance when applying for private law firms, there are some that require you to be in the top 10%, 25%, top 50 or have a 3.0 or a 3.4. I was in the top 25%. Because of my struggles with not hearing the professor or not grasping material, the professors tried to help me. I just couldn't get it. I have a 3.1. You get particular law firms that are looking for a set top 25% who will turn you down based on your GPA. They won't even look at the fact that there might be a reason (disability) and it's harder for you than someone who is just a normal person.

I don't know whether it is good to have that (disability) or not on the resume because they might think, "Oh, she's deaf" and they don't want to provide the interpreters. A barrier in my Master's program was more like a spur of the moment thing. The barriers now are timing. I applied too late. My biggest barrier was timing. Time is a big constraint; timing is key. I wanted to be a doctor, but I was deaf to certain high pitched lung sounds. I wanted to do pulmonary pediatrics, but I couldn't do blood pressures. I couldn't do pulse; I couldn't do simple things so I realized I would be more of a hindrance than a help, and I might endanger someone. So I said, "No I had loved research and you can go two routes for research." Another problem with research was I was allergic to mice so I was kind of limited to what I could do in the research field. So law school was my choice.

Reasonable Accommodations:

I use CART (communication access real-time translation), which is facial stenography, and it appears on a screen (laptop) for you. I basically lip read. My dad has a small business and he says, "the ADA only requires you to have a certain size (number of employees) to be technically ADA accessible. At ▮ job I was interviewed by a deaf attorney and he used a sign language interpreter, and he lip-read me. He said, "We have an attorney who is hearing impaired, and she gets CART. I never heard of CART until I had worked there. That's actually how I was introduced to it. CART us a little harder because it is a little time-delayed, but at least you can hear them talking at work. I took advantage of CART because my

problem is not so much what's in front of me, but what's behind me. So I could have gotten any accommodations there because there are others like me. So accommodations at ▉ were never a problem. I have been very independent and not having to depend on note-taking showed I couldn't do it myself. The CART person is my left ear and the job is to help me. If not, it is a battle, and you're going to miss stuff; it made me feel inadequate. So it is trials and tribulations that you have to go through.

Feelings on Discrimination:

I personally feel that any discrimination whether it's race, gender, sexuality or disability I feel that you'll always have that discrimination no matter what because every person has their personal bias. Unless you start the whole world over with a clean slate with no discrimination, you're not going to get rid of the discrimination for the deaf or the dumb. Disability is a portrait for us, the higher up you get, and you're sitting there by yourself. I'm very defensive about my disability and my allergies. A disability is a full time job where it doesn't go away. It's 24/7 [24 hours, seven days a week]; my job never ends. I feel like I am on the bottom of the minorities. I guess my personal opinion is that you're on the bottom of the list!

Final Thoughts:

I'm hearing impaired; I don't fit in the hearing world and don't fit in the deaf world. There is a deaf culture, but the deaf society doesn't want hearing impaired. All my life, I have tried to fit into the hearing world, but you never do. I want to write a Cinderella book for a person who is hearing impaired. There is a Cinderella story in most cultures, each one specific for their culture. Guess what, "I will be proud to say I have a disability."

Structural Narrative (Researcher Interpretation)

Participant #1 is a recent graduate from the site selected for data collection. The participant graduated with a Bachelor of Science in 2003 and then with a Master's in 2006 from the same institution. P_1 tried to attend graduate school in a PhD program, but that experience was negative and P_1 felt the institution misrepresented its disability services. According to the participant, "they lied about services for graduate students," and she "hated it because the location of the disability office was not accessible." In fact, the disability services were two hours away. The participant self disclosed that she has had a hearing impairment from birth and was "diagnosed at 2½" years of age. The participant admits the disability imposed several limitations on her such as speech, the way she learns, and how she learned to read. Because of this, it was more difficult for her and at

times the participant felt she would question her abilities due to her disability and often would question why she was rejected.

The participant reported having multiple jobs, which included unpaid internships, teaching assistantships, as well as paid jobs. Experiences with the participant's first job were memorable and the supervisor was kind to her. Due to the participant's course of study, in the sciences, the research she engaged in became her job, a lab assistant. On one account, however, the participant recalled a supervisor who also had a disability but she was rough on her as a worker. It is as if the supervisor was trying to warn the participant that life with a disability is difficult, so she was not going to cut her a break. Unfortunately, this method of supervision was a "turn off" to the participant rather than a help, which resulted in the participant leaving that position. After several jobs, the student made a conscious decision to go to law school and try to combine her love of science with practicing law in genomics and disability legislation.

Law school was an alternative to employment and she believed that achieving a higher academic level would provide employment success in the future. The participant indicated that even though going to law school was a good choice, the "higher up you go educationally," the lonelier it is for a person with a disability. When discussing environments to pursue employment, the participant felt the federal government would be a better choice to achieve success as they do not discriminate against people with disabilities. However, there appears to me some regret with this choice as all her other law school colleagues are looking for jobs and clerkships with big paying law firms and she was not. Additionally, the federal government in the participant's opinion will provide expensive accommodations such as CART (communication access real-time translation), which is facial stenography. Such accommodations might not be required for smaller businesses nor would they have to provide the assistive technology used by some individuals with hearing impairments.

For Participant #1, there were mixed reviews on the use of Career Services while in college. The participant did not feel there were adequate career services in law school, and she did a considerable amount of her own job search using the Internet. She "Googled" to find jobs. She sent resumes out to different organizations that she believed would be a good fit for her as a person with a disability. She often felt the law school career services center just gave her the employment book with jobs leads and did nothing else to help. On the other hand, the law school did have a job fair for law students with disabilities and this according to the participant was useful. Interestingly, the participant felt that her college advisor and the Disability Support Services (DSS) staff were more helpful in guiding her towards jobs and acted more like the career services than the career services staff. However, the participant admits the career services did help with mock interviews and reviewing her resume. Nonetheless, she felt like she

"stumbled upon jobs" and that her search was mainly based on "pure luck" rather than preparation that would be provided by the career services.

The discussion on barriers or what was a hindrance due to disability did not connect disability as a factor in getting jobs. The participant's own poor time management was a barrier; she indicated that her "timing" was a barrier that caused here to miss application deadlines for jobs. She identified her disability as a barrier directly aligned to career choice. For example, the participant wanted to be a physician, but due to her hearing impairment, she knew that she would not be able to perform several critical or essential functions of the job. Listening to lung sounds; hearing pulses through a stethoscope; or taking blood pressures on patients a hearing ability she did not have. Medical research was rejected as possible career choice because the participant was allergic to mice that were used in labs for human testing. Pointedly, the participant felt that her GPA and placement in class rankings could be a barrier. The participant believed that because her disability prevented her from being in the "below 10%" or having a GPA below a "3.4" could be a barrier for her as she sought internships or jobs after graduation with law firms.

Reasonable accommodations for the participant were limited. P_1 used assistive technology and CART (communication access real-time translation), facial stenography, which is a technology for students who are hearing impaired. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires that employers and institutions in higher education provide these services to qualified students with disabilities. The participant used a combination of CART and her ability to "lip read" to self sufficient when possible. P_1 did not indicate any problems receiving accommodations or that she had any problems with how to request accommodations in the workplace or school. There were some discrepancies however, as the participant indicated, she did feel at times "inadequate" using the CART system because it was time delayed and P_1 would miss information. P_1 described her technique as a trial and error process.

Participant #1 had strong feelings about her experiences and feelings of discrimination due to disability. P_1 felt there is always discrimination and that the world would have to change to eliminate discrimination. However, P_1 indicated that disability is a life long process that never goes away. There were feelings of being "less than" other minority groups and that because of her disability, she felt like she was at the, "bottom" of the list of all minorities. Furthermore, Participant #1 had a personal struggle within the hearing impaired community because of her hearing impairment. She described being in-between worlds. That she was neither deaf nor could she hear which caused a dichotomy of feelings. On the one hand, Participant #1 understands she has a disability, but P_1 does not know where she fits within the disability community because her disability does not fall with either category. The participant expressed a need for "belonging" and unity with others

like her in "society." P$_1$ ended her story saying that she would like to write a "Cinderella story" for the hearing impaired, which would establish a sense of p pride among the hearing impaired.

Structural-Textural Narrative (Verbatim Text and Researcher Interpretation)

Participant #1's story described how her hearing disability affected her life as a worker and a student. While Participant #1 reported having many job experiences, she also recounted the limitations her disability has caused her. A high achieving student currently in law school, the research believes that P$_1$ selected law school as a mechanism to enhance her future employment opportunities. However, Participant #1 expressed her concern at being at the top educationally, "the higher you go" there with a disability, there will be "loneliness." While P$_1$ appeared confident, the participant reported feeling "inadequate" at times because she is so aware of her problems with inference ability. In difficult situations, P$_1$ admitted she could not hear information or missed what was being said in the workplace or in school and frequently "second guessed" herself. The participant felt betrayed when she was "lied to" about available services for disabled students which she was told would be available to her; however, because P$_1$ was a PhD student and not a medical student these services were not available to her on campus. Services for graduate students who were not in the medical program were housed in an off-campus facility located "two hours away." Participant #1 said they "lied to her and it was really hard… really harsh and never taken seriously."

Her experience with supervisors was mixed. P$_1$ reported, on the one hand, she had good supervisors who were very helpful in fact they were "great." There were others however, [an advisor and a boss] who were, "tough" and tried to teach her a lesson that being disabled was "hard" and as a result, the participant indicated, "I left there because my advisor was against me."

The participant did not receive comprehensive career services while in school. The participant reported the services was minimal and had to conduct her own self-directed job search. P$_1$ relied on the use on the use of the internet and the "Google" search engine to "send out resumes to places for summer internships" indicating that, "Googling really helped me." P1 was frustrated at having no real assistance and indicated so when she said "when I went to career services, they said, 'here's the book; you have to open it up because we have no clue....'" P$_1$ did acknowledge that there had been one occasion where the law school service did notify the participant of a, "career fair for law students with disabilities and it has different organizations and different law firms… so I guess that is one thing that helped me." Unfortunately, the participant reported feeling inadequate conducting job searches "I don't know what I am doing and I feel like I stumbled upon jobs and that it is like pure luck."

Participant #1 did express her inability to manage her time as a barrier to securing a job. According to the participant, "timing is a big constraint… and timing is key" to successful job searches. The participant also referred to her disability as a barrier to career choice indicating "I wanted to be a doctor…; I wanted to do pulmonary pediatrics," but I was deaf…." P_1 noted that her hearing impairment prevented her from performing critical and essential functions of a doctor's job. "Listening to lung sounds; hearing pulses through a stethoscope; or taking blood pressures" on patients would be prohibitive for her. Another perceived limitation for choosing a career in medicine was participant's #1 "allergies to mice" used in labs for human testing. P_1 credited her severe allergies to mice as a barrier to medical research as a career option. She decided not to go into research so she attended law school.

The participant further stated that she believed that both her grades and her class standing were barriers. "GPA's could be a help or a hindrance when applying for private law firms, there are some that require you to be in the top 10%, 25%, top 50 or have a 3.0 or a 3.4. I was in the top 25%. Because of my struggles with not hearing the professor or not grasping material, the professors tired to help me, I just couldn't get it, I have a 3.1. You get particular law firms that are looking for a set top 25% who will turn you down based on your GPA. They won't even look at the fact that there might be a reason (disability) and it's harder for you than someone who is just a normal person." The researcher found it interesting that while grade point average and class standing might be factors for all law students applying for jobs; these factors intensified the job search for this participant.

Participant #1 first encountered reasonable accommodations while in law school. The participant said "I used CART, a communication access real-time translation which is a facial stenography" system for people with hearing impairments. This system, "appears on a screen for you", but even though she used this system, she also used "lip read." The participant indicated that these kinds of reasonable accommodations can be, "expensive" and therefore, she thought the government would be a better choice for jobs. Overall, the participant felt, "accommodations were never a problem." On the other hand, the participant has, "been independent and not having to depend on note-taking"… or other accommodations showed that she could manage things herself.

The issue of discrimination was very personal for Participant #1. At times she felt there was nothing anyone could do about discrimination unless the, "whole world was done over with a clean slate" and that, "you're not going to get rid of discrimination for the deaf and the dumb." This researcher was taken by surprise on the participant's choice of words [deaf and dumb] which is not "person first language" and it was quite significant that she used a derogatory term to refer to people who are *deaf or hearing impaired*. The participant believed she was, "…on

the bottom of the minorities" and said she, "did not fit in the hearing world or the deaf world?"

Participant #1 painted her own, "disability portrait" saying her disability was "24/7; my job never ends" and she felt like, "I am on the bottom of the list." P_1 also indicated being, "defensive" about her disabilities and that the "deaf culture and society doesn't want hearing impaired." At the conclusion of the interview, the participant shared very poignant feelings that she wanted to, "write a Cinderella book for a person who is hearing impaired and that there is a Cinderella story in most cultures" that needs to be told, but in the end, the participant indicated that, "I will be proud to say, 'I have a disability.'"

Horizonalization of Participant #1's statements provides all of the relevant terms aligned with the phenomenon of employment and disability of a college student with a physical disability. Table 5 is an account of all of the pertinent experiences, expressions, terms, and words used by Participant #1. A summary of Table 5 suggests that P_1 experienced discrimination during her academic tenure. P_1 further described feelings of exclusion by the disability community, her infrequent use of the university career center, her experiences with law school, and her perceptions about her own disability.

Table 5

Horizonalization: Participant #1

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P_1 (Statements are direct quotes.)
I hated it based on location; location was 2 hours away.
They were very discriminatory; discrimination against you; you always have discrimination no matter what; personal discrimination; discrimination for the deaf or the dumb!
They lied to me.
Disability Office was for med school students.
My advisor couldn't understand my problem; my advisor was against me; biology advisor; my advisor served more as a career service.
Your research was your job.
I didn't get credit.
Woman who had a disability was tough on me; tough on me.

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P_1
(Statements are direct quotes.)
Not break you, but make you.
Turned me off; being so mean to me.
Your research technically is your job.
Unpaid intern; don't have capacity to pay; we prefer interns; externship program; you get paid.
Tie in disability law; different sections of law; patent law; science law; useful tool for law school; legal profession; legal terms; disability law is my interest.
Government pays; government has the facilities to provide all; may not focus on private, but the government; big firms are general.
Giving you accommodations; it was really hard; I used CART; I basically lip read; Communication Access Real-time Translation; little harder for CART.
Harsh
Never really taken seriously.
Happy to have me.
Surprised by how well I could write.
I had a hearing impairment; high pitched lung sounds; I was allergic to test mice; didn't have a person with a hearing disability; higher deaf population; disability advocacy stuff; lawyer with a hearing disability; Interviewed by a deaf attorney; blind attorney; service dog; Braille; my problem is not so much what is in front of me, but what's behind me; my hearing aids were amplifying; learning disability; born with it; affected the learning process; I learned vocabulary differently; problems with inference.
Definitely not my career services in law school; law school; we have no clue; handed me the book; did know specific stuff; career fair for law students w/ disabilities; mock interviews, helped with my resume; interviews for my Master's programs; they helped me with cover letters; getting you prepared for an interview; Career fair is associated with Simplicity.
GPA's could be a help or hindrance; top 10%, 25%; top 50 or have a 3.0; 3.4; I was at the top 25%.
Harder for you; little harder; harder for me; harder for me out there.
Someone who is just a normal person.
I was always amazed; I wanted to be a doctor; pulmonary pediatrics; do a rotation in the ER.
Barriers in my Master's program; my biggest barrier was timing; so time is a big constraint.
I couldn't do blood pressures; I couldn't do simple things; I couldn't do pulse; might endanger someone; I couldn't hear him; I can't hear you.
Googled it
Just the disability mentoring program; like a mentor.
Part of my culture, deaf culture; deaf community; deaf society.
I lost access; access after you graduate.
ADA accessibility; ADA only requires; reasonable accommodations.

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P_1
(Statements are direct quotes.)
Depending on something; depend on note-taking; depend on somebody; she was my left ear; depends on where you are happy.
More of a struggle; I just had a battle; trials and tribulations; I stumbled upon it; stumbling upon them; stumbled upon things; going to battle while you are there; hitting a brick wall every day.
A great place.
Made me feel inadequate; I felt inadequate; second-guess your rejections; you second-guess.
Accept you for that reason.
Going to the appropriate school; PhD; I would have chosen the Master's program differently; the PhD differently.
I was shocked; I was completely clueless; I thought they would give me a bit more guidance.
Turns you off completely.
Disability is a portrait for us!
The higher up you get, you're sitting by yourself; this person has some so far, she must have overcome her disability; because you're so high up.
Plug your ears.
Defensive about my disability and my allergies; very defensive with him; that person yelled at me; I though he was going to beat me up.
Disability is a full-time job; It's 24/7.
I feel like I am on the bottom of the minorities; women are minorities; minority group for me; minority meeting; different ethnic groups; bottom of the list; I guess my personal opinion is that you're on the bottom of the list.
I'm hearing Impaired; I don't fit in the deaf world or the hearing world; I'm stuck in the middle—hearing impaired; My parents are both hearing.
Cinderella book for a person who is hearing impaired; Cinderella story in most cultures.
A love story in which a person with a hearing impairment.

Participant #2 (P_2)

Overview

Participant #2 is a Caucasian female and a recent graduate who self-disclosed that

she is a "little person," [a disability etiquette term used for a person of small stature]. This

researcher observed that the participant used an electric wheelchair for mobility. The

participant is a second-year graduate student in Film Studies (academic side of film) at a

university on the West Coast. Participant #2 went to undergraduate school at the selected

site and majored in history and film studies. P_2 reports multiple jobs: gardening business,

stuffing envelopes, working in retail, a cosmetic representative, and several college

internship positions. P_2 told stories about multiple jobs (10 employment experiences),

attending graduate school, career services, barriers, limitations, internships,

accommodations, discrimination, and included reflections about her future employment

and having a disability.

Textural Narrative (Verbatim Text)

> *Employment:*
>
> I've had several jobs; a lot of them. I just went in and applied. To be honest I
> found that if you want something to happen, you sort of have to put yourself out
> there and do it yourself. You're allowed to work legally before you're age 16;
> things like my father owned his own business, so I would do data entry for him.
> Then I tried to do a gardening business where I sold seeds, but a raccoon got
> them. So that didn't work out so well. I had one summer job where I stuffed
> envelopes for 5 cents an envelope. It's surprising how much that adds up quickly.
> I actually made a lot of money. My father owned his own business; he hired
> people with disabilities to work in the office, so that's how I actually initially got
> that job. Then I wanted to get a job outside of the home, so I actually worked for
> the ██. I did a lot of things: I folded clothes; I worked in the dressing room. My
> first year was a really good experience. I do not want to toot my own horn, but I
> actually got an award for excellence in service, a gold star. They were really good
> to me and then I transferred to a different store. That was actually a different
> experience, which is kind of interesting that you can work for the same
> corporation and have a different experience. They weren't mean or nasty, but I
> felt almost like I was the token handicapped person [Inaudible]. They would have
> me up front handing out fliers for like three hours, and it just wasn't the same
> experience. I tried my hand at being an [Inaudible] representative for a while, but
> due to transportation issues, it didn't really work out as well as I had hoped it
> would. Then after that I was at ██, I was not employed because I was too busy
> with classes and trying to maintain my GPA and doing internships.

I worked for ▇ show at ▇ news station, and I worked there as a volunteer where the woman who ran it was wonderful to me. I worked at the "will-call- window" and I actually worked security, which was just kind of funny and ironic. I did freshman advising; I was a TA basically for a five-week course every freshman has to take. That was a lot of fun because I want to go into teaching. It was a really good experience. I was recommended for it so I didn't have to interview. I was also an intern at the ▇ in D.C. one summer. That was a very interesting experience. I went in for the interview and I talked to them. I am always sort of not sure how to broach the whole disabled thing, especially when you're applying for a position. I still haven't really figured out how to do that because you don't want to walk in there and be disabled, because I think that's too much of a shock to people. I'm really passive-aggressive in general, so I always throw little hints. I'll say, "Is your building wheelchair accessible" or something like that to sort of give them a hint that I might be in a wheelchair. Yet, I'm not one of those people that throws it in your face either. I think I have trouble balancing that. They were actually very nice to me [Inaudible] they asked if I needed any special equipment and stuff to use the computer. I thought it was very interesting that they thought of that, which I didn't.

I began tutoring on campus for undergraduate students. I just applied. Nobody asked me to do it; I just sort of said, "I want a job, and I think it would be kind of fun and interesting. I went through the DSS office and took the application and applied and I got an interview. It was very pleasant. They were very nice to me. They knew me from before, so that was probably helpful. They asked what my qualifications were, so I had to get a letter from a professor saying I was actually qualified in that subject. Nobody walked in for tutoring, but actually it was a lot of fun. I met a lot of nice people, a lot of fellow tutors that were really nice. It's all about outlook and I think it is all about persistence and putting yourself out there and not being afraid to be rejected.

Feelings on Accessibility:

I actually transferred here to ▇ and the school I left was in ▇. I wanted to be in a city, which had public transportation, has things accessible and ▇ was notoriously bad for it, so I transferred. One thing that bothered me the most was the building that it was in, not exactly wheelchair accessible. If I can get into a building and the elevator, but the buttons are too high and I need assistance, that may be accessible, but not to me. I have my very own defined definition of it.

Reasonable Accommodations:

One job they offered me accommodations. I haven't really had to ask because they have all been part-time. I would probably talk to the HR (human resources) person. I would contact them before I talked to my supervisor. I've never done it

so I think going through it… would be kind of weird. I usually try to do the best I can.

Barriers and Job Desires:

I think in terms of the barrier of finding a job that I could actually do that is not data entry for the rest of my life. I actually want to do something. I think that can be difficult because I don't want to sit in an office all day and do meaningless tasks. I would say teaching, consulting, and I like to talk. Yes, in film: talking about film; writing about film; and that sort of thing; being a critic.

I think in some of the more physical aspects, like transportation as we spoke, but in terms of actually getting the job, I can see; I can hear; I can watch a movie; and I can obviously speak, so I can you know teach. So, I think in those terms, it's feasible. I think my career path is very feasible. I get nervous, butterflies, you know, the whole nine yards. I think I mentioned earlier that I don't really know how to broach the whole disabled thing…. Nowadays, you don't necessarily go in and apply. You do it all online or via e-mail, so it's very odd… How do you write to someone in an e-mail without sounding pathetic? So I think part of that is just trying to broach it without broaching it. So, I've found a kind of act passive-aggressive ways to do it. I think part of my problem is that I strive too high in that I don't just want to be a secretary answering phones.

I raised my hand one day and asked him if the building was accessible so I could hand in my final. He said to me, "There is a crappy ramp way up in the back". I turned to my friend and she turned to me and we looked at each other and said, "Did he just say this?" It was hysterical.

Final Thoughts:

Right now I'm looking to graduate this May. My thesis is on Adaptation Theory… the theory of how a book or vignette is taken and made into film… I am looking to share it with you one day.

Structural Narrative

Participant #2 reported to this researcher that she had multiple jobs over the years. P_2 started working legally before she was 16 years old which was considered legal age at her father's business. The participant also indicated that her father hired people with disabilities and P_2 attributes her first job to his work. Her first job was in a data entry position. P_2 tried other jobs such as selling seeds, but a raccoon ate the seeds so that business was short lived. The next job the participant reported was considered piecework where she made 5 cents per enveloped she stuffed which P_2 reports she made good money and that she realized that stuffing

envelopes could add up rather quickly. Participant #2 also worked in retail because she wanted to finally work outside of her home and her father's business. P_2 reports this job was a good experience, and she even received acknowledgment for her achievements by receiving an award of excellence in the form of a gold star for her work. On the other hand, the participant indicated that she transferred with the same corporation and that the experience with a new store was quite different. P_2 reflected on her job change indicating that she felt like a "token handicapped" person because they had her in the front of the store handing out fliers and not doing any work with customers.

Participant #2 also reported that she worked as a sales representative for a cosmetic line. She reported that this job did not last long due to transportation problems. P_2 took a break for a period of time with working to focus her attention on her studies and "maintaining her GPA" was important so P_2 who focused on internships, paid and unpaid. The participant told this researcher about multiple internships she had such as working at a TV station, a will-call-window, teaching assistant, trying a security job and tutor for undergraduates. P_2 thought the majority of these internships were favorable which resulted in making new friends, learning a great deal, and working with good supervisors. While many of her employment experiences were positive reports, the participant indicated having some problems. P_2 identified barriers such as transportation and bathrooms facilities that were not accessible in the workplace. To remedy these problems, the participant would work part-time to keep from having to use the restroom or she relocated to a facility that was accessible. After reflection on one particular job, Participant #2 indicated that she really did not know how to disclose or discuss her disability. P_2 further indicated that she did not want to shock prospective employers so she takes on a "passive-aggressive" manner by giving employers a "hint" that she has a disability and asking if their facility is wheelchair accessible. The participant believed that you have to balance things out when determining the appropriate time to disclose or discuss disability.

For Participant #2 accessibility is a priority for work and school. P_2 indicated that she transferred to another institution form her home state to the Mid-Atlantic Region. Because transportation and accessibility were potential problems, the participant took jobs that she could easily travel to. In terms of accepting positions, the participant searched out jobs that were accessible to enter and had accessible facilities and bathrooms.

When the issue of accommodations was discussed, the participant indicated while she has had some accommodations, she never really had any problems requesting or receiving them. However, if P_2 did need reasonable accommodations, she would seek out the human resources office. The participant further indicated that she is independent and would rather not have to request accommodations that she does her best to do tasks without them.

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Barriers have been a hindrance to this participant. The participant reported having several different kinds of barriers: barriers in career choices; barriers in terms of accessibility; the physical limitations of her disability; and transportation barriers. P$_2$ described barriers in her career choice as not wanting to be precluded from other jobs or having to do a sedentary office job like "data entry" the "rest of her life". P$_2$ expressed her desire to do more than, "answering phones" and, "meaningless" tasks. The participant further indicated that she has many abilities and jobs in teaching, consulting, writing about film, talking about film, or being a critic would be her preference. When discussing transportation, Participant #2 indicated that accessible transportation was important for her in considering where she would work, as she needed transportation to accommodate a wheelchair. More importantly, the participant indicated her strong need to select a position that would capitalize on her skills, interests and abilities rather than having to be in a mediocre career because she was wheelchair user.

Finally, while the participant expressed concerns about disability disclosure and how to inform potential employers about her disability and reasonable accommodations, she is excited about the prospect of graduating next May. P$_2$ expressed some discomfort in knowing how to approach the subject with employers as many jobs are applied for over the internet and that the employer does not have the ability to see her until she actually arrives for an interview. This was a dilemma for the participant.

Textural-Structural Narrative

Participant #2 described her employment experience with great enthusiasm indicating that she has had, "several jobs; a lot of them." P$_2$'s job search practice was to, "just go in and apply" and she believed strongly that, "if you want something to happen, you sort of have to put yourself out there and do it yourself" which indicated independence to this researcher.

The participant has been working before she was, "legal age of 16" to work and she started her employment career in her father's business. P$_2$'s father had a history of hiring people with disabilities and so this was how she started her employment, doing "data entry." Participant #2 then reports she was self-employed in a "gardening business selling seeds, but the raccoons got them" so that employment experience, "didn't work out so well." The participant also did piece work, "stuffing envelopes" where she made, "a lot of money" [Inaudible] and did surprise P$_2$, "how much that it really adds up quickly."

The next job Participant #2 reported was a summer job at a large retail chain. The participant says that at that point in her life wanting, "to work outside of the home." P$_2$ preformed several tasks such as, "folding clothes and working in the

dressing room." P2 further reported that she really had a, "good experience" and that while she did not want to, "toot her own horn," but she received, "an award for excellence in service, a gold star". While the participant reported this was a, "good experience" she "transferred to a different store." The participant further reported that working for the same retail chain in a different location produced, "a different experience". The people in the new store were not, "mean or nasty," but they made her feel like, "a token handicapped person… because she was moved up front to pass out fliers". The participant went on to discuss other jobs such as a cosmetic representative, but, "due to transportation issues, it really didn't work out as well as she hoped it would." After these experiences, P2 was, "not employed because she was too busy with classes and trying to maintain her GPA" was more important.

When Participant #2 was asked about internships, she reported that she had "unpaid" work experiences as a teaching assistant, an undergraduate freshman advisor, working at a TV station, security and a will-call-window. The majority of these jobs provided, "really good experiences" and the participant felt she had, "a good learning experience" at most of them. In fact, the participant described the security job as, "kind of funny and ironic" as she is a wheelchair user. One thing that did provide concern for the participant was her issues with disability disclosure. P2 indicated that, "I am always sort of not sure how to broach the whole disabled thing, especially when you're applying for a position. I still haven't really figured out how to do that because you don't want to walk in there and be disabled because I think that's too much of a shock to people." It was evident that the participant felt ambiguous about disclosure and further stated that, "I'm really passive-aggressive in general, so I always throw little hints. I'll say, "Is your building wheelchair accessible" or something like that to sort of give them a hint that I might be in a wheelchair." While the participant is confident about her abilities, she still expressed uncertainty regarding disclosing her disability to employers.

The issue of accessibility was prevalent throughout the interview. Participant #2 indicated repeatedly that she "transferred" [Inaudible] to the current school for good, "public transportation" and that her hometown was, "notoriously bad for it". On further examination of P2's experiences, the participant stated accessibility was also an issue when it came to restroom facilities, buildings, and elevators in the workplace and said that, "If I can get into a building and the elevator, but the buttons are too high and I need assistance then, it is not to me."

Participant #2 reported knowledge of the legal mandates for reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, but indicated that, "I haven't really had to ask for them" because the jobs P2 has held were "part-time" and that for this reason, this researcher reasoned that she would not have to use the restrooms if she worked part-time. On the other had, if the

participant did need reasonable accommodations, she knew to, "talked to the HR person [Inaudible] and to, "contact them before she talked to her supervisor." There was a level of discomfort with disclosing disability as well as asking for reasonable accommodations in the workplace as the participant indicated that, "I've never done it so I think going through it [Inaudible] would be kind of weird."

The discussion of barriers and issues that provided a hindrance to the participant was discussed during the interview. For Participant #2, the association of barriers was linked to choice of careers or her ability to get non-traditional jobs. P_2 stated that, "I think in terms of the barrier of finding a job that I could actually do that is not data entry for the rest of my life" would be her desire. Upon further questioning the participant said, "I think part of my problem is that I strive too high in that I don't just want to be a secretary answering phones. I actually want to do something. I think that can be difficult because I don't want to sit in an office all day [Inaudible] and do meaningless tasks." This researcher believes the engaging in graduate school is a mechanism to elevate the participant so that she can perform jobs that are of interest to her and launch a career in," teaching, consulting, talking about film, writing about film or being a critic."

Additionally, the issue of barriers was couched in terms of the physical aspects of different jobs and levels of complexity were connected to her physical limitations. For example, Participant #2, tried working security, a job that she viewed as "funny and ironic" as the participant is a wheelchair user. Moreover, the participant realized that she needed to select occupations that capitalized on her skills and abilities when she indicted to this researcher that, "I can see; I can hear; I can watch a movie; and I can obviously speak, so I can you know, teach. So, I think in those terms, it's feasible. I think my career path is very feasible". Nonetheless, while the participant has strong confidence, she continued on by saying that, "I get nervous, butterflies; you know the whole nine yards…when she has to "broach the whole disabled thing." Participant #2 presented her final thoughts in the interview by stating, "right now, I'm looking to graduate this May" [Inaudible] and P_2 is using, Adaptation Theory: in her graduate work in film and hopes to, "share it with you (the researcher) one day."

Horizonalization of Participant #2's experiences provides all the relevant terms aligned with the phenomenon of employment and disability of a college student with a physical disability. Table 6 is an account of all the pertinent experiences, expressions, terms, and words used by Participant #2. A summary of Table 6 indicates that P_2 held multiple jobs, enjoyed relatively good experiences with employers, and enjoyed her

previous employment opportunities. The participant did indicate, however, that she had

difficulty discussing disability disclosure with employers. P_2 also indicated that she did

not make full use of her university career center. Finally, P_2 expressed herself and her

experiences with laughter and candor.

Table 6

Horizonalization: Participant #2

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P_2
Several jobs; a lot of them; allowed to legally work; data entry; gardening business; sold seeds; summer job; stuffed envelopes; job outside of the home; worked in the dressing room; Avon representative; internship; I worked the will call window; I actually worked security; freshman advising; I was the TA; tutoring on campus; tutoring undergrads.
5 cents/envelope; adds up quickly; you weren't paid.
Father hired people with disabilities.
Really good experience; award for excellence; gold star; really good to me; good to me; absolutely wonderful to me; really good learning experience; lots of fun; interesting experience; very nice to me; very pleasant; weird experiences.
Transferred to a different store; completely different experience; wasn't the same experience; transferred.
They weren't mean or nasty.
I felt like a token handicapped person; up front handing out flyers; it wasn't dealing with the customers; didn't really work out well.
Went in and applied; If you want something you have to put yourself out there; do it yourself; applied for other positions; recommended for it; took the application and applied; putting yourself out there; strengths.
I went to the interview, the training and it was a really good experience.
Funny and ironic; too much of a shock; not a total shock.
She was really lovely; very friendly and bubbly; She chose me.
Not sure how to broach the whole disability thing; don't want to walk in disabled; throws it in your face; I have trouble balancing it; I have been rejected before; to broach it.
Passive-aggressive; never going to be an astronaut; definitely nervous; how do you write someone without sounding pathetic?
I've done well in my job search; all about outlook; all about persistence; all about tenacity; not being afraid.
Knowing I could do the job; choosing places to work; picking things that make sense

for you; work within what you can do.
Realizing your limitations.
Transportation is a hindrance; bathroom; the facilities are an issue; make modifications; use the restroom; transportation is definitely a barrier; public transportation.
Disability insurance; SSI; the government thing; It's ridiculous; get cut off; government gave it to you; I'm not dissing them; social security people;
They don't really work with you.
Career center; they were no help at all; every job I've had—I found on my own; career path; narrow field; I think my career path is very feasible.
Limited me; notoriously bad; Living in denial.
I can hear; I can watch a movie; I can see; I can speak; so I can—you know teach.
Accessible things; bothered me most was the building; wheelchair accessible; buttons to high; I need assistance; my own definition of it; crappy ramp.
Accommodations; I haven't really had to ask; one job offered me accommodations; PT and FT; talk to HR; kind of weird; very odd; very accommodating; I don't remember ever having an accommodation denied; relatively minor; adding a ramp; lowering a desk; accommodations never refused; never really an issue.
Barrier; more physical aspects.
I strive too high.
Meaningless tasks.
Teaching; consulting; talking about film; writing about film; being a critic.
Adaptation theory; made into film; process it goes to be made into film.

Participant #3 (P$_3$)

Overview

Participant #3 is a Caucasian female and a recent graduate who self-disclosed that she has cerebral palsy and a wheelchair user. The participant is a second year law school student and graduated from the current selected site school in May 2005. P$_3$ reported having multiple jobs and internships working at various advocacy organizations and organizations that specialize in civil rights and disability legislation. P$_3$ has aspirations to enter the field of law and specialize in disability and employment law. Participant #3 told

stories about her employment, attending law school, career services, barriers, limitations,

accommodations, discrimination, and reflections about her future after law school.

Textural Narrative (Verbatim Text)

Employment:

The summer after my freshman year, I worked in an organization called [Inaudible] and then in my sophomore year, I worked at the ■ center. During my senior year, I was at ■ and then between college and law school, I worked at a temp agency and they placed me at ■. The job I am at now is for civil rights and I am in their disability rights project. They are fantastic. They basically deal with ADA violations. They do both places of public accommodations and government entities.

Career Services:

In looking for the jobs, I used the Internet a lot. I sort of knew the subject area I wanted to focus on, and I really just looked for organizations that worked in those areas and… used their Web sites to figure out whether they were looking for anyone. I think a lot for me was my familiarity with the Internet. I was really comfortable just sort of seeking out the different organizations. For my jobs at law school, it's a little bit easier because ■ has a really good office of public interest careers, and they keep a database of places where you can apply, and they will do resume-collection for you and submit them to the organizations. Once I was in law school, they had a really fantastic career services office. I think it was definitely a lot easier to find the job that I am in now because the law school really provides a lot more support in their job search especially when you're doing any sort of traditional work at a firm. They would forward me placements that they thought I would be interested in… When I was looking for jobs in undergrad, I really felt like I was sort of, like I said, using the Internet. I didn't really know about any sort of databases or anything like that which would help me find the right place. I wasn't matched up with a career counselor like I am at law school. I think it would have been helpful to make me feel like I had someone to go talk to. Honestly, I really didn't get that much from career services. At ■ they had a resume review service that was really helpful. I had them look at my resume [Inaudible] to you know, have one more person go over it and make sure everything is right.

Reasonable Accommodations, Barriers, and Limitations:

I can't remember anything disability-related ever coming up in my interviews. The only thing that people would ask about my disability specifically, but they

would ask me more about the office, whether I would need furniture moved or things modified. My disability only affects my mobility, so the only accommodations I usually needed were if I needed a desk lowered or a wider clear path or something like that. I don't know that anything was really a hindrance. However, the only thing that sort of surprised me was that I remember having issues even accessing the career services building when I went for the resume review. It's sort of down a hallway in the basement and there weren't really signs. It didn't make for a very welcoming environment.

I think the hardest thing for me right now is feeling sort of geographically limited because of my disability. I've lived in ▉ area my entire life. So I am sort of reluctant to move to any other city where I don't know what's out there in terms of accessible housing and transportation. Right now I am applying for clerk jobs and I didn't feel that I was able to move somewhere else. I have friends that are applying all over the country. I really just don't feel like I have that kind of flexibility.

I didn't have that conversation about disclosure of disability until the first time I took a disability law class in law school. That's the first time we sort of discussed employment discrimination in that context. I don't remember feeling that I was excluded.

Everyone that I've worked with has been very accommodating. I don't remember ever having an accommodation denied or remember having a negative reaction. I really think that part of that is because accommodations that I need are relatively minor in terms of adding a ramp or lowering a desk or things like that. None of my accommodations have ever been refused. I think accommodations definitely are something that I've become more comfortable with as I've gotten older. I never really liked to ask for things or admit that I needed help, but I've definitely gotten better at that. Like I said, 'I don't really remember having a difficult process once I got it started. It was sort of an issue of me working up the nerve to ask for whatever it was I needed.

My disability has become an issue I think a big part of it would be getting around during the day, especially going out of the office for a meeting or training. Other people will just hop in a cab, and I'll sort of wait for METRO or meet them there. That definitely gets difficult. I build in extra time when METRO elevators break down. That's definitely an issue for me. There will be days when I am late to work.

Final Thoughts:

I think partly because I've had so many jobs, I really do feel confident. I feel like I've gotten better at it as I go along [Inaudible] I've had so many interviews that a

I sort of know what's coming. So I really feel like I know what I'm doing. I think it is more of a function of practice rather than any preparation. However, I think it is mostly anxiety about whether you're going to find something, whether you're making the right decision. But, with the application deadlines and [Inaudible] submitting applications here or there, it's definitely stressful.

Structural Narrative

Participant #3 described employment experiences starting during her freshman year. P_3 worked at an advocacy organization during her sophomore year as well. During P_3's senior year, she worked at another organization in the local area. The participant also recounted her employment experience at a temporary agency. P_3 current position is at a civil rights organization where they support disability rights projects and ADA infringement. The experience is very positive for P_3.

Participant #3 described two different experiences with college career services. In undergraduate school, she did not feel that she received any comprehensive services nor was she "matched" with a career counselor. Most of P_3's career search was self-directed and she used the internet to conduct most of her job searches. She was good at using the internet and credits this to her familiarity with it. The participant did admit that the career services in undergraduate did provide assistance with resume reviews, but the participant did admit they provided minimal assistance. On the other hand, the participant described a much more beneficial experience with the career services in law school. P_3 expressed feeling like the employers were supportive and provided many job leads for work in different law firms.

The participant discussed the issue of reasonable accommodations, barriers and limitations as it related to her disability. Participant #3 indicated that she did not recall experiencing any real problems with the issue of disability coming up in interviews. P_3's disability affects her mobility, as she is a wheelchair user. P_3 did have some inquiries from employers asking if she needed any assistance in the workplace. Employers asked if the participant needed modifications to the workplace such as a desk lowered or the furniture moved to accommodate her. While the participant did indicated that anything was a hindrance, she did feel that there were accessibility issues that she always has to consider. The participant recounted a situation where she felt an unwelcoming environment due to the inaccessibility at the career services at one school.

In addition to barriers faced by the participant in the workplace, the participant encountered barriers in terms of transportation. Using public transportation has become part of the participant's daily routine. Participant #3 indicated that public transportation is one of her biggest challenges, being "geographically" challenged. In fact, the participant said she selected jobs within the city limits so

she can travel with ease as well as find accessible housing. The participant also indicated others may just take a cab to meetings or training sessions, but she has to wait on the public subway system and often hopes that the elevators are working for wheelchair users. P_3 indicated that sometimes she could be late for work if there was a problem with the transportation system. Participant #3 mentioned that she did feel limited in her ability to apply for judge clerkships due to geographic location due to her disability. Unlike her peers who are applying all over the country, the participant indicated she was only applying in the Metropolitan area. P_3 did not feel like she had the same "flexibility."

The issue of disability disclosure was not a major concern for Participant #3. P_3's first learned about the ADA and the law in her law school class. This was the first time any conversations about employment discrimination and disability were put into "context" for the participant. P_3 did not personally ever feel excluded by any job due to disability or experience any employment discrimination. In fact, the participant indicated that she felt all those she worked with in the past were, "very accommodating". She never had any accommodation requests denied or refused and indicated she had never felt marginalized due to her disability. P_3 attributes her positive experiences with reasonable accommodations to the fact that her accommodations have been minor and inexpensive. Participant #3 indicated that the issue of accommodations becomes easier over time with experience and understanding personal need.

Finally, the participant closed the interview with reflection over the many jobs she has had. P_3 felt self-assured because of her employment experiences. P_3 pointed out that while she did experience some anxiety on finding a job, the more she interviewed the better she became and that practicing her interview skills made her successful.

Textural-Structural Narrative

Participant #3 provided her employment experiences with great joy and expressed her experiences with out inhibition. The participant had many jobs starting "after freshman year." P_3 worked at many non-profit advocacy agencies and agencies that "focused on civil rights and disability rights projects." The participant indicated that the employers were "fantastic" to her.

During the interview, the participant felt ambiguous about her experiences with receiving career services in graduate school and law school. While P_3 reported having a great deal of direction and assistance with career services in law school. P_3 did not report the same experience in graduate or undergraduate school. In graduate and undergraduate school, P_3 conducted her own job searchers using the Internet. P_3 stated that, "I think a lot for me was my familiarity with the Internet [Inaudible] and I was really comfortable just sort of seeking out different

organizations." The participant further stated that she had no direction and the "internet" was her only source of job search help and stated she, "really did not know about any sort of databases or anything like that which would help me find the right place." However, in law school P₃ described a different experience stating that, "they had a really fantastic career services office". Participant #3 reported that it was, "a bit easier because they had a really good office of public interest careers, and they keep a data base of places where you can apply and they will do resume-collection for you and submit them to places…" This experience was positive for the participant and she was appreciative for the help with job readiness skills to find jobs.

A reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability was the next substantial experience for the participant. P₃ indicated that she, "could not remember anything disability related ever coming up in her interviews". On occasion an employer would, "ask about disability… they would ask whether I need furniture moved or things modified." The participant reported that her disability, "affected mobility…so the only accommodations needed were to have a desk lowered or a wider clear path" to accommodate her wheelchair. The participant's disability in her own words was not a "hindrance." P₃ did reflect on a time where she had problems accessing the career services center and that the center was, "down a hallway in the basement" and there no clear accessible signage. In fact, the participant stated that, "everyone I've worked with has been very accommodating" and she did not, "remember ever having an accommodation denied or… having a negative reaction." None of her accommodations were, "ever refused." To sum up the participant's experience with accommodations she said that, "I never really liked to ask for things or admit that I need help" which demonstrates the participant's independence.

Limitations imposed by disability have presented problems for the participant. Participant #3 felt she was, "geographically limited because of disability" and her access has an effect on her commute to work and the places she applies for jobs. Accessible public transportation and housing in the metropolitan area where the participant lives, is key to her success. The participant felt limited in her search for jobs unlike her non-disabled peers because her friends were, "applying all over the country" and she did not feel she had the ability to, "move somewhere else." Simply put, the participants said, "I really just don't feel; like I have that kind of flexibility." This statement demonstrated that a huge barrier for her was *accessibility* that will determine her future employment opportunities. Moreover, the participant felt her disability was an issue, and it surrounded, "getting around."

Disability disclosure was not an issue for Participant #3. P₃ did however, indicate that she learned about disclosure in a, "disability law class." This was the only

time the issue of employment discrimination was discussed. The participant never felt, "excluded" in the workplace.

Final thoughts on Participant #3 are described with this participant's level of confidence and are demonstrated in her successfulness with finding and maintaining jobs. The participant while experienced in conducting a job search had some doubts and expressed her "anxiety about whether she will find something or whether she will make the right decisions" in the future.

Horizonalization of Participant #3's experiences provides all of the relevant terms aligned with the phenomenon of employment and disability of a college student with a physical disability. Table 7 is an account of all the pertinent experiences, expressions, terms, and words used by Participant #3. A summary of Table 7 suggests that P_3 had multiple employment experiences, attended law school, and had various methods for conducting a job search. P_3 also discussed the things that were barriers to her job search related to her disability.

Table 7

Horizonalization: Participant #3

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P_3
Internships; worked in organizations; campaigns; actual paying jobs; traditional working; because I've had so many jobs; so many interviews.
Law school
Disability rights project; disabled law students; disability-related; my disability specifically; my disability affects my mobility; disability law.
Places of public accommodation
Government; looking for jobs.
Used the internet; Web sites; database of places; subject area; my familiarity with the Internet; found databases.
Careers; job search; right placement; firm path; interviews; fantastic career services; forwarded me placements; resume review; took advantage of resume review; didn't get much from career services; don't remember any programming about interviewing; internship interviews; I wasn't matched up with a career counselor; resume review service; fellowships; submitting applications.

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P_3
Resume collection.
Lot more support; do sort of help you.
Whether I would need furniture moved; or things modified; accommodations; need a desk lowered; wider clear path.
Hindrance; hardest thing; geographically limited; reluctant to move to another city; I am sort of reluctant to move to any other city where I don't know what's out there in terms of accessible housing and transportation.
Flexibility; really useful; really helpful.
Accessible housing, transportation; getting around during the day; going out of the office; just hop a cab; wait for METRO; definitely gets difficult; build extra time; my schedule; METRO elevators break down; I'm late to work.
Employment discrimination
Disclose disability
I don't remember feeling excluded.
Sort of odd; I kind of felt silly; mostly anxiety; definitely stressful; It was sort of an issue for me, working up the nerve to ask for whatever I needed.
Become more comfortable.
I never really liked to ask for things; admit I need help; definitely gotten better at that; working up the nerve to ask for whatever it was I needed.
More of a function of practice than any preparation; making the right decision.
Everything sort of falls into place.
Surprised me; accessing a building; basement; get in the building.
Didn't make it a very welcoming environment.
However, I think it is mostly anxiety about whether you're going to find something, whether you're making the right decision. But, with the application deadlines and … submitting applications here or there, it's definitely stressful.

Participant #4 (P_4)

Overview

Participant #4 is an Asian-American female. P_4 is a senior in college who self-disclosed that she has cerebral palsy and uses an electric scooter for mobility. The participant is majoring in International Affairs at the current selected site. P_4 reported having multiple internships working as a research assistant locally and in New York.

Participant #4 told stories about her employment, aspirations to work in the

Foreign Service, and travel in a study program abroad that took her to Australia. P_4 also

tells about her confidence in her abilities, her clarity about her own disability, and how to

communicate and articulate her needs to employers. Finally, P_4 mentions her experiences

with career services, barriers, limitations, accommodations, and future plans for work.

Textural Narrative (Verbatim Text)

Employment:

Right now I'm interning at a small research group in █ that focuses on
population, health, and environment. My work is mostly in the demography side.
Sometimes it is U.S.-based and sometimes internationally based. The specific
main project that I was brought on was for a newsletter about Nutrition. I wanted
research experience because I want to head to grad school. For one of our classes
I had to go to a research group and interview someone. We went in a group of
ten… He [prospective employer] mentioned that he was looking for research
assistants, so I sent him a résumé. I got the job. It was unpaid, but now it is paid.
It started in July and our agreement goes up to the end of this semester, but we
may extend it after that. Before this summer, I was at the █ as a student intern. I
was there for six weeks.

Last summer I also did a research assistant job at NYU, which was looking for a
research assistant in International Affairs Education. My concentration right now
is in international development studies. It's definitely a field where you need at
least a Master's degree. In 2002, for National Disability Mentoring Day, I went to
the White House. It was an interesting experience because it was kind of brought
out of the blue. It was not very organized. You did stuff at the White House and it
was only for a day, so you didn't really get to do many projects or anything. It
was more that you went around and met people and saw what they were doing.
Everyone I met was very nice. I never had any problems. I didn't sense any
hostility or being uncomfortable or anything like that. I think my perception of the
program was jut kind of like; "Let's get these people in here, and it doesn't really
matter what they do". That was frustrating. I know that the White House is not
completely accessible, so they kind of arranged it so that the only areas we saw
were accessible.

The Job Search:

I normally don't tell people I have a disability when I apply. In some cases they know that going in because I am in a chair. But I always kind of wonder, when it comes up in the end, whether it's going to be an issue or not. It's not so much a barrier as it is something that I am always aware of. I think a lot of these things were that I just came across them (jobs) and if I thought they would be interesting, I applied and eventually ended up getting them. Research is one of those things that are mostly what I've been focused on so far where the disability is not a factor. So I just haven't paid attention to that. I never really had a formal kind of interview process. It was more that I sat down with the individual researchers…brought a copy of my resume and a writing sample. We talked for an hour to see if we could work 40 hours a week without killing each other, and then I got the job. I know that I don't have a lot of energy to waste. I know that I have a certain amount of energy over the course of the day. I'm not going to spend all that energy on stuff I know isn't going to go very far. So I tend to focus on, "Is this process going to be really complicated and headachy, or can I just kind of make it work?"

I always felt like going into more recent jobs and that having the history of prior jobs always helped. They kind of built on each other. I also knew how much time I could give without being exhausted in the end. The job I had this summer is the same job I really have now [Inaudible] when he asked me, "How many hours do you want to work a week?" In my last research job in New York, I said I'd work 40 hours, but I always came home in the end and I was pretty exhausted. So I said I'd only work 30 hours a week and that worked out fine.

Job searches are never fun, but I feel like between my previous experience and other things that I've done and my network here is a doable thing. I've seen others struggle to find jobs both people with disabilities and people without disabilities. In some cases, I know I'm in a better position to look for a job than they might be, because they might have come out of college with no experience at all. I'm not looking forward to having to search for a job, but I know I'll be okay.

Barriers:

I know what I'm really good at based on what I've done before, but I think especially with a disability, going into new areas, I might not have role models to ask questions that have actually done this work. I am more reluctant to go for those types of jobs than I am for what I already know. The field I'm going into really requires a lot of international experience and it is hard for me to find a job in those areas, especially doing field work. It's hard to find an accessible place where I can do field work, but it's also difficult knowing where I can go like even studying abroad. It was difficult to know which countries it was reasonable to

think I could go and which ones I could not. So, I went to Australia. It was interesting and I had a lot of fun. I met nice people, but it wasn't where I had originally planned to go. I wanted to go to get language experience, but in Australia, they speak English, so that didn't help.

Future Aspirations:

I am looking to go into the Foreign Service to get international experience. They have told me that they don't discriminate and they don't hire on the basis of disability. But one of the things about the Foreign Service is that you need to be able to go anywhere that they send you. "So, I wonder what does this mean in my case"? If I can't go anywhere on the planet, "does that mean that I am not qualified to join the Foreign Service or not?" They have never been able to give me a straight answer. They always pass the buck onto some other department. The same thing is true with the Peace Corps. So it's kind of been I don't know whether I really can apply because of my disability and the travel involved. I can apply, but I don't know if the disability is actually an issue in the application or not [Inaudible]. Again, it's looking for jobs abroad that are really a problem for me.

Career Services:

I don't actually spend a lot of time at the career center. Most of the jobs that I found were jobs on my own. When they had seminars and stuff like that, that I think might be useful, I'll go. Once they had an on campus recruiter and sometimes I've gone to those just to see what candidate pool they were looking at and that sort of thing. I think they were useful experiences. I got a broader sense of what really goes into hiring people, but it's not a place where I'm going to really look for a job. It's not what I think about first thing when I think about looking for a job.

Special Programs for Employment:

I participated in the National Disability Mentoring Day. Just having it on my resume was useful. Also in my freshman year, I was in a special program for female freshman coming in. It was called Women in Leadership and Power. Just putting that on a resume and saying I was in the program has been useful. The DSS office sends things out and I sometimes look at them and if they don't necessarily apply to me I don't go, but some of them do and if they are useful, I tend to join them. I know for this city and this school, which really has an extended network of people who work here are willing to help students out is good for help with jobs, that is the alumni and former professors. I know that this is a resource I can use.

Reasonable Accommodations:

People have always been accommodating. I've never had a real issue. I think one of the most important things that I found over time is that in the beginning, I didn't necessarily know what my accommodations were, but I definitely do know now because I'm very clear about what I need. I am very clear in my head about what I need and what a problem is for me and what's not. I'm able to articulate that to the person that I'm working with. It's not really an issue. What I need is an accessible workspace; I need to know if I need stuff moved because it's too high up; and I make sure that they know that if there is a lot of writing involved, that I may not be able to get stuff to them as quickly as they might expect, like extra time. I use public transportation because that is accessible, so it's not really an issue. I think in my first jobs I was kind of reluctant about asking for accommodations. I didn't feel comfortable asking even if people there were accommodating. It just felt like an annoying thing to have to bring up. I think now, because I've done this more than once, I realize that if I don't ask for them, it is just going to make everybody's life more difficult in the end. It is not as uncomfortable as it used to be. It's not really uncomfortable at all.

Surprises:

I am going to Florida next week for the youth conference for a student advisory council on disability. They feel like they aren't hiring enough people with disabilities or that after they hire them, they're not retaining them or they're not going anywhere. I think one of the things I might mention in that process is that sometimes having specific programs for people with disabilities is more of a turn-off to me. I think because I feel like, depending on where the program is, having a specific program for disabilities I know that sometimes they are great for people to break the stereotypes and all that, but I also feel like a program marketed for people with disabilities just makes it feel like were different or separate [Inaudible] and sometimes that's not a positive thing.

Structural Narrative

Participant #4 describes her experiences with jobs. The participant currently works as an intern at a research group with an emphasis on population, health, and environmental issues. The position initially was unpaid, but now the position is paid. The particular interest for this participant is to develop a newsletter on nutrition. The participant has a special vocational interest in research and feels she will have to go to graduate school to be marketable. Last summer Participant #4 worked as a research assistant in New York at ▮ University in International Affairs Education, which is in alignment with her major of International Development Studies. P_4 felt it is a discipline that requires a Master's degree. She further reported that she participated in a federal program, National Disability

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Mentoring Day, and was placed at the White House for the day. P_4 met many people and was able to see people performing different jobs. While it was a good experience, the participant felt the program was unorganized. P_4 felt the White House was not fully accessible, but the areas she had access to allow her to get around.

When looking for a job, Participant #4 reported that she usually did not tell employers before hand that she had a disability. Often employers know she has an obvious disability because she uses an electric scooter for mobility. Nonetheless, the participant had some trepidation about disclosure and whether or not disclosing disability would be an issue. Participant #4 reported that for her disability is something she always thinks about and that the issue of disability is often in the forefront of P_4's thoughts. As such, the participant has chosen to go into research where she is more confident that the disability will not be a problem for future jobs. Participant #4 said that she has never really had a formal interview, but has found jobs of interest and just applied. P_4 took her resume; provided a writing sample; and had a conversation with the hiring authority. Moreover, the participant indicated that judging her own physical stamina is critical for her when selecting positions. P_4's energy level can be compromised by the end of the workday so she is cognizant of whether she can work full-time versus part-time.

For Participant #4, previous work experience is important for securing new positions. Participant #4 indicated that looking for a job is not enjoyable, but because of her work history and experience, her ability to find a job is achievable. However, because of P_4's disability, there was some hesitancy to apply for jobs that she has no experience in. Participant #4 was concerned that she would not have a person that has done similar work to inquire about the difficulties one might encounter on the job if you had a disability. Admittedly, Participant #4 while interested in going to work in the area of international affairs was concerned that her physical limitations would prevent P_4 from performing job tasks that are more physical in nature. Accessibility is always a consideration and this was an issue she had to contemplate even on a Study Abroad trip to Australia. P_4 chose Australia because of the accessibility, but in fact she admits that she did not get the language emersion experience she wanted because Australians speak English.

For Participant #4, her aspirations and future is connected to international affairs and gainful employment with the U.S. Foreign Service. However, there are some concerns as to whether her disability will limit her opportunities for assignments that require travel. The unpredictable nature of the Foreign Service and the myriad of locations nationally and internationally give her pause and doubts. The accessibility of locations to do field work and manage with her limitations is noteworthy. P_4 stated that the Foreign Service does not discriminate against

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people with disabilities, but P$_4$ has not been able to find anyone within the Service that can speak to these issues. P$_4$ has these same concerns with the Peace Corps. In the end, the participant indicated that any jobs abroad are going to present challenges for her.

The participant described her experiences with the Career Services Center as a place that she has not really frequented. P$_4$ has conducted her own self-directed job search most of the time, but she does find some of their services valuable. Participant #4's experiences with the career center allowed her to have insight into the hiring practices by employers, which was constructive, but contends that she still would not seek their help as a first choice.

Participant #4 spoke candidly about her experiences with reasonable accommodations. The participant has never had any problems with receiving accommodations and most people were helpful, but shared that she believes that people with disabilities need to know their limitations and be able to "articulate" their needs and accommodations with clarity. The participant usually required specific reasonable accommodations in the workplace to include: accessible workspace to accommodate her electric scooter; assistance with objects above on shelves; and extra time if there is a substantial amount of writing. While the participant is confident about what she needs, she stated that in the beginning, she became frustrated and hesitant to ask for help. P$_4$ indicated her uneasiness with the process, but felt certain that with practice and time, she was able to make requests.

The participant surprised this researcher with her final thoughts. Participant #4 indicated that she is going to a student council conference for students with disabilities. P$_4$ voiced her concern over programs tailored for people with disabilities as something that she is not sure she feels positive about them. While, P$_4$ has participated in these types of programs, she believes they can create a detached environment for people with disabilities from the mainstream and create stereotypes.

Textural-Structural Narrative

Participant #4 has had multiple internships. Her current job is working for a "small; research group" that focuses on "population, health, and environment". The participant's assignment is to work in "demography" and her, "specific main project was to work on a newsletter on nutrition". The position was an "unpaid internship", but now it is paid and the participant hopes the internship will last through the semester. It is possible that the internship might, "be extended after that." Last summer the participant worked as an, "research assistant job at NYU in International Affairs Education." P$_4$ indicted that her major is in international development studies and feels that, "it's definitely a field where you need at least

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a Master's degree." Participant #4 also described her participation in the National Disability Mentoring Day program at the White House. While P_4 enjoyed this experience, the participant said, "It was not very organized" and that, "you didn't really get to do many projects…it was more that you went around and met people and saw what they were doing." Admittedly, Participant #4 felt the White House only made available the accessible areas, but she felt that the, "White House is not completely accessible [Inaudible] and everyone was very nice."

For Participant #4, "job searches were never fun," but P_4 contended that if you are prepared and have prior work experience, "it is doable". Disability disclosure is something that the participant does ahead of time, but she initially was, "uncomfortable" with the process. Over time, the participant said, "I always kind of wonder, when it comes up in the end, whether the disability is going to be an issue or not" and that her disability is, "something she is always aware of." In retrospect, Participant #4 felt that the more experience one has the better one becomes with accepting disability disclosure. Because of physical limitations, the participant has chosen research jobs in international affairs for future employment. P_4 has conducted her own job searches and has taken the approach to, "apply, and bring a copy of her resume and a writing sample" to those research assistant positions she found. P_4 has not gone through, "a formal interview." More importantly, the participant indicated that she really watches her physical stamina as she often gets exhausted by the end of a workday. As such, participant #4 discusses with potential employers her working, "40 hours a week without killing each other (employer and herself) with her fatigue. P_4 said, "I don't have a lot of energy to waste" and because of this she knows she has, "a certain amount of energy over the course of the day" so the participant was likely to, "focus on whether the process is going to be really complicated and headachy." Trying to minimize her efforts at work to function was important to the participant's ability to "make it work" so the participant has opted for working 30 hours per week.

Previous work experience was important to the participant. For participant #4, "having prior jobs always helped" in her ability to secure a job as she felt, "they kind build on each other." For instance, "the job I had this summer is the same job I really have now". The participant's insight into obtaining future jobs goes back to prior job experience. As such, the participant indicated that she felt confident in her ability to find a job because of her previous work experience. The participant stated, "Between my previous experience and other things that I've done and my networks here are a doable thing". P_4 felt that other students may not do as well with a job search if they did not have prior work experience like she did and that in her case, "I am in a better position." Therefore, P_4 displayed confidence in her ability to secure employment.

The participant discussed barriers to employment. Participant #4 indicated that barriers are reduced if a person with a disability goes into areas that they know

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and look at. The problem for Participant #4 was that she did not have, "role models" that were disabled to ask about entering various jobs and occupations as a result of this, the participant was, "reluctant to go for those types of jobs." A particular instance came up for the participant as it related to her Study Abroad program. While the participant wanted to "get language experience," but because accessibility was an issue, the participant selected a country that was accessible however, the ability to learn a language, "didn't help" as the Australians spoke English.

The participant's interest for future jobs is to secure a position at the Foreign Service to get "international experience." While the participant understands that the Foreign Service "does not discriminate or hire on the basis of disability," she has been unable to find someone to address her concerns about disability and employment at the Foreign Service and stated, "they have never given me a straight answer and they always pass the buck onto some other department." The participant felt the same way about the Peace Corps. Nonetheless, the participant felt that her disability and the issues of accessibility would be pivotal to her career choices. She stated that, "because of my disability, and the travel involved, I can apply, but I don't know if the disability is actually an issue in the application or not and that looking for jobs abroad are really a problem for me". While the participant felt confident about her abilities to secure a job, she was concerned about her ability to travel out of the country as a wheelchair user.

When looking for jobs, the participant did not, "actually spend a lot of time at the career center and most of the jobs that I found were on my own." The participant did indicate that there were selected events that she found "useful" that she would go to. For instance, the participant said that, "once they had an on campus recruiter …that I might find useful, then I'll go." Participant #4 indicated that looking at "candidate pools" were useful experiences. She stated that candidate pools provided her insight into, "a broader sense of what really goes into hiring people."

The participant discussed experiencing good outcomes with requesting reasonable accommodations and felt, "people have always been accommodating". In fact, the participant said that, "I think one of the most important things that I found over time is that in the beginning, I didn't necessarily know what my accommodations were, but I definitely do now." Participant #4 felt that having clarity about her needs and specific accommodations served her well in the workplace. P_4 stated that, "I am very clear in my head about what I need and what a problem it is for me and what's not." The participant felt that she needed to be "articulate" in describing her accommodation needs to employers. While participant #4 was clear on the accommodations she needed in the workplace, she was at times "reluctant" in asking for accommodations and only over time did she get better at the reasonable accommodation process.

Participant #4 ended our discussion with her assessment on special programs for people with disabilities. P_4 indicated that while she was traveling to a student advocacy council conference. P_4 she did not feel like special programs were always a good thing. P_4 indicated that having, "special programs for people with disabilities are more of a turn-off to me. The participant indicated that she felt like, "a program marketed for people with disabilities" would make her feel like people with disabilities were "different or separate" and to her, that would not be the most "positive" approach to employment.

Horizonalization of Participant #4's experiences provides all the relevant terms aligned with the phenomenon of employment and disability of a college student with a physical disability. Table 8 is an account of all the pertinent experiences, expressions, terms, and words used by Participant #4. A summary of Table 8 suggests that P_4 held multiple jobs, traveled internationally, wanted to work with the Foreign Service, and had concerns about the availability of work assignments due to her disability and the use of a wheelchair.

Table 8

Horizonalization: *Participant #4*

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P$_4$
Internships; interning is a small research group; work is mostly in demography; looking at demographics in the U.S. and International; unpaid internship is now paid; agreement lasts for this semester; research assistant job.
Current project is on a newsletter about nutrition.
I wanted research experience; research is one of those things to get a job.
I plan to head to grad school; Master's degree; My concentration right now is in international development studies.
Research assistant in International Affairs; major is in international affairs; international education; really requires a lot of international experience.
My resume; brought a copy of my resume.
National Disability Mentoring Day; I went to the White House; interesting experience; not very organized; for only one day.
I didn't sense any hostility; everyone I met was very nice; I never had any problems; I didn't sense any hostility or being uncomfortable.
White House is not completely accessible; hard to find an accessible place where I can do fieldwork; I need an accessible workspace; I need to know if stuff needs to be moved because it's too high up.
I just kind of came across them (jobs); I thought it would be interesting, so I applied; I eventually ended up getting them; I never really had a formal kind of interview process.
Disability is not really a factor; he saw me in a chair, that wasn't a big deal; I normally don't tell people I have a disability when I apply; I don't know if the disability is actually an issue in the application or not.
Work 40 hours a week without killing each other; I only work 30 hours a week ant that worked out fine.
Comfortable; I didn't stress over them.
I don't have a lot of energy; certain amount of energy over the course of the day; I could give without being exhausted in the end; I was pretty exhausted.
Is this process going to be really complicated or headachy; I wonder when it comes up, whether it's going to be an issue or not.
Jobs having history of prior jobs always helped.
I know what I am really good at; what I've done before.
I didn't sense any hostility; everyone I met was very nice; I never had any problems; I didn't sense any hostility or being uncomfortable; frustrating.
I might not have role models to ask questions.
I'm more reluctant to go for those types of jobs.
Hard for me to find a job in those areas.
Studying abroad; difficult to know which countries; I went to Australia; I wanted to get

language experience; doing fieldwork.
No so much a barrier as it is something I am always aware of.
Foreign Service; you need to be able to go anywhere; go anywhere on the planet; go anywhere they send you; Peace Corps.
They don't discriminate; they don't hire on the basis of disability.
Pass the buck; I can't get a straight answer either way.
I don't really spend a lot of time at the Career Center; most of the jobs I found on my own; seminars might be useful; not a place I'm going to really look for a job.
Candidate pool
Might be useful, useful experiences; putting it on my resume was useful; if they are useful, I ten to join them.
Broader sense of what really goes on in hiring people.
Good networking; good resources.
People have always been accommodating; most important thing I found over time, is that in the beginning I didn't necessarily know what my accommodations were; I definitely do now; I'm clear about what I need; I need a little extra time for writing; I was reluctant about asking; I didn't feel comfortable asking; annoying to have to bring it up.
I'm very clear in my head about what I need; I am able to articulate that to the person.
I use public transportation.
Going to make everybody's life more difficult in the end.
Fellowship in Germany
Looking for jobs abroad that are really a problem for me; job searchers are never fun; struggle to find jobs; I'm in a better position to look for a job than they might be; come out o college with no work experience; I'm not looking forward to having to search for a job, but I know I will be okay.
I make it clear that it's a doable thing; my network here is a doable thing.
Health issues
Give me a straight answer.
I don't want to go through the whole interview process and then in the end find out that they won't accept me because I can't go anywhere; I don't want to waste my time and energy.
Specific programs for people with disabilities are more of a turn-off to me.

Participant #5 (P_5)

Overview

Participant #5 is a West African male from Sierra Leone and reported that he is a

recent immigrant to the United States after leaving his country due to civil unrest.

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Participant #5 self-disclosed that he lost his sight at age nine and is a person who is blind. The participant further stated that he was the first person who was blind to graduate from the University at Sierra Leone where he received a Master's degree in social planning. Participant #5 is currently a recent graduate in Special Education from the selected site and just completed all course work this past summer. The participant has a background of teaching English and History in Sierra Leone and reported that he was a high-level civil servant with responsibility for social services for the entire country. The participant reported that he has studied abroad in London and furthered his education in the United States obtaining another Master's degree in Special Education in order to teach. Participant #5 told stories about his employment, experiences with employment in West Africa, his transition to the United States; his disappointments, and his disability. Participant #5 also recounted his transferable skills, and his many efforts to secure gainful employment in the United States. Finally, P₅ mentioned his experiences with career services, barriers, limitations, reasonable accommodations, and his current employment situation.

Textural Narrative (Verbatim Text)

> *Participant Describes Background in Sierra Leone:*
>
> I've held several jobs, both here and abroad. Let me first of all say, since I am West African, I will describe myself as a recent immigrant to this country. The fact is that in my country of origin, I held a position with the government, and I was a civil servant. I rose through the ranks to the position of head of department for the whole country. In the meantime, while I was a civil servant, I also did some part-time teaching. I taught English and History up to college level. I had my first degree from the University of ████████. Then I proceeded to the United States for further studies for one year. I attended ██ University. I went back home and was in charge or programs for rehabilitation and placement services for the blind and the disabled. Really it wasn't difficult for me getting a

job when I graduated from the university. Even though I was the first blind university graduate in that country, it wasn't too difficult for me to get a job.

Employment:

Then as I got better trained up to the point where eventually I went to the █ School of Economics to get a Master's degree in Social Planning that even enhanced my position in the service. Then when civil unrest caused me to leave the country 10 years ago and to settle here, I had a problem finding a job. In the first place, I applied to a number of agencies, which I thought were in my area of interest. But since my training was in the area of Social Planning, here I didn't see anything akin to that. I looked through so many job opportunities that came up, but there was nothing directly related to my area of interest. The closest to it was something like generic social science or social studies. After over a year of looking around, I got a job as credit management associate. It was something that I never did before, but I got some training. It was through my connection with the National █. There was an opening that needed some people to be trained as associates for the company, so I went in, and that was how I got my foot in the doorway. I was there for less than a year, and then there was another opening somewhere else, which paid a little better and had better benefits, so I switched over to that. This one was more closely related to what I had done back in Sierra Leone. This time it was Independent Living Specialist.

I worked with different categories of persons with disabilities in terms of helping them find resources, in terms of accessing training opportunities. I just went to the facilities like those who need ramps to their houses or apartments, you know, things like that … who need modification of bathrooms, kitchens and things like that. So I worked in that area for a year and then I got an even better offer in terms of pay from another agency. But unfortunately, things didn't go well with them. I wouldn't delve into things there, so I had to leave them.

And I ventured briefly into the field of insurance. I took a course in insurance, and I passed it, and I started. But I found out it was not my cup of tea, you know. It was too demanding, so I left it. That was when finally I decided that since I had taught before, I should explore the possibility of teaching. I checked around and learned that it was not easy getting a teaching position if you didn't get accreditation, so I started exploring. My nephew, who taught in █ at that time, gave me a hint about a program that could train me as a special education teacher. With that, I applied and got accepted into the program, and the rest is, what we would say, is history.

I'll tell you maybe the initial barriers was training and education that did not relate directly to the American system [Inaudible] learn the American Way, to adapt to the American way of doing things [Inaudible] let me go back to the jobs

that I applied for. For instance, on a number of occasions, I applied for vocational rehab specialist positions, and I would be interviewed and was always given the impression that my performance was okay. But in the end I would receive the polite letter: "We were impressed with your credentials; however, we have offered the position to somebody else" blah, blah, blah.

You know, I went to a whole number of interviews. Again, I must say, when I came over here, I was not computer literate at all. It was here that I started training in the computer area, first with ▊ for the Visually Impaired and then one or two other places where I got more and more training. So, in a sense that was a little bit of a disadvantage to me by not being computer literate; however, it never came up in the interviews. Although I had in the back of my mind that I needed to be competent in using the computer, nothing like that came up in the interviews. To the best of my knowledge, I know I answered very well, but I can assure you that this is my suspicion that for those interviews, there was a little bit of bias. I suspected some bias, but eventually for the jobs that I got, I mean the interviews were very well conducted. I felt very comfortable with them. For instance, for the Independence ▊ position, I was interviewed by the then-supervisor for the area, and everything went very cordially, and just like that I got the job. Similarly for the ▊, when I went for the interview, I didn't have any problems. I didn't suspect anything amiss. I really think it was very well and very objectively conducted. That was my experience. I didn't have any problems. In fact, for both positions, as soon as I finished the interview, right there I was told that the position was mine. Yes, on the spot, I was told that the position was mine. So, that was the experience I had.

For the Vocational Rehab Specialist position, there was an indication that I was over-qualified for the position. Yes. I had a Master's degree and I indicated the kind of positions I had held before and all that sort of thing. So they said I was over-qualified for the position. In another instance, it was indicated that my qualifications were not in that area. But I'll tell you, I know people who don't have any kind of specific training in disability issues who hold those kinds of positions. I know them personally. I knew one or two before, and up to this moment I know that a number of those in that area don't whole any specific qualifications. It's only now that they are beginning to be very firm about, for instance, having somebody who has a vision certification to handle the position for dealing with blind and visually impaired candidates. It's only now that they are beginning to be insistent on that, but up to a few years ago it was not the case.

Well, the computer skills help a lot because I would go on the Internet and look at things, especially when certain job sites were recommended to look, like the American Job. I forget the exact name, but there was a Web site that I went to now and again also personal contacts. In fact, all the jobs I have succeeded in getting were, I should say 80% at least, through personal contacts. Networking is

something I believe in very much because it has worked for me. So those are the areas, you know, if I could call them qualifying elements for successful job searches.

Barriers/Hindrances:

Well, a hindrance I can hardly think of anything in particular, but I think one very important element here was being able to relate well to people, to other people. If you're not able to relate to people and you are not able to go out, you have to be a go-getter to some extent. Otherwise, if you just want to wait until somebody else does things for you, especially as a disabled person, things will not work. But you have to make the effort. To some extent, you have to bother people, you know? Sometimes some people might tend to overdo it and you might hesitate that it's overdoing things, but if you don't keep calling people to check on things and remind them about things or to ask pertinent questions, then things will not work. That's very important that you contact people, ask pertinent questions, and explain things for them to understand what you want. You have to know what you want and explain people exactly what you want, how you want to get it, and so on and so forth. The barrier may be perhaps in my case my initial education and training, which did not relate directly to the American system because my original education [Inaudible]. So to some extent, I had to learn the American way as it was and try to get myself to adapt to the American way of doing things.

Career Services:

I didn't use them as such, although there was a time when I kind of briefly contacted somebody there. I don't remember her [career center personnel staffer] name now, but she helped me kind of reorganize my resume. But that was rather brief, so I didn't have much to do with them. It depends on the disability and what kinds of careers you want to get into and lots of programs the person would like to [Inaudible] I mean, what kind of career the person would like to get into. Let's say for instance, with somebody who is blind or visually impaired, I know there are lots of programs around that offer training at different levels, but not high. When you come to the academic or intellectual levels, that's different somewhat. But, even in that, you also have a number of universities that offer training for mobility and orientation, that sort of thing. There are also programs that help blind and visually impaired people to achieve high professional qualifications. Of course, I'm not very familiar with other disability situations, but I know that there are a number of programs and organizations that give support.

Reasonable Accommodations:

Typically, you have the Light House for the Blind. There are consumer advocacy groups, which help a lot in pointing you in the direction that you could go to

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receive help or something like that. That's an interesting one. I work for ■ Public Schools. For the past two years, I have been asking for accommodations in the form of a note-taker. I have not gotten any because, you know, while they just assume that since they provide the schools with equipment, we the teachers could access that equipment. But the fact is that that equipment is meant mainly for the students, you know, like the note-takers, the screen-reader programs and a number of other items that are meant specifically for the students.

As a teacher, you need your own piece of equipment, especially the note-takers. You need your own note-taker that you can use to do things and prepare your reports and things like that. Last year, two of my colleagues were able to get note-takers, but I didn't because for some reason somebody said that I already had a note-taker provided for me somewhere else.

I'm entitled to a note-taker that is provided for me by my employer, not by somebody else. JAWS (Job Access with Speech) or Window-Eyes [screen readers for the blind], but I use JAWS. Some other people like Window-Eyes, but I prefer JAWS. JAWS is what I've been using all the time on my computer. For scanning and things like that, I use Kurzweil 1000. For instance, if I want to read my correspondence, I use Kurzweil. I have the scanner, and I put the text on the scanner and Kurzweil l will scan it and read it to me. Oh yes. I am a very proficient Braille reader. I have not been provided with any Braille material really. Mostly it's the students … it's like the text that the students need. They try to get those, but nothing specifically for the teachers. The only thing is when for instance I asked for a teacher's assistant, the question I got was, "Well, how do you need somebody else to help you? If you're a teacher, you should be qualified. You should be able to handle things." I said, "That is true, but there are so many things that I sometimes need help with." I used to be an itinerant teacher. I went from one school to the other.

Quite often I would get material that I needed to read that was not available in Braille and also some material that I needed to get transcribed into Braille. To transcribe material into Braille is not that much a problem if there is somebody who could scan it and then edit it; because, when you scan something, it doesn't come out the same way like it is in the regular text. There may be some glitches. Sometimes the characters are miss-recognized by the OCR system and so on and so forth. So I needed somebody who could help me make the necessary corrections to text before the text is embossed in Braille. My explanation seemed to be received with skepticism, to say the least. It never worked. I don't know whether that's surprising enough, but that's one of my experiences that I had, which I thought should have been better considered.

There is a situation that I'm kind of hesitant to go into at this point in time. It's kind of current, but it's one that is beginning to let me feel that it's because of my

disability. I don't want to rush into any conclusions. I want to make sure that I confirm things. If it comes to the crunch, I know what to do about it, but for the meantime I'll just wait and see how things turn out. That's a tricky one.

The Job Search:

Just like I said earlier, when I was looking for a job, I sent out a lot of resumes. I sent my resume all over the place. I would send the resume. I would follow up with a phone call or two. That's basically what I did [Inaudible] sent out resumes and followed up with phone calls and tried to talk to whoever I thought might be able to clarify things for me or be able to put a word in edgewise or things like that. This is where the networking thing comes in again. So that's the way I handled my job search, sending out resumes, and I had a lot of help from this place in █. There was a gentleman there, at the Career Center and he helped me a lot in trying to update my resume and sending out resumes and things like that. He helped me a lot. I went in to just get some kind of counseling with him. That helped a lot.

Structural Narrative

Participant #5 reported that he was an immigrant from Sierra Leone, West Africa. P_5 came to the United States ten years ago due to civil unrest in his country. Participant #5 reported that he became blind at age nine. In his country, the participant described a career in Social Services and his work as a civil servant with responsibilities for the entire country in rehabilitation programs for the blind and people with disabilities. P_5 was the first person who was blind to ever graduate from the University in his country and he worked his way up in the government. P_5 reported having a background in teaching and taught English and History up to the college level.

Participant #5 also reported that he went to London where he earned a master's degree in Social Planning. The participant further reported that finding employment after work in Sierra Leone was not problematic. However after P_5's arrival in the U.S., the participant reported him experiencing difficulty finding jobs. The participant stated that he could not find jobs in the U.S. that initially fit his background and then he decided that more general social science or social studies areas were a better fit for him. Participant #5 indicated that one of his first jobs in the U.S. was as a credit management associate and he found this job through a connection with an advocacy organization for people who are blind. It was the participant's way of getting a start to establish a work history in the United States. P_5 explained that he left that job for a better salary and better fringe benefits and that the job was more in alignment with his profession back home.

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The participant indicated that he worked with others with disabilities and as a service provider; he would assist his clients to find resources and training opportunities. P$_5$ explained that he would go to the places where the clients lived and would evaluate their homes for modifications for bathrooms, ramps for their houses and modifications for kitchens to provide better accessibility. Participant #5 left that job for another position, which had better pay, but recalls that the job did not work out at as he had hoped.

Participant #5 further discussed jobs in insurance. P$_5$ took an insurance course to prepare for a job in the insurance industry and passed the course. However, the participant reported that the insurance field was not particularly a good fit for him; the work was too challenging. As a result, P$_5$ left that job. After this job, the participant felt he needed to get back to work that was most familiar to him, teaching. The participant realized that returning to teaching was not easy and decided to return to graduate school to obtain a master's degree at the current site location in Special Education. P$_5$ recalls that he applied and was accepted into the program and completed his studies in the summer of 2007.

The participant recalled the barriers he faced here in the United States. The initial barriers dealt with his understanding and learning how to navigate his job search and the manner in which he adapted to the "American way" of conducting a job search. As such, the participant applied to many jobs in Vocational Rehabilitation, but recalled that he received many rejections. P$_5$ believed that his shortcoming was in the fact that he did not have computer skills. As a result of those experiences, he engaged in computer training at an advocacy organization for the Blind. Participant #5 believed that the computer skills were a great assistance allowing him to surf the Internet to look for jobs. But, the participant contends that while he did not have computer skills, this never came up in any of his interviews. Therefore, P$_5$ was skeptical that there might have been some bias. Participant #5 continued with his suspicions with these interviews recalling that he was told the reason he was not hired was because he was too qualified for the jobs. P$_5$ indicated that he knew others that had been hired in this field, but to his knowledge did not have any special skills or experience in disabilities.

Conversely, Participant #5 gave an account of positive employment experiences where he interviewed; felt the interviews were received well and P$_5$ left the interviews feeling comfortable with the process. P$_5$ recalled several experiences he had with advocacy groups that focused on the independence for people with disabilities. The participant indicated that he did not have any suspicions nor did he experience any problems and in fact, was hired immediately. The participant concluded his views on the ability to find a job with the notion that he has credited to his networking skills and that in fact, he secured the majority of his jobs in this way.

Participant #5 reported that he was an immigrant from Sierra Leone, West Africa. P_5 came to the United States ten years ago due to "civil unrest" in his country. Participant #5 reported that he "lost his sight at age nine." In his country, the participant described a career in Social Services and his work as a "civil servant" with responsibilities for the entire country in rehabilitation programs for the blind and people with disabilities. P_5 was, "the first person who was blind to ever graduate from the University" in his country and worked his way up in the government. P_5 reported having a background in teaching and "taught English and History up to the college level." The participant reported that, "even though he was the first blind university graduate [Inaudible] it wasn't too difficult to get a job."

The participant revealed that, "As I got better trained up to the point where eventually I went to the ■ School of Economics to get a Master's degree in Social Planning" P_5 felt better prepared. The participant stated that once he received the degree it "enhanced my position in the service. Participant #5 recalled that, "when civil unrest caused me to leave the country 10 years ago and to settle here, I had a problem finding a job." The participant did not have problems however finding a job in his country. As such, the participant looked in the U.S. to find positions close to his prior work in Sierra Leone in "social planning," but did not find anything. After some time, he switched his focus and looked for jobs in more "generic social science or social studies" related jobs. When the participant did find his first job here in the U.S., he reported that he received assistance from an organization for the blind. The first position the participant stated, "I got a job as a credit management associate" and that, "it was something that I never did before, but I got some training." This was "P_5's way of breaking into the American job market and he recalled the experience by saying, "I got my foot in the doorway." Not long after that job, the participant found another job which, as an Independent Living Specialist which "paid a little better and had better benefits" and felt this position was, "more closely related to what I had done back in Sierra Leone."

Participant #5 continued to report his experiences with employment. P_5 worked with; different categories of persons with disabilities in terms of helping them find resources, in terms of accessing training opportunities." The participant said that the job required him to go to" the facilities like those who need ramps to their houses or apartments, you know, things like that [Inaudible] who need modification of bathrooms, kitchens [Inaudible]." and assist people with disabilities to find accessible solutions through "modifications." After this job, the participant recalled that he "ventured briefly into the field of insurance" which resulted in him taking, "a course in insurance, and I passed it." But, P_5 quickly

realized that this type of work was, "not my cup of tea [Inaudible] and that it was "too demanding, so I left it."

The results of participant #5's insurance job experience, lead him to rethink his employment goals. As a result, the participant decided to return to teaching and stated that, "since I had taught before, I should explore the possibility of teaching." The participant explored his options and decided that, "if you didn't get accreditation" he might not find a teaching job without it. As such, the participant stated that his, "nephew who taught at the time, gave me hints about a program that could train me as a special ed teacher" and therefore, the participant, "applied and got accepted into the program" at the site location and the, "rest was history."

The participant explained his experiences with barriers. P_5 felt his, "initial barriers was training and education that did not relate directly to the American system". Participant #5 said repeatedly that his ability to transition into the workforce in America depended on his ability to, "learn the American way, to adapt to the American way of doing things." Nonetheless, the participant felt he did not received certain types of jobs in the vocational rehabilitation field and he stated that he "received polite letters, saying 'we were impressed by your credentials; however we have offered the positions to somebody else…" This according to the participant was an initial barrier in his experiences with finding employment in the U.S.

Participant #5 further explained that in the past he, "went to a whole number of interviews" and that when he, "came over here" he was not computer literate that this might have been the reason for some of his employment rejections. As result, the participant took computer courses, but admits that his limited computer skills were, "a little bit of a disadvantage." The participant felt on some occasions that there might have been some "bias" with the job rejections. P_5 "suspected some bias… and "suspicion" as he felt for those "interviews were conducted very well". P_5 further stated that, "I felt very comfortable with them…and one particular job he stated the interview was, "objectively conducted." P_5 stated that he was even "hired on the spot."

The experiences described by the participant with conducting a job search in the U.S. were provided with mixed accounts. Some experiences told of jobs he received and jobs the participant was rejected from. Participant #5 provided his experiences with the applications for jobs in Vocational Rehabilitation. The participant stated that he was advised that he was, "over qualified for the position" even though he had a Master's degree. Participant #5 contended that he, "personally knew people who don't have any kind of specific training in disability issues who hold those kinds of positions…or specific qualifications" in order to do the job. The participant stated that in his ability to secure other jobs were credited to his computer training. The participant stated that, "the computer skills

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helped a lot" and that these skills assisted him in surfing the Internet. The participant ends his accounts with his job search reflecting on the fact that his "personal contacts" were his best method of finding a job. P_5 further stated that, "networking is something I believe in very much [Inaudible] and that he found "80% of his jobs" in this manner.

Horizonalization of Participant #5's experiences provides all of the relevant terms aligned with the phenomenon of employment and disability of a college student with a physical disability. Table 9 is an account of all the pertinent experiences, expressions, terms, and words used by Participant #5. A summary of Table 9 suggests that P_5 is a recent immigrant to the United States. Further phrases from P_5 suggest that he had to go back to college to obtain another advanced degree to become employable in the United States. More textural phrases suggest that P_5 experienced difficulty when requesting reasonable accommodations and technology for the blind in the workplace.

Table 9

Horizonalization: Participant #5

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P_5
I've held several jobs; position with the government; a civil servant; Part-time teaching; got a job as credit management associate; Independent Living Specialist; I ventured briefly into the field of insurance.
In the U.S. and Abroad; London, Sierra Leone; my country of origin.
I am West African.
Lost my sight at age 9; blind; Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind and then Services for the Visually Impaired; National Federation of the Blind; dealing with blind and visually impaired candidates.
Recent immigrant; civil unrest; caused me to leave the country 10 years ago;
American way of life; adapt to the American way; learn the American way of doing things; the American system.
I rose through the ranks; enhanced my position in the service.
Position of head of department for the whole country.
Taught English and History up to college level.
First degree from the University of Sierra Leone; further studies for one year; I went to

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the ▮▮▮▮▮ School of Economics; Master's degree in Social Planning; My training was in the area of Social Planning; generic social science or social studies.
In charge or programs for rehabilitation and placement services for the blind and the disabled; worked with different categories of persons with disabilities; vocational rehab specialist positions.
It wasn't difficult for me getting a job when I graduated from the university; it wasn't too difficult for me to get a job; looked through so many job opportunities that came up.
I was the first blind university graduate.
I got better trained up; I got some training; trained as associates for the company; took a course in insurance; training for mobility and orientation.
When I settled here; I had a problem finding a job.
I applied to a number of agencies; I went to a whole number of interviews; I sent out a lot of resumes; I sent my resume all over the place; sent out resumes and followed up with phone calls.
Got my foot in the doorway.
Paid a little better and had better benefits; I got an even better offer in terms of pay from another agency.
Needed modifications; I have been asking for accommodations in the form of a note-taker; I have not gotten any; screen-reader programs; JAWS or Window-Eyes; Kurzweil 1000; Kurzweil will scan it and read it to me; I am a very proficient Braille reader; I have not been provided with any Braille material really; text is embossed in Braille; I asked for a teacher's assistant.
Unfortunately, things didn't go well; not my cup of tea. Too demanding.
The impression that my performance was okay.
I was not computer literate at all; started training in the computer area; bit of a disadvantage to me by not being computer literate; I needed to be competent in using the computer; computer skills help a lot.
This is my suspicion; suspected; I didn't suspect anything amiss.
There was a little bit of bias; I suspected some bias.
Over-qualified for the position; my qualifications were not in that area; specific qualifications; vision certification; achieve high professional qualifications.
Personal contacts; Networks; 80% of jobs through personal contacts.
Being able to relate well to people.
Have to make the effort; to some extent, you have to bother people; keep calling people to check on things; ask pertinent questions; very important that you contact people.
Barrier may be perhaps in my case my initial education and training.
Reorganize my resume; careers you want to get into.
Academic or intellectual levels.
Consumer advocacy groups.
Schools with equipment, we the teachers could not access that equipment; that

equipment is meant mainly for the students.
You need your own piece of equipment.

Participant #6 (P_6)

Overview

Participant #6 is a Caucasian female and reported that she is a senior at the selected site. Participant #6 self-disclosed that she has a spinal cord injury from an accident, and the participant was observed using a cane. The participant stated that in the past she used a wheelchair for a period of time. The participant indicated that she was a transfer student from a community college in Maryland and was at the selected site on a scholarship for students with disabilities. P_6 is currently majoring in geography and wants to secure a career in Geography Information Systems where she can create maps for engineers to build roads in underdeveloped countries in Africa. The participant has an employment background in very physical work for over 26 years with thoroughbred horses, but reported that she can no longer do this type of physically demanding work due to her disability. The participant reported that she started with her re-training in computers at a community college, received counseling on careers and, as a result, received her Associate's degree in geography in 2006. Participant #6 told stories about changing careers, re-training, employment experiences, and her disability. P_6 also reflected on her experiences with a newly acquired disability and tells about the differences in being born with a disability and acquiring one later in life. Finally, P_6

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mentioned her experiences with jobs, barriers, limitations, reasonable accommodations, and future employment aspirations.

Textural Narrative (Verbatim Text)

Disability Background Explained:

Well, since my accident [Inaudible] everything I did prior to having this spinal cord injury everything I did for employment was based on full physical participation. So after my accident, I was wholly unprepared to do anything. I didn't know what I was going to do. What I did do was I went to the ■ Zoo, because my background is in thoroughbred racehorses. I couldn't do anything physical. I was still in my wheelchair, so I thought I'd work in their research library. I was not qualified to do that because I didn't know anything about a computer, and I couldn't get around. It was too hard to get around. So that's when I went back to school when I started at ■. First, I just took a computer class to learn the basics. Then I tried to work at the ■ Federation. Again, my interest in conservation, but I was unprepared to do that as well because I wasn't qualified to do anything. I didn't have the skills. I wasn't educated enough.

I have worked during the summertime when I'm not in school. As I said, I worked for the ■ Federation. That was an internship. I actually worked at the ■ Nursing Home. I took care of people with dementia. I fed them, and I was an aide sort of. I just took care of people. I was a Recreational Aide. I also worked at ■ in tree services. They monitor the tree canopy in D.C. all the trees in D.C. and they plant trees and they monitor the tree canopy in D.C. This is a city that has a lot of trees. So I worked on their databases.

Disability Disclosure and Jobs:

The main thing that I was always concerned about before even applying for these jobs and before going in to meet with these people, I always felt like I wanted to warn them that I was disabled. I wanted them to know before I came in that I was in a wheelchair or that I had my crutches and that I was disabled. I always felt personally like that was important for me to do because I always felt like I wanted them to know ahead of time because the couple of times that I did go to an interview and I was in my wheelchair, people were uncomfortable. It was important to me to let people know. To me, when I went to the --- Federation … when I went into the library at the Zoo, I hadn't told the guy that I was disabled, and I just got a [Inaudible] it was very awkward for me and for him. I was newly disabled as well. And then there was another time. I remember I was going to do an internship at one of my mom's old offices at ■ America, and I got to the building ■ it was an affiliate in ■ and I couldn't get in. It was steps up and I

couldn't get in. I had to call. I left; I didn't go. I couldn't get in the building. Yes and I was embarrassed, and I couldn't get in.

Career Services:

My professors mostly, to tell you the honest-to-God truth. DORS (Department of Rehabilitation Services) was of no help whatsoever and actually was a hindrance. My advisors at ▮ College were fabulous in helping me formulate ideas and how not only what I might be interested in looking for but who to contact, how to contact people, whether to call, whether to e-mail, or whether to write a letter. My professors were key. The career center at the ▮ College, not so much. My professors and my department, the Geography Department, were really key for me anyway. I haven't used it here. I'm thinking about going on to get my Master's. But I will tell you this, as far as my department goes, and this is again in my department within this university, the availability [Inaudible] and I probably won't use the career center as much as I will use my contacts within my department [Inaudible] for instance, at the university I'm working on ▮ Street Scapes, and we're surveying a campus and putting them into GIS layers and basically mapping the campus. That's through my department. Through my department are hundreds of really fabulous opportunities with the federal government, just huge opportunities.

Just the whole stigma around the whole thing. Like I said even though I felt like I had skills, I felt somehow that my disability made me inadequate somehow because of my physical disability. You know you're qualified but you feel like you're not. I felt like I wasn't somehow because I felt myself physically inadequate. Also, the fact that I have a spinal cord injury that doesn't look painful, but it is a beast, and having to sit for long periods of time at the computer during data management was sometimes more than I could bear. So I sort of started out looking for things that weren't going to be overly time- intensive, 5 days a week, 9 hours a day sitting in a chair; I couldn't do it. Yes, that's the physical part of it. It was an intellectual and an emotional challenge.

Accessibility:

Not being able to find the way into the building. Yes, the accessibility. When you're newly disabled and you've had a severe spinal cord injury and you have never lived in the city … Like me, I've never lived in the city. I raised thoroughbreds, and I got hurt in ▮ Queens at ▮ Racetrack. So I worked on the racetrack with horses. I never lived in a city. I lived in the dorm at the racetrack. I galloped racehorses, and then I had a farm of my own. I had 100 acres in --- County and raised and bred racehorses. So after doing that for 26 years and then all of a sudden faced with you can't walk, there was a big barrier to what on earth

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could you possibly do with your life now. So that was the deal. And then after that sort of trying to put the whole thing together, you know.

Reasonable Accommodations:

You just really try not to ask for any accommodations, even if you really need them. At least I find that's what I do. Because I don't want to seem too needy or too demanding. I have some friends who are disabled in wheelchairs, and they are horrible to be around. They are demanding. They have a chip on their shoulders. I don't want to be like that, so I try to be as less demanding as I can possibly be. After I have the job, I think I'm more comfortable asking for accommodations. You just heard me ask ██, because I'm in this sometimes it's not easy to accommodate. Like I need a chair like this. I can't sit on a hard chair because it will drive me through the absolute ██. I won't be able to learn because the pain will be so bad. But sometimes you can't get a chair. There are these chairs with the thing here [Inaudible] you know, you pull it up and you sit there and that's that. I don't want them to have to bring a whole new desk into the thing for me. [Pause and Participant #6 said, "I'm going to take my medicine]. People are pretty accommodating, at least where I've worked. People have been more than happy. But in the places I've worked there are pretty highly educated people.

Because I think that people that have more exposure to the world in general through university or through higher learner and the thought processes that go along with it are more sensitive to the world in general and not so [Inaudible] For instance, when I went to my parents' hometown in Pennsylvania, and had my wheelchair and tried to get into the restaurant and asked them to move the chair so I could slide my wheelchair. You would have thought that I asked them to tear down the front of the building and bring me a freaking' throne to sit on. It was a diner for God's sake. They were so rude, so mean, so nasty. I'm just thinking to myself. I think areas where there are more worldly observations, people observe the world differently than … so, yes, I do think education and experience that it brings matters in where you're going to apply. Do you know what I mean?

In every job I've had, it becomes an issue because of the physical hardship that it just has on me physically. For instance, when I worked at ██ Trees, a lot of what I did was data collection in and around the city, but in environments that were … first of all, I don't drive, so I get everywhere by public transportation. A lot of the data that I had to collect to put into my GIS. We plant trees and when we plant trees, we planted trees on the weekends. We planted 50, 60 or 100 trees. We don't plant just one tree. So it's these community drives and it's very physical, which is part of the nature of the job, and I had to collect the data. My supervisor I just felt that her expectations of me were not very realistic. I couldn't do a lot of it, but I did it because I didn't want to say, "Look, I can't climb up there. I can't get up there." I did it, but it became physically impossible for me to follow through on

what I was being assigned. Yes, it became an issue. I think I'm doing really well. I think that willingness do to it is a big part of it and actively participating in it is a big part of it.

Feelings on Disability:

I felt like everybody was looking at my wheelchair. That's what I felt like. Instead of listening to me, especially in the first couple of years … it's really funny … when they don't know you're disabled and you come in the wheelchair, everybody scatters to sort of find the right spot and move the table and … anyway. So you feel at once sort of, "Oh, ▮ [explicative], here we go again!" Every one is futzing around. And then you feel like, "This is hilarious. Look at everybody just running around." They're more uncomfortable than I am sometimes. Sometimes I just feel really uncomfortable myself. That's why I wanted to make sure that potential employers know that I'm physically disabled. It's no big deal. Just a heads-up!

Final Thoughts:

It would surprise you that I ended up at ▮ [site location] studying remote sensing and GIS, having never turned on a computer in my life, having a full scholarship at one of the best universities in the country. It surprises the ▮ [explicative] out of me. In some respect, I think that your education is a job, you know especially if you're a newly disabled spinal cord patient who needs to change her life. Say you're a spinal cord injury patient and you had an accident on an ATV (All-terrain-vehicle) and you worked in a bank, you can go back to work in the bank and don't need to go back to college. But somebody like me who had no clue what was going on and now is like studying remote sensing, go figure. That's what is surprising, I think.

Structural Narrative

Participant #6 reported having an accident while performing tasks in her former occupation of 26 years working with thoroughbred race horses at a racetrack in the Northeast. P_6 admits she did everything before acquiring a spinal cord injury where she says that she was unable to perform most of her job which was very physical. Participant #6 had no idea what she would do for employment since her spinal cord injury left her with limitations and a wheelchair user. P_6's first thought for a job was to apply at a Zoo because she had experience working with horses, but realized that she couldn't do anything physical and decided she might be able to work in the Zoo library and do research. This became a problem as well as the participant did not have any computer skills. The participant tried another job in the area of conservation, but she could not do that job as well due to her lack of qualifications.

The participant advised she tried several other jobs in areas such as recreational aide in a nursing home and at a tree service, but that job was also too physical in nature. After realizing this, P_6 decided to go back to school and enrolled in a community college in Maryland for computers to learn the fundamentals. While in college, the participant majored in geography and earned her AA degree. The participant advised that she transferred to the site location school to obtain her BS in geography and that she wanted to study Geography Information Systems (GIS) where she would be responsible for making maps for engineers to build roads in poor countries, like Africa or other third world countries, to provide an infrastructure.

P_6 recalled trying many jobs and that the physical nature of the jobs and the physical limitations imposed by her disability were at the forefront of her experiences. The participant disclosed that very physical jobs are a challenge for her. Participant #6 recalled that she was always troubled about applying for jobs and dealing with disability disclosure. P_6 stated that because of this, she would disclose that she had a disability before she arrived for the interview providing the employer with advanced warning so that employers would not feel uneasy with her. Accessibility was an issue for the participant. As mentioned earlier, P_6 had problems accessing buildings when she used a wheelchair for mobility. The inability to gain entrance into buildings was difficult and the participant recalled periods in her life where she experienced many barriers. P_6 described an experience where she went for an internship interview and when she arrived at the location, she could not gain access to the building because of all the steps; she was in her wheelchair so, she left and did not go to the interview.

The participant told of her experiences with college career services. She did not experience a great deal of help from the career services at the site location, but she did have a positive experience at her community college. Participant #6 stated that her professors and advisors at the community college she attended were mainly her source for job leads and information about jobs and careers. P_6 stated that she did not receive any help from a state vocational rehabilitation agency, but contends that her college professors were wonderful. Participant #6 further indicated that she rarely used the college career center.

Participant #6 revealed her feelings about disability. P_6 disclosed that she felt stigmatized due to her disability and that she felt that people would look at her wheelchair rather than pay attention to what she was saying. P_6 further indicated that somehow the disability made her feel incompetent. The participant described feeling physically inadequate due to her spinal cord injury. P_6 asserted that while her disability does not look severe she is in constant pain and that prolonged periods of sitting in the wrong chair can be uncomfortable and painful. As a result

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of P$_6$'s physical limitations, P$_6$ has set hours and times during the week that she could manage physically in an employment situation.

The participant generally felt people were very accommodating. P$_6$ expressed her feelings about others with disabilities and that at times they were demanding; had attitudes and were not easy to be around. But, the participant disclosed that she tried not to ask for many accommodations trying not to appear that she was dependent. P$_6$ indicated that after she was employed, she would be more at ease to ask for accommodations. P$_6$ stated that she knows it is not always easy to accommodate her as she is in acute pain even though she does not use the wheelchair anymore, which makes others think her disability is less severe. Admittedly, the participant said that she required a special chair for an accommodation in order to sit for prolonged periods of time which is difficult due to the pain. In the end, however, the participant revealed that she felt more highly educated people were more likely to understand the need for accommodations. P$_6$ continued to provide insight into her beliefs. P$_6$ correlated the notion that more educated people are broader in their thinking and less likely to have a negative view for accommodations. P$_6$ recalled an experience where she went home to a small town to eat out with her parents. Participant #6 remembered that when she asked for accommodations for her wheelchair, the restaurant staff where difficult and unwelcoming. Therefore, P$_6$ associated willingness to accommodate with educational levels.

Participant #6 had some final thoughts. P$_6$ felt amazed that she was where she was today after having lived through experiences of disability with great pain and difficulty. P$_6$ indicated that she was surprised to be at the current site location and studying in the area of GIS on a full scholarship at one of the best schools in the country. P$_6$ felt that education was in a sense her employment in her attempts to find a new life and new career. Participant #6 provided an analogy of her situation with an acquired disability. Participant #6 felt if a person sustained a physical injury and his or her previous work was in a physical job then he or she would not be able to return to work without some type of re-training. As such, the participant felt that because her pervious work at a racetrack as a trainer which was very physical work, she had to go back to college for re-training in order to become employable.

Textural-Structural Narrative

Participant #6 sustained a spinal cord injury in an "accident" at her pervious job "galloping horses" at a racetrack in the Northeast. The participant revealed that, "after my accident, everything I did prior to having this spinal cord injury [Inaudible] and everything I did for employment was based on full physical participation". The participant stated that, "after my accident, I was wholly unprepared to do anything; I didn't know what I was going to do." As such, the

participant made a first attempt to return to work at the Zoo in the research library, but, she stated that, "I was not qualified to do that because I didn't know anything about computers." The participant advised she tried several other jobs. P_6 worked in a nursing home where she, "took care of people with dementia" where she, "fed them" and performed duties as a "recreational aide." P_6 further described a job working for a tree service, but that job was also too physical. After realizing that she could not do these jobs, P_6 decided to go back to school and enrolled in a community college in Maryland for computers to "learn the basics." While in college, the participant majored in geography and earned her AA degree. The participant advised that she transferred to the site location school to obtain her BS in geography and that she wanted to study "Geography Information Systems" (GIS) where P_6 would be responsible for making maps for engineers to build roads in poor countries to provide an infrastructure.

P_6 recalled working at jobs that were too physical and that the physical limitations she experienced did not compliment each other. The participant disclosed that she often felt very physical jobs are a challenge for her. P_6 indicated that she "felt somehow that my disability made me inadequate" [Inaudible] and that while she thought she was qualified for jobs, she felt, "she wasn't because I felt physically inadequate." The participant further indicated that that many times people did not realize how much pain she was in and that, "in fact that I have a spinal cord injury that doesn't look painful, but it is a beast." The participant further explained her experiences with pain as difficult when she had to, "sit for long periods of time at the computer doing data management" and that sitting for prolonged periods was, "more than I can bear." The participant conveyed that due to certain working conditions at one job, where she would work "5 days a week, 9 hours a day sitting in a chair" was too difficult and she, "couldn't do it." To work this long according to the participant was, "an intellectual and emotional challenge."

Participant #6 recalled problems with accessibility over the years. P_6 described her feelings with becoming newly disabled and living with a spinal cord injury and the differences of living in the city and with a wheelchair and living in the country. After 26 years working with race horses she was suddenly faced with how she would now live her life and what type of employment she would do? P_6, stated, "All of a sudden I was faced with you can't walk, and there were big barriers as to what on earth could I possibly do with my life now." P_6 described this time a difficult and she wanted to, "put the whole thing together."

As the participant recalled this difficult time in her life, she also described her feelings on asking for reasonable accommodations. P_6 stated that, "you really try not to ask for any accommodations, even if you really need them. When this researcher asked her why, the participant stated that, "because I don't want to seem too needy or too demanding [Inaudible] I don't want to be like that, so I try to be as less demanding as I possibly can be." Participant #6 went on to say that,

"after I have the job, I think I'm more comfortable asking for accommodations."
As P_6 recalled this experience, the participant described the pain she was
constantly in and as a result of the pain, "I need a chair like this. I can't sit on hard
chairs… I won't be able to learn because the pain will be so bad." In fact, the
participant had to take a pause to take pain medication. After the interview
resumed, the participant indicated that she felt that, "people are pretty
accommodating, at least where I've worked."

The participant then discussed her observation of people's willingness to
accommodate is linked to their level of education meaning that more educated
people had a broader sense of disability issues and would be more receptive to
help. When this researcher asked P_6 why the participant indicated that she feels
when, people have more exposure to the world in general [Inaudible] the thought
processes that go along with it are more sensitive to people with disabilities.
Participant #6 went on further to describe a time when she went to visit her
parents and they all went out to dinner. P_6 remembered going into a restaurant in
her wheelchair and when she asked, "them to move the chair so I could slide my
wheelchair in" the participant recalled feeling very upset. P_6 said that, "You
would have thought that I asked them to tear down the front of the building and
bring me a freakin' throne to sit on [Inaudible] .They were so rude, so mean, so
nasty." The participant's final thoughts on accommodations were, "So, yes, I do
think education and experience that it brings matters in where you're going to
apply" (meaning apply for jobs).

A physical disability according to P_6 is a "physical hardship." She recalled a
position with a tree service where her physical limitations were too difficult for
her to perform the required tasks of the job. In fact the participant indicated that
every job she applies for, "it becomes an issue" and getting around was equally as
difficult. The participant said, "I don't drive, so I get around everywhere by public
transportation." Participant #6 goes on to say that her disability provided several
limitations: "I can't climb; I can't get up there" and as such, felt this particular job
"became physically impossible for me to follow through on what I was being
assigned."

Participant #6 expressed her feelings about her disability by stating, "I felt like
everybody was looking at my wheelchair…instead of listening to me, especially
in the first couple of years." The participant recalled another instance where she
did not let people know ahead of time that she was a wheelchair user and when
she arrived, the participant observed, "everyone futzing around…everybody just
running around" and thinking to herself the participant said, "They were more
uncomfortable that I am sometimes." As such, the participant wanted to eliminate
this type of reaction from future employers. P_6's final thoughts were, "that's why
I wanted to make sure that potential employers know that I'm physically disabled.
It's not big deal. Just a heads up!"

P_6 concluded the interview with her amazement at her current situation in life. The participant said that, it surprised her that she, "ended up at [site location] school studying remote sensing"…having a full scholarship at one of the best universities in the country." The participant further expressed feelings about her injury and her previous work. P_6 indicated that "your education is your job" if you have to be re-trained. She further stated that, "if you're a spinal cord injury patient and you had an accident on an ATV and worked in a bank, you can go back to work in the back, and don't need to go back to college." But, in P_6's case, she had, "no clue what was going on" and had to find a whole new life through going back to college and getting re-trained.

Horizonalization of Participant #6's experiences provides all the relevant terms aligned with the phenomenon of employment and disability of a college student with a physical disability. Table 10 is an account of all the pertinent experiences, expressions, terms and words used by Participant #6. A summary of Table 10 suggests that P_6 had acquired a disability and used a wheelchair early in her recovery. Additionally, phrases from P_6 suggest that her experiences with disability were painful and physically difficult.

Table 10

Horizonalization: *Participant #6*

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P_6
My accident; spinal cord injury; newly disabled; everything prior to having this spinal cord injury; wheelchair; I came in a wheelchair.
Everything I did for employment was based on full physical participation; I couldn't do any thing physical; I couldn't do it.
Disability is painful; severe spinal cord injury; I can't sit on a hard chair; I won't be able to learn because the pain will be so bad.
I was wholly unprepared to do anything; I was not qualified; I wasn't educated enough.
I worked in a nursing home; I tried to work at the ■ Federation; that was an internship; I was a Recreational Aide; I worked in ■ tree service; I worked on data bases.
I wanted to warn them (employers) before going in; I was always concerned.
I couldn't get in; awkward for me; it was the steps up and I couldn't get in; I left; I didn't go; I couldn't get in the building; with my wheelchair I tired to get into the restaurant; sometimes I feel really uncomfortable; they are more uncomfortable than I am; Oh ■ [explicative] here we go again!
DORS was of no help whatsoever; actually was a hindrance.
Advisors at the College were fabulous; career center at the College, not so much; my professors and my department were really key; contacts in my department; through my department hundreds of really fabulous opportunities; just huge opportunities.
Whole stigma; disability made me inadequate; physically inadequate.
Try not to ask for accommodations; don't want to seem too needy; after I have the job, I feel more comfortable asking for accommodations; not easy to accommodate; people are pretty accommodating; move the table.
Intellectual and emotional challenge.
Friends who are disabled in wheelchairs; horrible to be around; they are demanding; they have a chip on their shoulder; I don't want to be like that; I try to be less demanding.
Every job I've had becomes an issue of physical hardship; I don't drive; community drives are very physical; I can't climb up there; became physically impossible.
I feel like everybody was looking at my wheelchair; instead of listening to me.
It surprises the ■ [explicative] out of me.
Your education is a job.
If you are a newly disabled spinal cord patient; needs to change your life.
But somebody like me had no clue what was going on.

Participant #7 (P₇)

Overview

Participant #7 self-reports that he is an Indian American [East India] male and

disclosed his disability, indicating that he has Retinitis Pigmentosa, which is a

degenerative disease of the retina. This disease affects his vision, which he reported

loosing late in high school and during his college years. P₇ currently uses a guide dog for

mobility. He reported coming to the United States at six months old from India. P₇ has a

Master's degree in Accounting with an emphasis in finance. P₇ further reported that he

attended graduate school at the selected site in the fall of 2005 and graduated in

December 2006. At present, he is employed as a Tax Accountant. P₇ indicated that he has

a background in economics and statistics. P₇ told stories about his experiences with

disability disclosure, reasonable accommodations, assistive technology, the job search,

and career services.

Textural Narrative (Verbatim Text)

Disability and Jobs:

I'm a little older, as I had mentioned to you, so my first job out of college was
with a company called ▮. I'm just not going to use names. It was with a local
energy company in the ▮ area. So, that was the first job I held. At that particular
time, I actually had not disclosed my disability to anybody. My disability, which
we really did not discuss, which is I think pretty relevant to my particular
situation is Retinitis Pigmentosa. It's a degenerative visual disability. At the time,
I probably started losing functional vision around, let's say, late high school or
early college. While the vision loss had always affected me my entire life, not in a
pervasive way or not in a way that anyone would really know, but little things I
definitely was aware of. So I guess I started losing my vision in college. I was still
able to function pretty normally. I didn't have to disclose my disability to get my
job. So they didn't know I was disabled. Maybe I was actually legally blind at that
time actually, so I don't know I'd be classified as disabled. So I worked for them

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for a year. Do you want me to just list my employment and then tell you my experiences with it?

So that was my first job. I ended up leaving that company and going to a start-up brokerage company. I worked there for about a year and a half or maybe almost two years as a commodity broker. I did disclose my disability to them, and that was the first time I disclosed my disability actually. After that, that company ended up [Inaudible] it was a start-up company and start-ups are not stable. It ended up discontinuing operations, so I was sort of at a crossroads where I didn't know what to do. I have an okay background in economics and statistics, but unfortunately I didn't do well in school for a number of reasons; my effort and things like that. But your vision sort of plays an underlying foundation role to the decisions you make. It definitely handicapped me in a lot of ways, and I also didn't overcome it in a way that I should have in college. So I'm left with a college degree with not great grades and skills that were, I felt, not indicative of my potential. So I decided that I needed to do something else.

I was in sort of the market of … I had been in the market of understanding commodities for almost four or five years, so it was a market I understood, so I decided to start my own company. I started a small investment company and brought over a couple of the clients that I had made from the brokerage company. I was doing that and sort of surviving. I then ended up continuing the sort of futures investing side, but really started focusing on real estate during that time. That's when the market really started to heat up here. It worked well with my background because I understood the futures market, which is understanding concrete, lumber and things like that, which are all vitally important in building houses ad in construction. There were a couple of colleagues that I had met along the way, and I sort of pulled these people together and started a commodity company as well as really started getting heavily into real estate for the last two years.

And these people were obviously aware of my disability, and that was another aspect that I will go into later I guess. I ended up going to grad school during this time. Let's see, I started this company in January of 2004 and ended up going to grad school I think in the fall of 2005, about a year and a half later. I ended up finishing just this past December 2006. So then I started with ▮▮company [name deleted] back in July.

Professional Credentials:

I'm a tax accountant. It's a Master's of Accountancy, with a concentration on finance. It was a decision for me to make as to whether I wanted to do an MBA or Master's of Accounting. Given my experience, I felt like I had reasonable management experience. This program was shorter. I applied sort of right before

the beginning of the program. They were a little more flexible in giving me a scholarship and letting me in and things like that. Plus my wife is in the area, so I didn't want to have to go out of the city because MBA programs are sort of that you need to get into the best program to make it worthwhile, at least in my opinion.

Like I said, the first company didn't know, and it was very difficult for me because there were many situations where my disability began to reveal itself. It definitely presented issues for me. I didn't know at that time whether I should disclose or how I should disclose, so that was difficult for me. It was probably a reason why I did leave the company. Although it was a fantastic job actually, it definitely was a contributing factor. So that was the reason why I disclosed from the very beginning in my new employment. They didn't seem to mind, actually, but I also don't think they realized what my potential limitations were. Because I present myself I guess in a way where it's very hard to know what this person can't do when they're looking you in the eye. I did really well. I passed my exam within two weeks to get my license, whereas most people it took them six weeks or something. So there were things like that that made them think I could do anything I want. For them it didn't matter. It definitely did affect my employment. We had to travel some. The first couple of times, although I let them know I was apprehensive about traveling because I didn't use any mobility aids at that time. I knew it was going to be difficult, and it proved to be difficult. It didn't affect my job as much, just the traveling. It does affect your ability to probably get out of the job what you want because that's a large part of it. Traveling is a large part of it and you're the only one who can't travel. That made a difference.

Reasonable Accommodations:

I do. I have a guide dog now. I work for myself that was completely different because what I sort of did was isolate myself. I think I got a little uncomfortable with being out there with my disability. I really didn't know how to rehabilitate it. I tried using some services like whatever the mobility rehab service is offered by the state. I think they didn't evaluate properly what my needs were. If they're on budgets and things like that, it's a very difficult condition to manage because it's different for every person and requires some outlay of capital to be able to invest in the programs and really find out what someone needs. So when I got some help and it really didn't help me that was very discouraging. I didn't know anything was out there and it didn't help, that was even more discouraging.

So when working for myself, I think I sort of isolated myself. I was successful with running a reasonably profitable business, but I was unsuccessful with putting myself out there more in the type of setting that I should have put myself in, meaning that I had people helping me all the time with mobility, and I think it retarded my rehabilitation. Let's put it that way. Then I found JAWS (Job Access

with Speech) and some other programs. It starts to open the floodgates a little bit. So that experience helped me tremendously.

This is really my first experience. To be quite honest with you, asking for it has not been a problem. Everyone has been unbelievably wanting to be helpful. The organization I work for is huge and has a lot of resources. But, in the same respect, dealing with such a large company, there is a lot of proprietary software and a lot of potential for incompatibility with software.

So it has presented a problem for me performing my job, actually. While they are trying to help, I realize that you still need to be the forerunner [Inaudible] you need to be the initiator for it to get done. I have high-up technology people trying to work on it. It's really up to you, I think. If you find a solution, they would more than be willing to pay for it. I have no doubt about that, but finding a solution for some of these complex problems is not easy.

Specifically, I asked for [Inaudible] my screen reader is not working with one of their proprietary programs that we use in my group to do our jobs. So I specifically asked for the reconciliation of this incompatibility. The outcome is that I've talked to [Inaudible] you have to start with the lowest level tier—technology—and it's moved up pretty high, so I'm waiting. People have been receptive. I've had a number of different people involved, so they're utilizing resources and people's time, but it has not been resolved yet. I don't know if it's a problem that can be resolved, quite honestly.

They do have an accessibility group. That group generally deals with advisory. There are a couple of technology people. Their specialty is not strictly accessibility. It's probably programming and strategic development of their security and their technology, but their sole function is not accessibility, no.

Career Services:

I definitely think going back to school and registering with DSS definitely helped me. I didn't really take advantage of the particular seminars and programs that I know that they had. I know they had a job fair for people with disabilities who are interested in the financial markets. That was really impressive to me. I was up in New York, and it's something I should have done. Time constraints just didn't allow me to do it. I think they had resume-writing seminars or career seminars where they had people like yourself from different schools giving tips. What really helped me was that I went to DSS not having any mobility, not even using any technology at that point. So them introducing me to this one program [Inaudible] that sort of opened the floodgates.

It gave me access to information. Like you sent me that document or whatever, and I read it. I read that four-page document in about three minutes. So that's something that would have taken me a half-hour to read. So when you get access to information, you sort of enable your potential a little bit. Yes, I did go to ▮ [site location]. I used ▮ [site location] career services. I enrolled into the ▮ [site location] career services program or whatever it is. I think you can post your resume and send it to different potential employers, but I guess that has nothing to do with disability because they didn't know I was disabled. I actually didn't get my job through the ▮ [site location] career center. I ended up getting my job just by cold-calling actually—a skill that I picked up along the way. Again, I haven't participated directly in any, but just getting the e-mails that the ▮ DSS organization sends out. I think there is another career fair coming up here that's put on [Inaudible] I don't remember the name of the magazine, but it's something about disabled people and careers. Apparently, it's a very big career fair. Almost every major employer in the D.C. area is going to be there. I think they have these expos all over the country. Actually, a friend of mine who I told you about … maybe we'll discuss it after this [Inaudible] also forwarded me the e-mail because she is attending. It's something I might attend actually just to get some experience.

Exactly. The career center was not very helpful. Actually, this might be an interesting experience. I went to the career center and spoke with one of the counselors there. This person used to work in the HR department for a big company and has experience with hiring people. He had no experience really with dealing with a disabled person, so I found that pretty interesting. He didn't know how I was going to do my job, and it was a company where he must see thousands of resumes and meet applicants all the time. So I thought that was interesting. And then he referred me to someone else in another department, which I'm interested in actually, and that person was a little bit also naïve about people with disabilities. So I found that kind of interesting that the career services people weren't as maybe educated on this subject as I think maybe they should be.

Barriers/Hindrances:

I mean; it's difficult. Yes, I don't travel as well as I would like to, even with a guide dog, but I would be able to [Inaudible] without it. I wouldn't be able to go and have a job without it. So that's one thing that helped. What was a hindrance? I guess I'm really sure. I'm not really understanding the question. I guess one hindrance would be that people definitely questioned whether I could do the job. I graduated at the top of my class, and I didn't get a job offer from every interview I went on, where if I wasn't a disabled person, I can guarantee I would have gotten every job, particular with smaller companies. I think it poses a little bit of a threat to them because they might not know how they're going to facilitate someone like myself.

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Yes, it's a barrier. It's a pervasive barrier because you're not [Inaudible] I can't do everything I want to do, so I until I completely master my disability, which I have not even come close to, I'm not as outgoing. I don't want to travel as much. Just simple things like going and finding [Inaudible] just being as social and as much of a net worker as I guess I would be. I feel like I'm unable to do this. There are a number of job functions I can't perform. It absolutely does limit my technical and networking social capabilities at work. I think people do break those barriers down, but it takes experience, and I think you have to find the right job as well. I don't think a disabled person can perform any job. I do think there are jobs that are better suited for a disabled person than other jobs.

Surprises:

I don't know if you would be surprised because you've been in this for so long, but my surprise was how well this particular firm, how almost nonchalant they were about me being disabled, almost to the point where me being, "Oh, I actually might need some help." I mean they were more than willing to help, but I'm just saying that the way they perceived me was so equal to everybody else; they didn't blink an eye. I was not expecting that. I had gotten some other [Inaudible] you know; you can tell when someone is uncomfortable in the interview. You can tell when you're not going to get the job mostly because of your disability. My experiences with some of these bigger firms [Inaudible] I was very impressed. I've never felt so comfortable actually going into a situation where I didn't feel like it was an issue. I don't know if that's surprising.

That's what I hear, actually. I was also surprised that there is a blind partner at this firm. There are three blind senior managers, and it's very difficult to become a manager. So they're doing reasonably well, and they're doing reasonably well with putting me in touch with that network of people, too. I'll be honest with you. It's a huge firm. I went to a different office for a community service day, and one of the directors of communications or something came up to me [Inaudible] she likes dogs, which has become like a huge networking tool.

It really is. I mean, you have to use what you have. He's great. Because of my disability and I think if you come off like you're capable and reasonably intelligent and you look okay, she's really willing to put me in touch with partners and things like that in groups that I'm more interested in … the job functions that I think would be better suited for me. It's something that without a disability, I don't think I'd have these opportunities. That was pretty shocking to me.

P₇ tells his story about his disability and experiences. P₇ indicated that he was a little more mature in age and so his first job out of college was with a local energy company. He preferred not to use any names. Participant #7 indicated that during that time in his life, he did not tell anyone about his disability and the issue of disability did not really come up as no one could tell he had a vision disability. P₇ disclosed that he had a disease called Retinitis Pigmentosa, which is a degenerative disease that affects his vision. He said he is now legally blind with almost no vision. He stated that he started to loose his vision in college, but described being able to do most things. P₇ was functioning. P₇ felt he did not have to tell anyone about his disability at that time so he was not coded as a person with a disability.

When P₇ started to discuss his employment experiences, he started with this first position which he left to become self employed and began his own brokerage firm. P₇ indicated he did this job for about one year and then he worked two years in commodities. P₇ did tell this company about his disability unlike the first job and indicated that this was the first time disclosing disability came up. This job ended and because they stopped operations, he felt he was at a new place in his life where he was not sure what his next job would be. As such, P₇ assessed his skills in economics and statistics, but he indicated that he did not at that time in his life do well in college. P₇ believed that one's vision is important in career decisions, but felt that his vision limited him in many ways. Participant #7 further indicated that he did not deal with his disability in college so he suffered with poor grades. In the end, P₇ decided to go into another field.

For Participant #7, his background in commodities for approximately five years was something he understood which lead him to start his own firm and become self-employed and was making it fairly well. P₇ had customers from a pervious company and focused his efforts on real estate, which was very lucrative. P₇ background really supported his business, and he did his business for about two years. After P₇'s business venture, P₇ decided to go back to graduate school in 2005 and graduated from the site location in December 2006. P₇ is currently a tax accountant at a major firm and holds a master's degree in accounting with a specialty in finance which all compliments his background in economics and management. P₇ reported he received a scholarship to go to graduate school. While he wanted an MBA degree, P₇ felt you had to be accepted into the best program to be successful.

Next during the interview, P₇ discussed how his disability started to surface more and more and affect his jobs and his performance. P₇ indicated that the issues surrounding disclosure were difficult for him and determining when the time was right to disclose. While, P₇'s performance was affected by his disability, he felt

that he has had good jobs and that because of that, he decided to disclose his disability earlier and he felt several employers were very accepting of his disability. P_7 stated that sometimes he covered up his disability because he was doing well in the job. In fact P_7 stated that he did so well that he passed his licensure exam within two weeks whereas others took approximately six weeks to take the exam. Participant #7 also indicated that travel with vision impairment affected his employment.

P_7 discussed his experiences with reasonable accommodations. While he initially did not have many accommodations, he stated that he currently has a guide dog to assist with his mobility. P_7 indicated that his world opened up when he went to DSS at the site location and was exposed to all types of assistive technology such as JAWS (Job Access with Speech), a screen reader for the blind. In the early years with accommodations, P_7 used rehabilitation services for the blind and said he did not feel he was adequately evaluated during that time, and because of that, he was disheartened. Participant #7 felt he isolated himself and indicated that he was not as social or outgoing as he could have been which affected his work and his business. P_7 said he was unsure about himself and his disability and he did not know a great deal about how to manage it. While P_7 used various services, he did not feel they knew how to assist him to work within his restrictions and so the help he received did not empower him and as a result he was discouraged. P_7 attributes any lack of success with his business due to his lack of complete knowledge about his disability and he reflected about how it affected him overall. But, once P_7 was exposed to the different types of assistive technology such as JAWS (Job Access with Speech), a screen reader for the blind, P_7's life opened up!

While the participant now has the appropriate assistive technology, his accommodations have not gone without problems with implementation. P_7 indicated that in his current job that there are Information Technology Specialists, but they are not in the field of assistive technology and they are having problems matching the work software with his JAWS screen reader. There is some type of incompatibility and the employer is aggressively working to try and figure out the problems with the internal software.

When P_7 discussed his experiences with the career services center, he spoke of their contribution as a positive experience. Participant #7 indicated that he did sign up to use the services and take advantage of the opportunities. P_7 indicated that at first he did not go to many of the seminars, like job fairs for people with disabilities, but he was impressed with the knowledge they had on careers in finance and marketing. P_7 did find the career services helpful with resume-writing and securing job leads. He was also able to post his resume for potential employers to view. Most of all, P_7 felt the DSS office was the biggest help to him and his exposure to accommodations. While P_7 did use the career service, he did

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not find his current job through them. Participant #7 found his current job as a tax accountant through "cold calling."

Participant #7 did however express his feelings about one particular incident with the career services office that was not so positive. P_7 recounted an experience where he went to one of the Career Counselors and he felt they did not have enough training working with people with disabilities. P_7 recalled the feeling that because of his disability that they did not believe he could do certain jobs if he could not see. P_7 then recalled he was referred to another person who in fact had Human Resources experience who also did not know how a blind person could do the job. P_7 found it interesting that people who worked in Human Resources could be so limited and not as knowledgeable about working with people with disabilities.

Participant #7 stated that his work with the DSS office provided him with the tools necessary to garner information and read it independently. P_7 provided a real life experience when he described his ability to read the Consent Form and Participant Letter that I provided him. According to P_7, he was able to read a four-page consent form in a matter of minutes with the assistance of his technology. P_7 felt the DSS office provide him good job leads and information about career fairs. In particular, P_7 mentioned how DSS informed him about a rather popular job fair for people with disabilities that he might go to for the experience.

Participant #7 discussed his experiences with barriers or hindrances. P_7 indicated that his mobility has been a barrier and that he did not travel as much as he would like, even though he has a guide dog. P_7 felt he would not have a job without his mobility and that his guide dog was a big part of his enhanced abilities. The participant also indicated that a hindrance is in his mind when people doubt his capabilities to do his job and advised that he graduated at the top of his class. P_7 felt that he was sure that he did not get certain jobs because of his disability otherwise; he would have gotten all the jobs he applied for because he graduated at the top of his class. P_7 speculated that the disability posed a threat to employers and how to accommodate a person with his type of disability might be difficult.

P_7 further indicated that his disability was a barrier, an all-encompassing barrier. P_7 stated that he could not do all things he wanted to until he mastered his disability, which he admitted he had not yet done. P_7 felt while he has done well, he still cannot do certain things and his disability does limit is technical, networking and social abilities. However, P_7 feels these barriers can be eliminated, but it requires time and experience and doing a good job. P_7's final thoughts on this subject were that he does not believe all people with disabilities can do all jobs and that there are jobs that people with disabilities are more compatible with.

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Finally, P$_7$ provided this researcher with a surprise. Participant #7 indicated that he was in fact surprised at how willing and receptive one company was to helping him and providing him accommodations. He felt this company was unconcerned about his disability. P$_7$ felt they viewed him as "equal to everybody else". P$_7$ described a feeling of awe that he could have been treated so well and accepted without reservations. P$_7$ continued with this experience by indicating that this particular firm even had a partner who was blind as well as other senior managers. P$_7$ was surprised to find a manager who agreed to introduce him to two other people in the company who were blind that he would not have had the opportunity to meet them on his own. P$_7$'s final thoughts were that manager's reaction to him and knowledge about the other employees who were blind was a shock to him, but a pleasant one.

Textural-Structural Narrative

P$_7$ stated that he was, "a little older" and his first job out of college was with a "local energy company." Participant #7 indicated that he had complex issues surrounding disability disclosure and that at his first job; he "did not disclose disability to anybody." P$_7$ revealed that his disability is called Retinitis Pigmentosa which he described as a "degenerative visual disability." Participant #7 indicated that he started to loose his vision, "in late high school or early college." P$_7$ stated how the vision influenced his life when he said, "vision loss had always affected my entire life." While P$_7$ stated that his vision loss was over time, he felt that he was able to "function pretty normally" and so he did not disclose with his first job. At one point, P$_7$ disclosed that he was "legally blind" at that time and so he wonders if he would have been, "classified as disabled."

The participant indicated that he left his first job and went to work at a "brokerage company" for "about a year and a half or maybe almost two years." On the second job, P$_7$ indicated that he did disclose disability and stated, "That was the first time I disclosed disability." P$_7$ continued the interview by indicating that the second job did not last due to "discontinuing operations." Therefore, P$_7$ stated he was "sort of at a crossroads where I didn't know what to do." P$_7$ believed he had a sound background in statistics and economics," and said that, "unfortunately I didn't do well in school for a number of reasons." As such, P$_7$ decided that his vision played an underlying foundations role to the decisions" he made and that his disability, "definitely handicapped" him. He further felt that he "didn't overcome" his disability while in college and as a result, he believed his degree did not provide him with what he needed. P$_7$ further decided to take on a new challenge and perused self-employment opportunities in commodities for about five years. This complimented his background and experience in economics and statistics and to embark in the area of investments worked for him. During his period of self employment, P$_7$ focused on real estate and the "futures market,

which is understanding concrete, lumber, and things like that." P_7 was self employed for two years.

Participant #7 eventually went back to school to get a graduate degree in the fall, 2005. P_7 graduated with a Master's in Accounting in December 2006. P_7 has a concentration in finance and stated, "I'm a tax accountant." P_7 stated, "It was a decision for me as to whether I wanted to do an MBA or a Master's of Accounting." With P_7's experience, he believed he "had management experience." Participant #7 believed that this type of program suited him and the he stated that the program was "flexible in giving me a scholarship."

The issue of disability disclosure was a constant theme for P_7. P_7 further stated that disclosure "was very difficult for me because there were many situations where my disability began to reveal itself." P_7 seems to have struggled with his first job trying to determine when it was appropriate to disclose disability. In fact P_7 said, "I didn't know at the time whether I should disclose or how I should disclose, so that was difficult for me." As a result, the participant ended his employment, but felt strongly that while this was a good job, his disclosure issues were a reason why he left. P_7 said that it, "was a fantastic job" and that his lack of disclosure was a "contributing factor" for leaving. P_7 recalled that he presented himself well and that the employer did not, "realize what his potential limitations were." P_7 further stated, "I presented myself I guess in a way where its really well, I passed my exam within two weeks to get my license, whereas most people it took them six weeks [Inaudible] so there were things like that, that made them think I could do anything [Inaudible] but it, definitely did affect my employment."

When Participant #7 recalled his experiences with reasonable accommodations, he described how it was without accommodations and the journey he had up to the point he received a guide dog for mobility. P_7 stated that when he was self employed that he was "isolated" and stated that, "I think I got a little uncomfortable with being out there with my disability." P_7 used rehabilitation services for mobility training, and stated that travel was difficult for him. The participant stated that, "The first couple of times, although I let them know I was apprehensive about traveling because I didn't use any mobility aides [Inaudible] that I knew it was going to be difficult, and it proved to be difficult." Participant #7 also said, I think they didn't evaluate properly what my needs were" and this was an additional problem for P_7. The participant now has a guide dog and his mobility is improved.

P_7 also indicated that when he "found JAWS (Job Access with Speech) and some other programs through the DSS office, that it really did, "open the floodgates" The participant said that asking for accommodations has not been a problem and that, "everyone has been unbelievably helpful." P_7 has, "specifically asked for a screen reader" but found that it has problems with internal software. At P_7's

current employer which he said was "huge and has a lot of resources," there have been some problems with accommodations and, "proprietary software and a lot of potential for incompatibility with software." The participant felt the employer is "trying to help" figure out the problems with the software and stated that, "if you find a solution, they would be more than willing to pay for it." In fact, P_7 stated, "I have know doubt about that, but finding a solution for some of these complex problems is not easy."

P_7 continued with the interview saying that his company had an "accessibility group" and this group is comprised of Information Technology specialists that, "deal with advisory" issues. While the information technology staff had backgrounds in technology, "their specialty is not strictly accessibility [Inaudible] and their sole function is not accessibility, but probably programming and strategic development of their security."

When P_7 discussed his experiences with the career services center, he generally had positive experiences. The participant indicated that he, "did enroll into the career services program" and he stated that he believed the career services was a place where, "you can post your resume and send it to different potential employers." P_7 also went to the DSS office, but that he did not "really take advantage of the particular seminars and programs." P_7 knew about "a job fair for people with disabilities who were interested in financial markets" in New York, but he did not attend even though he was impressed. P_7 said that, "it was something I should have done." P_7 was limited by "time constraints" which did not allow him to attend. While P_7 indicated that he used the career services, he found his "job by cold calling…" a skill that he "picked up along the way." Participant #7 on the other hand, did not feel the career center was "helpful." P_7 stated that he had an "interesting experience."

P_7 stated that, "I went to the career center and spoke with one of the counselors…" and apparently, the counselor had a background in Human Resources. However, P_7 indicated that the counselor, "had not experience really with dealing with a disabled person" and the participant, "found that pretty interesting." P_7 felt the counselor did not know how he would be able to perform job tasks as a person who was blind. P_7 felt that after that, the counselor in the end "referred" the participant to someone else. P_7 stated, "that person was a little bit also naïve about people with disabilities." In the end, Participant #7's evaluation of his experience was that, "I found that kind of interesting that the career services people weren't as maybe educated on this subject as I think maybe they should be."

The participant also discussed his experiences with barriers and things that were a hindrance for him. Travel and physical mobility was a barrier as P_7 indicated that, he does not "travel as well as I would like to, even with a guide dog." P_7 stated

that without the dog, he would not be able to at all to get a job. P$_7$ said that a hindrance "would be that people definitely questioned whether I could do the job." P$_7$ told this researcher that he "graduated at the top of my class" and admittedly he did not get every job he interviewed for, but assumed that if he were not blind, P$_7$ felt certain that, "I can guarantee I would have gotten every job, with the smaller companies." P$_7$ further felt that his disability was a barrier, but more of a "pervasive barrier." He stated that because, "I can't do everything, I wanted to do, I'm not as outgoing." The participant asserted that, "I don't travel as much" and in fact, P$_7$ stated that, "there are a number of job functions that I can't perform." P$_7$ knew that his disability "absolutely does limit" his "technical and networking social capabilities at work." Nonetheless, P$_7$ felt that, "there are jobs that are better suited for a disabled person than other jobs."

Near the end of the interview, P$_7$ shared one of his surprising moments. The participant disclosed that he was surprised with the attitudes of a firm that he applied for a job where the managers were "almost nonchalant" about his being disabled. P$_7$ felt this company was "willing to help and P$_7$ stated that, "I'm just saying that the way they perceived me was so equal to everybody else" and "they didn't blink an eye." This experience "impressed" P$_7$. The participant also felt surprised when he said that, "there is a blind partner at this firm and there are three blind senior managers." Participant #7's final thoughts were that, "if you come off like you're capable and reasonably intelligent, they would be willing to put him in touch with other partners.

Horizonalization of Participant #7's experiences provides all of the relevant terms aligned with the phenomenon of employment and disability of a college student with a physical disability. Table 11 is an account of all the pertinent experiences, expressions, terms, and words used by Participant #7. A summary of Table 11 suggests that P$_7$ had employment experience and credentials for work in Commodities at a brokerage company. Phrases from P$_7$'s interview also suggest that he was not always comfortable with his disability (degenerative eye disease) and that he experienced difficulty with disability disclosure.

Table 11

Horizonalization: *Participant #7*

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P$_7$
My first job out of college…a local energy company; list employment experiences; Brokerage company; commodity broker; market of understanding commodities; I started a small investment company; futures investing; real estate; I understood the futures market, understanding concrete (i.e. lumber and things like that); commodity company; heavy into real estate for the last two years; I started this company in 2004; I'm a tax accountant.
I actually did not disclose my disability to anybody; first time I disclosed my; the first company did not know; it was very difficult for me; It definitely presented issues for me; I didn't know at the time whether I should disclose or how I should disclose; it was difficult for me; Disability; obviously aware of my disability; I disclosed from the beginning; they didn't know I was disabled.
My disability is Retinitis Pigmentosa; a degenerative visual disability; losing functional vision; vision loss had always affected my entire life; I started loosing vision is college; I was still able to function pretty normally; So they didn't know I was disabled; legally blind; classified disabled; your vision plays an underlying foundation; Role to the decisions you make; It definitely handicapped me in a lot of ways; potential limitations.
Start up company was not stable; discontinuing operations; I ended up leaving that company.
Background in economics and statistics; college degree with no great grades; I ended up going to Grad school; going to grad school during this time in the fall of 2005; I graduated at the top of my class; I ended up finishing just this past December, 2006; Masters of Accounting with a concentration on finance; MBA or Masters of Accounting; reasonable management experience; I applied right before the beginning of the program; little more flexible in giving me a scholarship; MBA programs are sort of you need to get into the best program to make it worthwhile.
I passed my exam within two weeks to get my license; most people took them six weeks; it definitely affected my employment.
I didn't use any mobility aids; I do have a guide dog now; I had people helping me all the time with mobility; I found JAWS (assistive technology); lot of proprietary software; lot of incompatibility with software; high-up technology people trying to work on it; my screen reader (JAWS) is not working with one of the proprietary programs; reconciliation of this incompatibility; start with the lowest level tier of technology; they do have an accessibility group; group generally deals with advisory; couple of technology people; specialty is not strictly accessibility; opened floodgates; I read that four-page document in about three minutes; would have taken me a half-hour to read.
It opened the floodgates.

I proved to be difficult; little uncomfortable with being out there with my disability; mobility rehab service is offered by the State; I think they did not properly evaluate my needs.
Traveling is a large part of it; I don't travel as well even with a guide dog; I don't want to travel as much.
I didn't know how to rehabilitate it; I think it retarded my rehabilitation.
Outlay of capital; able to invest; I was successful with running a reasonably profitable business.
It was very discouraging; I sort of isolated myself.
That experience helped me tremendously.
Everyone has been unbelievably wanting to be helpful; people have been receptive; I have had a number of different people involved; more willing to help.
Presented a problem for me with performing my job; I can't do everything I want to do; There are a number of job functions I can't perform; I don't think a disabled person can perform any job.
Going back to school and registering with DSS; definitely helped; what really helped me was that I went to DSS not having any mobility, not even using technology.
Yes, I used career services; I enrolled into the career services program; I didn't really take advantage of particular seminars; they had a job fair for people with disabilities; they were really impressive to me; resume-writing seminars; career seminars; gave me access to information; you can post your resume; send it to different potential employers; I didn't get my job through the career services; another career fair coming up; disabled people and careers; big career fair; expos all over the country; the career center was very helpful; career center. Counselor, worked in the HR department; had no experience really dealing with a disabled person; he didn't know how I was going to do my job; then he referred me to someone else; the career services people weren't as maybe educated on this subject as I think they should be.
I ended up getting my job through cold calling; a skill I picked up along the way.
I guess one hindrance would be that people definitely questioned whether I could do the job; yes it is a barrier; a pervasive barrier; break those barriers down.
I didn't get a job offer from every interview; where I wasn't disabled, I guarantee I would have gotten the job.
I completely mastered my disability.
I'm not as outgoing; social; networker; limit my technical and networking; willing to put me in touch with partners.
My technical and networking social capabilities at work.
I do think there are jobs that are better suited for a disabled person than other jobs; job functions better suited fro me.
Surprise; nonchalant; I was also surprised that there is a blind partner
They perceived me was so equal to everybody else.
I'm just saying that the way they perceived me was so equal to everybody else and they didn't blink an eye, I was impressed.

Blind senior managers; blind parnter.
Without a disability, I don't think I'd have these opportunities.

Participant #8 (P$_8$)

Overview

Participant #8 is a Caucasian male who self-disclosed that he is Deaf Oral, and he was observed wearing one hearing aid. While the participant cannot hear, he reads lips and has speech. A sign language interpreter was not used to conduct this interview, but on occasion, paper and pen were used to communicate when the participant's speech was not clear. P$_8$ is currently employed with a federal agency and requires a security clearance. As such, the participant was unable to discuss the particulars of his job or his job duties. P$_8$ is a recent graduate of the selected university and has a Master's in Security and Policy with a concentration in Middle Eastern Studies. The participant told stories about his disability, his limitations, and accommodations in the workplace, as well as his perceptions about vocational rehabilitation services and the career center. The textural data for this participant had to be supplemented with heavy note taking due to the difficulty in translation of the participant's speech, which was often unintelligible due to profound deafness.

Textural Narrative (Verbatim Text)

> *Employment:*
>
> In █ I had two internships: one at the National █ University and one at the █ Data Center. I interviewed for about 15 jobs and got two jobs. Interviewing was good and if I got an interview for all the jobs I applied. I used the Web site at the ███ School for International Affairs. I got my Masters from █ in security and

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policy with a concentration in the Middle East. I currently work for a defense agency ▮ and my work is confidential. I cannot talk about it. I grew up in England, but I am American. My major in undergraduate school at ▮ College was in political science.

VR (vocational rehabilitation) was very helpful in the interview process, they sent my resume for me; VR was a huge help with interviews even though they have a bad reputation. I had a new counselor that helped me and it was that the VR counselors kept in touch. They sent me to two different agencies. What assisted me was the internet and Web site with people looking for jobs in my field and getting me internships. A lot is about networking which is important here in this area. VR was helpful and worked with DSS ▮ and they had a good working relationship with her. At ▮ College they did not help, which was not helpful for two reasons, one they did not have a good relationship with the VR and two, I was not looking for a job.

Barriers/Hindrances:

A help was the Web site places like USAJOBS.com, the internships was a big help to have the Web site to apply all online. My barriers are not due to my disability, not having enough qualifications or experience with security policy no military experience due to my hearing was a barrier instead. It is very competitive with those who have military experience or in the government over a decade [Inaudible] and then I did not have that experience.

The career services here were a huge help. They helped me with job leads, applying on line was extremely helpful. They helped me with resumes and cover letters, but it was my field that was helpful to use career services in my field. A hindrance was my hearing and not able to get telephone calls about jobs to receive calls back. I cannot use a telephone so this is a problem. The career services were fantastic at ▮ they had separate data systems for people in politics and the job leads. The staff is not trained enough, but they are trained to know about what kinds of careers especially in security and political careers, even if they cannot put you in the right direction, they will find out. And what is it that you need to do yourself is important to do it yourself, to be a self-advocate. If I did not get jobs, it was not due to my disability, but due to a lack of experience.

Reasonable Accommodations:

Once I had a TTY to use and I had two phones once and the TTY but I had to cut the use of one due to the cost of having two bills. I have used the Relay system until about 7 months ago people don't have understanding of how to use the Relay.

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Education is really the best thing to get a masters degree that will help your career. Get the most credentials and qualifications and what you need to put on the resume and cover letter to get your foot in the door. And the qualifications you have on paper are important. Prior to interviewing the employer would ask me what I need. I don't need an interpreter because I lip-read and just tell them I need paper and pen. It is good that they would ask about a sign language interpreter, but I don't need it. At work I ask for CART for big meetings, but I did not ask for CART for the internships. I did not need a TTY. My current job I use CART and TTY. I go to the EEO officer and my supervisor to get accommodations and hope that it works. The employer has been good about accommodations, no problems so far. I was cleared to get CART, but the person to do CART has to have the same security clearance as me and they have to come from the inside and it is important for them to have the same level of security and I don't have an issue with that; [Inaudible] it is very important.

Surprises:

Well, I have to think about that. Let's see, what would be surprising? Most people were very helpful and open, but sometimes they "tip-toe" around me, they don't want to break any laws [Inaudible] One co-worker and supervisor went to ▮ I have mixed feelings about sign language and I don't use interpreters. The assumption that I need a sign language interpreter, nothing against it, it is good if someone takes the time to learn sign language [Inaudible] let me rephrase that; Hats off for knowing sign language.

Structural Narrative

Participant #8 provided an interview about his disability and employment with a federal agency that he could not provide details on due to the confidential nature of his work and his specialty. P_8 has a master's degree in security and policy with a major concentration in the Middle East. P_8 stated that while he grew up in the U.K., he was an American citizen. As such, P_8 started to recount his experiences with his work during college and his two internships. Both of the internships were also with intelligence organizations.

P_8 described his experiences working with a state agency, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). P_8 found his interaction with VR helpful in his quest for employment. VR assisted P_8 with guidance and counseling through the assignment of a new counselor. This individual helped P_8 with job readiness skills (i.e. interviewing, resume writing, cover letters and job leads). While Participant #8 felt that VR did not have the best reputation, he found them hugely helpful. However, even though P_8 had help, he indicated that he found his job through use of the internet using searches through Web sites like "USAJOBS.com." P_8 also advised that "networking" is important in a job search. The participant further

indicated that VR worked collaboratively with the DSS office at the site college, which also helped. If he ever felt VR was not helpful, he believed it was due to two reasons: (1) he was not actively looking for a job and (2) the college did not have a good relationship with the VR agency.

For this participant, barriers and hindrances were minimal. P_8 felt that a barrier was the lack of skills and qualifications. P_8 described his lack of knowledge with security policy and military experience, which most other government workers in his field had at the time he was conducting a job search. He did not however feel that his disability prevented him from getting a job, but more then that, the abilities one needed to be competitive.

The participant described his experiences with the Career Services Center at school as a big help to him. P_8 indicated that they helped him with job readiness skills such as job leads, applying online, resumes, and cover letter writing. The participant stated that his hearing loss was a barrier because he was at a disadvantage when employers would return phone calls and he cannot use a phone. The career services were in P_8's mind wonderful and that they had a multiple number of leads in the securities field and politics for him. On the other hand, P_8 felt the staff was not as well trained, but they could refer him to the appropriate places. Finally, the participant believed that in the process of looking for a job, one had to be their own "self-advocate."

P_8 did require reasonable accommodations to fully participant in all aspects of his employment. Participant #8 recalled his experiences with accommodations. P_8 at one time used both a TTY and a phone, but due to the cost, he had to cut one off. P_8 does use the Relay System for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired. This system uses the assistance of a Relay telephone operator to provide text to speech for a deaf and hearing person to communicate. As such, when Participant #8 interviewed, the employer he recalled would ask what he needed for accommodations. P_8 advised that at his current job, he uses CART and a TTY and that in order to receive accommodations; he goes to the EEO officer and his immediate supervisor to start the accommodation process. To date, the participant has not had any problems receiving reasonable accommodations in the workplace. The participant recalled that in order for him to have a CART transcriptionist; that person has to also have the same level of security clearance that he has to assist him on the job due to the security measures put into place.

Near the end of the interview, the participant advised that education is probably the most important thing in a job search. Obtaining a master's degree is important in his mind to helping a person with their career. By having an advanced level degree and ensuring that one's skills and abilities are on a resume, was P_8's idea that this would allow a person with a disability secure employment. P_8 further

stressed that one's qualifications and what he presents on paper is critical to successful employment.

Participant #8 finally provided a surprise about his experiences. The participant felt there were times when those that worked around him were cautious due to his disability as they did not want to do anything that could violate any legal statues that protect people with disabilities. While most were willing to be helpful, he felt they could be tentative at times. The participant shared his final thoughts when he expressed that he had mixed feelings about sign language and interpreters. While the participant did not personally use sign language or interpreters, he felt it was a great thing that there are those that actually learn the language to assist others who are deaf.

Textural-Structural Narrative

Participant #8 disclosed that he is deaf oral; meaning that he is deaf, but has speech and reads lips to communicate. P_8 is currently employed with a government agency that deals with some type of security and stated, "My work is confidential [Inaudible] and I cannot talk about it." The participant also indicated that he has a master's degree from the site location school in security and policy with, "a concentration in the Middle East." P_8's undergraduate degree is in "political science."

Participant #8 recalled that he received help with his job search through a state agency, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services for people with disabilities. While he indicated that they don't always enjoy a good reputation, he said that, "VR was very helpful in the interview process; they sent out my resume for me and VR was a huge help." P_8 further stated that, "what assisted me was that the VR counselors kept in touch" and "they sent me to two different agencies." As P_8 recounted his experiences with VR, he believed that a "good working relationship" with VR and DSS was critical to his success. The only time the participant thought VR did not work out for him, was based on two things (1) "if the college and DSS did not have a good relationship" and (2) "I was not looking for a job."

P_8 stated that looking for a job using the internet provided him with job success. He went to "places like USAJOBS.com" to find internships that he could apply for "all online." The participant indicated that, "my barriers are not due to my disability; not having enough qualifications or experience with security" or "no military experience" have been a problem. P_8 recalled that when working for the government, most government employees "have military experience or in the government over a decade" and according to the participant, to have this experience and important to be "competitive." P_8 said that he "did not have that experience."

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Career services proved to be a positive experience for P_8. He stated that, "the career services were a huge help. They helped me with job leads, applying on line was extremely helpful. They helped me with resumes and cover letters, but it was my field that was helpful to use career services in my field." P_8 did however recall a time where his hearing was a hindrance as he had problems with employers calling him. The participant stated that, "I cannot use the telephone so this is a problem." The participant further stated that, "The career services were fantastic... they had a separate data system for people in politics and the job leads." While he enjoyed the help he received, P8 felt the staff did not have enough training, but if they did not know something, they would "put you in the right direction." Most of all, P_8 felt you had to be your own "self-advocate" in order to get a job and further stated that, "If I did not get jobs, it was not due to my disability, but due to a lack of experience."

During the interview, Participant #8 talked freely about his deafness and receiving reasonable accommodations. P_8 stated that, "Once I had a TTY to use and I had two phones once, but I had to cut the use of one due to the cost of having two bills." The participant now uses the Relay system which he indicated that most "people don't have the understanding to use the Relay." As P_8 thought about his career and his personal journey, he indicated to this researcher that, "education really is the best thing to get a master's degree that will help your career." The participant further stated that to "get the most credentials and qualifications on your resume and cover letter will help to get your foot in the door."

P_8 went on to tell this researcher that, "the qualifications you have on paper are important." For P_8, receiving reasonable accommodations on the job was no problem. The participant stated that, "at work, I ask for CART for big meetings, but I did not ask for CART for the internships." At the participant's current place of employment, he uses CART and TTY to communicate. P_8 described the reasonable accommodation process at his job as, "I go to the EEO officer and my supervisor to get accommodations and hope that it works." P_8 further advised that, "the employer has been good about accommodations; no problems so far." Finally the participant advised this researcher that all accommodations that he receives requires those providing the accommodation to, "have the same security clearance" as he does. When I asked what he thought of this procedure, the P_8 stated, "I don't have an issue with that; it is very important."

Near the close of the interview, P_8 discussed something that surprised him. P_8 felt it was surprising how some of his co-workers would "tip-toe" around him trying to make sure they did not "break any laws" that protect people with disabilities. They were at time cautious, but P_8 said that, "Most people were very helpful and open." P_8's final thoughts were about his "mixed feelings" over the use of sign language. While the participant does not use sign language, he felt that, "it is good

if someone takes the time to learn sign language." P$_8$'s last comment was, "hats off for knowing sign language!"

Horizonalization of Participant #8's experiences providing all of the relevant terms aligned with the phenomenon of employment and disability of a college student with a physical disability. Table 12 is an account of all the pertinent experiences, expressions, terms, and words used by Participant #8. A summary of Table 12 suggests that P$_8$ had multiple employment experiences and felt comfortable with his job-seeking abilities. Phrases from P$_8$ also suggest that he had multiple ways for securing jobs as well as the reasonable accommodations he used in the workplace.

Table 12

Horizonalization: Participant #8

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P$_8$
I had two internships; I interviewed for about 15 jobs; I got two interviews Interviewing was good; I got an interview for all the jobs I applied; the internships were a big help.
I used the Web site.
I got my masters; security and policy w/ a concentration in the Middle East; My major in undergraduate school at ▮ was in political science.
My work is confidential; I cannot talk about it
VR (vocational rehabilitation) was helpful; they sent out resumes for me; VR was a huge help; It was the VR counselor that kept in touch; they sent me to two interviews; VR was helpful and worked with DSS.
I had a new counselor that helped me.
They had a good working relationship.
I was not looking for a job.
A help was the Web site places like USAJOBS.com; to apply all online.
Career services were a huge help; job leads; cover letters; helped me with resumes; My field was helpful to use career services; what you need to put on the resume; job leads.
A hindrance was my hearing.
Not able to get telephone calls about jobs.
I cannot use a telephone.
I used to have a TTY; the Relay system; people don't have the understanding of how to

Horizonalization of Disability and Employment Common Terms P₈
use the Relay.
Education is really the best thing to get a master's degree that will help your career.
Get the most credentials and qualifications; qualifications you have on paper.
Get your foot in the door.
Separate data systems for people in politics.
Put you in the right direction.
What is it you need to do yourself is important; to do it yourself; to be a self advocate
If I did not get jobs…
I don't need an interpreter; I can lip-read; I tell them I need paper and pen; I ask for CART; my current job I use CART and TTY; I was cleared to get CART; the person to do CART has to have the same security.
I go to the EEO officer and my supervisor to get accommodations.
The employer has been good about accommodations; no problems so far.
Prior to interviewing, the employer would ask me what I need.
Most people were very helpful and open.
Tip-toe around me.
Don't want to break any laws.
I have mixed feelings about sign language.
The assumption that I need a sign language interpreter; nothing against it; hats off for knowing sign language.

This concludes the narratives for this study. The tables in the next section identify the participants' perceptions within the context of the emerging themes and provide an audit trail. Tables 13, 14, and 15 provide a visual representation of the common responses from the raw data collected from all eight participants. The data presented in these tables were derived from the process of horizonalization and reduction. The interviews were then coded and cross-referenced with the three central research questions demonstrating (a) affirmative responses, (b) no experience with the phenomenon, or (c) some experience with the phenomenon of disability and employment. The study participants' perceptions and experiences follow.

Table 13 provides an overview of responses aligned with the three central research questions. Table 13 provides an overview of responses provided by the participants regarding their lived employment experiences; their perceptions about disability and how their disability influenced their ability to obtain employment, and their perceptions about the contributions of career services in preparation for employment after graduation. Table 13 drew upon the many phrases located in Horizonalization Tables 1 through 12 derived from the participant narratives, which were particularly important in addressing the phenomenon. Table 13 also provides a visual representation of the first level of coding (sub-codes), as mentioned in Chapter III, and the alignment with the central research questions.

Table 13

Populated Tables Cross-referenced by Central Research Questions

Disability & Employment Common Terms: Question #1: What are the lived employment experiences of seniors and recent graduates with physical disabilities?	P_1	P_2	P_3	P_4	P_5	P_6	P_7	P_8
Paid Employment Experience	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Multiple jobs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Internships	√	√	√	√	X	√	X	√
Graduate Teaching Assistant	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
Unpaid Work Experience	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X
Summer jobs	√	√	√	√	X	√	X	X
Advanced education enhancement instead of securing gainful employment after graduation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Disability & Employment Common Terms, Question #2: What are their perceptions of how their disability influences their ability to obtain employment opportunities after graduation from college?	P_1	P_2	P_3	P_4	P_5	P_6	P_7	P_8
Disability has been a hindrance	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Disability and physical pain	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
Felt discriminated against due to disability	√	X	X	√	√	√	X	X
Felt marginalized due to disability	√	√	X	X	√	√	√	X
Barriers due to disability: Transportation								
Housing	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	X
Needed reasonable accommodations	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Denied Reasonable Accommodations	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X
Had good knowledge of the types of accommodations needed based on particular disability	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Knowledge about the ADA	√	√	√	X	√	X	X	√
Knowledge about or participated in Special Employment Enhancement Programs	X	X	X	√	√	X	X	X
Felt Inadequate due to disability	√	X	X	X	X	√	√	X
Physical Stamina influences job choice	X	X	X	√	X	√	X	X
Qualifications for jobs is important	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Disability as a stereotype, stigma	√	X	X	√	X	√	X	X

Disability & Employment Common Terms, Question #3: How do seniors and recent graduates with physical disabilities perceive the contribution of career services in their preparation for the employment process in terms of the job readiness skills (i.e., interviewing, resume writing, disclosure of disability, and how to request reasonable accommodations)?	P_1	P_2	P_3	P_4	P_5	P_6	P_7	P_8
Received Career Services assistance	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√
Felt career services were helpful	√	√	√	√	X	NA	√	√
Did not feel career services were helpful	√	√	√	√	X	NA	√	X
Wish they had more help	√	√	√	√	√	NA	√	X
Had Job Interviews	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Received Resume Help from Career Services	√	√	√	X	X	X	√	√
Job Leads	X	√	√	X	X	X	√	√
Career services staff did not know about disabilities	√	√	√	√	NA	NA	√	X
Did not know about special employment programs for SWD	√	√	√	NA	√	√	√	√
Surprises about their employment experiences	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	√
Discloses disability before a job interview	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√
Networking important in a job search	X	X	X	√	√	√	√	√

Table 14 provides a compilation of 24 responses from the data and the themes that emerged as well as the categories and patterns that emerged as *lived experiences* associated with the phenomenon of disability and employment as reported by all eight participants. Once again, Table 14 shows affirmative responses, no experience with the phenomenon, or some experience with the phenomenon of disability and employment. Table 14 further provides a visual representation of the sub-codes in Table 13 and how

the 37 sub-codes in Table 13 were delineated into 26 larger categories representing the

second level of coding. The following larger categories were common to the majority of

the participants and resonated repeatedly in the interviews.

Table 14

Aggregated Data on Disability and Employment

Common Terms, Categories, and Patterns	P_1	P_2	P_3	P_4	P_5	P_6	P_7	P_8
Disability/Impairment	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Disability Disclosure	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Barriers/Hindrances	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Career Services did provide some help	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√
Job Search Preparation: Internet Job Search (Google, Web sites)	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	√
Secured jobs through Networking	X	X	X	√	√	√	√	√
Employment Discrimination	√	√	√	X	√	√	X	X
Needed Reasonable Accommodations; modifications on the job	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Denied Reasonable Accommodations	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X
Clarity about Accommodation Needs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Accessibility: transportation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X
Accessibility is a consideration in finding jobs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X
Feelings of Inadequacy due to disability	√	√	X	X	√	√	√	X
Disability Discrimination: employment	√	√	√	X	√	X	X	X
Continuing Graduate Education provides high level jobs in the future	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Special employment programs are a help	√	√	√	√	√	NA	NA	NA
Previous Work experience is useful	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Disability programs separate out and stereotype	NA	NA	NA	√	X	√	X	X
Disability is Life Long (24/7)	√	NA	NA	√	NA	√	√	X
Role Models for the Disabled	√	NA	NA	NA	X	X	X	X
Born with a disability	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X
Acquired a disability	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Advanced education enhancement	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Disability and Educational levels	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√

Table 15 is a representation of the aggregated themes that emerged from the raw data presented. The major themes were most ubiquitous and salient in the present study, revealing the phenomenon on disability and employment of college students with physical disabilities. These seven themes are a collection of over 62 themes that emerged and cross-referenced with the central research questions. All eight participants in the study responded affirmatively to the majority of the themes that emerged. The seven themes that emerged from the data are (a) Advanced Educational Attainment, (b) Accessibility, (c) Barriers/Hindrances, (d) Reasonable Accommodations, (e) Disability Limitations, (f) Career Services, and (g) Discrimination.

Table 15

Aggregated Table of Seven Main Themes

Themes	P_1	P_2	P_3	P_4	P_5	P_6	P_7	P_8
Advanced Education Attainment	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Accessibility	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X
Barriers/Hindrances	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Reasonable Accommodations	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Disability/Limitations	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Career Services	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	√
Discrimination	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X

Summary

This chapter provided a brief overview of the purpose of the study, central research questions, the data collection process, the phenomenological study unit of analysis, demographic data on the study participants, and the pseudonyms assigned to each college student with a physical disability. The findings from the participant

interviews were identified and discussed. An interpretation of the findings was provided

in accordance with the phenomenological data collection process, three types of

narratives (textural, structural, and textural-structural) telling the stories of the

participants were summarized. Horizonalization of disability and employment common

terms was provided for each interview, reporting all relevant phrases and content to the

phenomenon and presented in tables following the narratives. I presented a synopsis of

the content and context of the participant interviews, which included cross-referencing of

the data with the central research questions and presentation in tables for simple review.

Chapter V presents a discussion of the results from this study, limitations,

recommendations, implications for future study, and conclusions.

Chapter V: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to reveal and understand how college students with physical disabilities perceive their disability and how the disability influences their ability to obtain employment after graduation. This study examined how college seniors and recently graduated students with physical disabilities perceived how disability influenced their ability to obtain employment opportunities after graduation. In addition, the researcher examined barriers to employment and the available programs that improved employment opportunities of college students with physical disabilities. The use of a phenomenological research method allowed this researcher to discover how students perceived the challenges associated with looking for jobs, how they viewed the contributions of career services, and whether or not they felt marginalized or discriminated against due to their disabilities. This chapter is organized into five sections: (a) a discussion of the findings, (c) limitations, (d) recommendations, (e) implications for future study, and (f) conclusions.

Discussion of the Findings

More than 62 disaggregated terms emerged, providing seven common themes: (a) Advanced Educational Attainment, (b) Accessibility, (c) Reasonable Accommodations, (d) Barriers/Hindrances, (e) Disability and Impairment, (f) Discrimination, and (g) Career Services. Each theme was cross-referenced by the central research question to show alignment with the phenomenon and the purpose of the study. A review of the findings follows.

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Research Question #1: What are the lived employment experiences of seniors and recent graduates with physical disabilities?

Advanced Educational Attainment

A theme that emerged from this research question was advanced educational attainment. This study's finding suggested that the transition from college to work was not a priority; however, advanced educational attainment beyond the baccalaureate degree was a personal priority shared by each participant. As stated in Chapter IV, the typology of responses displayed by all of the participants (P_1 to P_8) emerged, which indicated that *advanced educational attainment* to obtain degrees beyond the baccalaureate degree was important in securing employment. Several of the participants were seniors in college who also indicated plans to attend graduate school after completion of their undergraduate studies. Five participants, in this study, were actively engaged in graduate studies or had completed a graduate degree. There were no differences in the belief of college seniors and recent graduates that earning an advanced degree would be valuable in obtaining gainful employment.

Leotta (2003) claimed that a college education provides the first step towards independence. Furthermore, other studies (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Riconscente, 2004) found that in most cases, a college degree is critical in securing employment after college. Notwithstanding the findings of previous studies and the literature that a college degree leads to employment after graduation, the finding of this study suggested that employment immediately after college may not be an immediate goal for some affluent and academically strong students with disabilities (considering the participants were

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drawn from a selective private institution). Education and employment priorities of

college students with disabilities might be individualized and particularized to their

career interests, goals, and parental influence. Moreover, this study helped to reaffirm

that the disability community cannot be viewed as a monolithic community.

The current study's findings suggest that students with physical disabilities found

the continuance of education to be the next logical step in their academic planning rather

than seeking gainful employment. While this finding is not generalizable to a larger

population of college students with disabilities, it is significant nonetheless. The

participants pursued a perceived safer route—advanced degree programs—rather than

enter the competitive workforce. Analysis of the findings suggests that earning the

highest degree possible is significant for a person with a disability, as this offers them an

enhanced opportunity for securing rewarding employment. This was evident in the

findings, which highlighted that participants in this study found advanced education

important:

- P_2 is currently in graduate school. P_2 stated, "I am in graduate school in California majoring in film."
- P_1 and P_3 are currently in two different law schools. P_1 stated, 'I graduated with my BS in 2003. I finished my Master's program in May of 2006. I actually went to a Ph.D. program in genetics, and tuition was paid for before my Masters. P_1 finally ended up in law school in the Northeast.
- P_5 has two Master's degrees. P_5 stated, "I had my first degree from the University of ▮. Then I proceeded to the United States for further studies for one year."
- P_7 stated, "I have a Masters of Accounting."
- P_4 and P_6, while seniors, indicated future plans to attend graduate school after completion of their undergraduate programs.
- P_8 stated he had, "a Master's degree in Security and Policy."

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It appears that the participants delayed employment due to a sense of security and comfort in the educational environment rather than entering the workplace. All of the participants implied or stated in the textural data that their aspirations to do well in society and their ability to seek upward mobility are firmly based in advanced educational opportunities beyond the baccalaureate. The responses by the participants' behaviors and homogeneity of their responses tells this researcher that engaging in advanced educational studies after graduation was their plan for success.

Research Question #2: What are participants' perceptions of how their disability influences their ability to obtain employment opportunities after graduation from college? The following themes that emerged from this research question are discrimination, accessibility, reasonable accommodations, barriers/hindrances, disability, and impairment.

Discrimination

Discrimination, according to the EEOC (2005), is any practice that includes any form of unjust employment practices based on race, color, sex, national origin, disability, and age; any retaliation against a person that filed a charge of discrimination; or any employment decision made based on stereotypes about the abilities or performance of a person based on that person's protected class. According to previous studies, people with disabilities face employment discrimination solely based on disability (Traustadottir, 1990), but it appears that six out of eight participants in this study did not feel discriminated against according to the legal definition.

The analysis of the findings indicates that the majority of the participants did not

feel discriminated against based on the legal definition or based on their disability.

However, there were different viewpoints, perspectives, and expressions regarding how

the participants conceptualized discrimination. The findings show that only a few of the

participants felt marginalized, inadequate, or discriminated against due to disability. For

example, one study participant (P_1) perceived that the disability community discriminated

against her through exclusion. While P_1 has a disability, she is not totally deaf; and her

hearing loss is not substantial enough to be considered non-disabled. Textural data from

P_1 confirmed her response on discrimination and feelings of exclusion by the disability

community when she stated:

> I'm hearing impaired; I don't fit in the hearing world and don't fit in the deaf
> world. There is a deaf culture, but the deaf society doesn't want hearing impaired.
> All my life, I have tried to fit into the hearing world, but you never do. I feel like I
> am on the bottom of the minorities. I guess my personal opinion is that you're on
> the bottom of the list!

This data underscores the poignant feelings about discrimination by those within the

disability community as well as prescribing to the notion that discrimination will always

exist. Textural data further confirmed P_4's feelings and doubts that she would be able to

secure a position for these reasons. P_4 stated:

> The field I'm going into really requires a lot of international experience, and it is
> hard for me to find a job in those areas, especially doing field work. It's hard to
> find an accessible place where I can do field work.

On the other hand, one participant described discrimination in employment practices,

which is aligned with the legal definition when he was denied a reasonable

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accommodation in the workplace as mandated under federal statute. P_5 provided textural

data saying,

> For the past two years, I have been asking for accommodations in the form of a note-taker. I have not gotten any because, you know, while they just assume that since they provide the schools with equipment, we, the teachers, could access that equipment. . . . Last year, two of my colleagues were able to get note-takers, but I didn't.

While the study's findings do not wholly align with the literature that

discrimination is prevalent solely based on disability (Traustadottir, 1990), the study's

findings do suggest that discrimination for college students with disabilities is perceived

differently based on the participants' experiences.

In examining the application of policy to the findings, only two participants (P_1

and P_3) made direct reference to the federal statute, the ADA. The sole purpose of the

ADA is to prohibit discrimination based on disability. P_1 stated, "My dad has a small

business and he says the ADA only requires you to have a certain size (number of

employees) to be technically ADA-accessible." P_3 indicated her knowledge of the ADA

when she said, "The job I am at now is for civil rights, and I am in their disability rights

project. . . . They basically deal with ADA violations." P_5 made reference to the law

when he stated, "I'm entitled to a note-taker that is provided for me by my employer, not

by somebody else." However, P_5 did not specifically mention under what circumstances

he was entitled to receive a note-taker. He did not appear to understand that the ADA

provided him with protections and the ability to receive reasonable accommodations

under the law. One could argue that the participant's lack of experience with direct

violations of the ADA demonstrated his limited knowledge of the law.

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While the study participants appeared to have knowledge about their academic

accommodations under the ADA, it appeared that they had marginal information about

their employment rights under the ADA. Participants did not reveal any knowledge or

substantial awareness of the employment provisions under the law. This would suggest

that there is a possible disconnect between the knowledge students have about the ADA

in an academic environment and their comparable knowledge about the ADA in the

workplace. This presents a level of concern that students with disabilities are not

empowered with the necessary knowledge about disability employment legislation, which

is crucial for their success in the workplace.

Accessibility

The findings indicate that accessibility is a major factor that influenced the ability

to conduct an effective job search or obtain gainful employment. Accessibility was

associated with feelings of being limited or at a disadvantage. The issue of accessibility

dominated many of the interviews. Each participant told a story that illustrated the

inability to access workplaces, buildings, public transportation, housing, and physical

hardships. P_3 indicated her problems with geographic accessibility when she stated:

> I think the hardest thing for me right now is feeling sort of geographically limited
> because of my disability. So I am sort of reluctant to move to any other city where
> I don't know what's out there in terms of accessible housing and transportation.

P_6's problems with accessibility dealt with physical accessibility to facilities. As P_6

expressed, "Not being able to find the way into the building . . . yes, the accessibility."

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as well as the ADA states that

postsecondary institutions may not discriminate solely on the basis of disability and must

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ensure that the programs offered, including all extra curricular activities, are made accessible to students with disabilities (Leuchovius, 1994; Thomas, 2000). Titles I, II, and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates accessibility in higher education to programs and services as well as facilities. Additionally, Title III mandates accessibility to public accommodations (ADA, 1990; Kaplan & Lee, 1995; Raines & Rossow, 1994; Rothstein, 1998). The availability of equal access for college students with disabilities to conduct a job search or secure gainful employment is predicated on their ability to have full accessibility in all areas of public accommodations, including transportation, housing, and facilities, in order to be successful.

The findings were in agreement with previous literature on accessibility and fell within the boundaries of the legal interpretation of Section 504 of the federal statute. This statute offers qualified people with disabilities equal access to programs and services as well as physical accessibility of facilities.

Reasonable Accommodations

The study's findings suggest that reasonable accommodations are necessary to allow college students with disabilities to fully participate in employment and classroom activities. The implications of the findings in this study support the belief that if given modifications and reasonable accommodations, college students with disabilities will be able to fully participate in all activities of employment and classroom-related assignments. According to previous research, the reasonable accommodation provision is defined in the ADA as "any modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that enables a qualified individual with a disability to

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enjoy an equal employment opportunity" (ADA, 1990; Daddona, 2001; EEOC Technical Assistance Manual 1992, p. III-2). The following textural data indicate alignment with the literature:

P$_3$ indicated that she received reasonable accommodations in the workplace as a wheelchair user and stated:

> But they would ask me more about the office, whether I would need furniture moved or things modified. My disability only affects my mobility, so the only accommodations I usually needed were if I needed a desk lowered or a wider clear path.

P$_4$ indicated similar accommodations due to her disability when she stated, "What I need is an accessible workspace; I need to know if I need stuff moved because it's too high up." Participant #1 provided further distinctive data indicating that she needed to use "CART" (communication access real-time translation) in order to fully participate in classroom activities. P$_7$ stated, "I have a guide dog now." P$_5$ and P$_6$ both advised that they used special software for people who are blind, such as JAWS, a screen reader for the blind, Window Eyes and Kurzweil, to scan printed material to be read. P$_8$ indicated that he used CART services, TTY (text telephone for the deaf), and paper and pen due to his hearing impairment.

Conversely, a significant finding revealed by only one participant in this study demonstrated a denial of reasonable accommodations. P$_5$ was denied workplace accommodations of a note-taker and assistive technology to allow him to be self-sufficient. P$_5$ appeared to be dismayed with the accommodation process at his job. This finding was not consistent with the findings for other participants, as they were accommodated and felt that people were generally receptive to providing help.

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Barriers/Hindrances

The participants' perceptions about barriers were not in agreement with previous research (Bruyere, 2000), which suggested that there were seven barriers to employment that exist for people with disabilities, which include "lack of job-related experience, lack of required skills/training …" (Bruyere, 2000, p. 3). Out of the seven barriers, the lack of job-related experience dominates, and the lack of skills and training is the next highest reason reported with lack of experience. However, this study's findings did not corroborate the results that students were unprepared or lacked self-advocacy as indicated by previous research. The participants were very knowledgeable about jobs and careers and demonstrated a sound understanding on what was necessary to fulfill the requirements to obtain advanced degrees to become employable in their chosen fields. Moreover, barriers for the participants in this study were regarded as anything that prevented them reaching a goal.

In this study, the definition of barrier varied from the inability to get into a law school due to poor grade point averages (GPA) to what some of the participants referred to as "hindrances" in career choices. Additionally, several participants were faced with physical barriers when they tried to enter the career center. Specifically, P_2 connected barriers to job selection, career direction, and not wanting to be "pigeon holed" into one particular occupational class. P_1 connected the concept of barriers to her inability to get into law school with a low GPA. The participant felt that her disability and struggles to do well in school were due to her hearing loss. P_1 associated her low grade point average and acceptance into law school with her disability when she stated:

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GPAs could be a help or a hindrance when applying to private law firms. There are some that require you to be in the top 10%, 25%, top 50, or have a 3.0 or a 3.4. . . . Because of my struggles with not hearing the professor or not grasping material, the professors tried to help me. I just couldn't get it; I have a 3.1.

P$_4$ further commented on barriers as not having *role model* peers to mentor her in career-seeking activities. P$_4$ noted this reluctance when she stated:

I think, especially with a disability, going into new areas, I might not have role models to ask questions that have actually done this work. I am more reluctant to go for those types of jobs than I am for what I already know.

In sum, employment barriers were not reflected in chronicles of the participants; but, rather, barriers prevented the participants from achieving an ambition.

Disability and Impairment

This study purports two important findings on disability and impairment. First, there is no single way to define disability and impairment, which is consistent with previous studies. Second, the findings are parallel to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter II.

In the first assumption, researchers (Altman, 2001; Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997; Mitra, 2006) grappled with defining disability. Mitra (2006) posits that no one theory can define disability. Practitioners, clinicians, legislators, and people with disabilities have also tried to define *disability*, but have not in almost four decades developed one ideology or theory to define disability.

Moreover, legislation has played a role in the definition and treatment of people with disabilities. *Disability,* once called "handicap" during the 1970s, refers to an underlying physical or mental condition (Rothstein, 1998; U.S. Census Bureau, 2004b). However, "Today, *disability* is seen as a complex interaction between a person and his or

her environment" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004b, p. 1), including the development of more comprehensive disability rights legislation.

The verbal communications that college students with disabilities in this study used to describe their personal perspectives on disability and impairment parallel the literature on disability. Specifically, each of them viewed disability in different ways, suggesting that there is no one way to define disability. It was also evident that college students with disabilities recognized the legal, social, and cultural influences disability has on their lives. As such, the findings in this study show that participants experienced differences with very personal insights by indicating that their disability was a daily occurrence, while others described the physiological aspects of disability. Some of the language that emerged from the textural data regarding the participants' perceptions about their disability and their personal lives was indicated when Participant #6 said that disability is "painful; it is a beast." Participant #1 said, "A disability is a full-time job where it doesn't go away. It's 24/7 [24 hours/seven days a week]; my job never ends." Finally, Participant #1 further described disability as something to be proud of when she stated, "I will be proud to say I have a disability." The textural data above provide a confirmation that even within the college community; students with disabilities describe disability and impairment with a variety of terms and viewpoints.

Disability and impairment showed similarities with the theoretical framework, as participants defined disability as "an embarrassment"; "I felt inadequate"; "disability is something to be proud of"; or "disability is about disclosure," which directly align with the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1995). According to Oliver's Social Model of

Disability (1990, 1995), there are two types of models: (a) the individual model of disability and (b) the social model of disability. The individual model places the problem of disability on the person and views the cause of disability as a result of residual problems due to the disability that are thought to be a direct result of that disability (Oliver, 1990, 1995). The social context of meaning of disability, according to the participants, supported the idea of disability existing, but positioned the problems of disability on society, not on the individual with a disability (Oliver, 1995). Participant #1 described not being socially accepted by the disability community when she said:

> I'm hearing impaired; I don't fit in the hearing world and don't fit in the deaf world. There is a deaf culture, but the deaf society doesn't want hearing impaired. All my life, I have tried to fit into the hearing world, but you never do.

This self-report suggests that the participant does not feel accepted by the deaf community or the hearing community; and, as a consequence, she is not socially accepted.

The participants freely discussed their limitations and spoke about how they felt others perceived their disability. On occasion, students in this study did discuss their feelings about how others perceived them, indicating that they felt inadequate or ignored. To specify, P_6 spoke candidly about her experiences when she was first injured and had to use a wheelchair. P_6 stated, "I felt like everybody was looking at my wheelchair. That's what I felt like. Instead of listening to me. . . ." This excerpt provides data from the participant on how she felt people viewed her as a person with a physical disability and how they appeared to ignore her. This type of interaction appears to suggest an alignment with the Social Model of Disability and how society views people with disabilities.

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The findings further suggest that disability can be viewed within the context of the Nagi (1965) Model of disability. The Nagi Model of Disability (Cornell University, 2003-2007; Nagi, 1965; Parsons, 1975) postulates that medical conditions result from "infection, metabolic imbalances, traumatic injury, or other causes" (Nagi, 1965, p. 101). Nagi refers to these conditions as the "pathology or disease process of disability" (p. 101). As a result of the medical pathology, there are functional restrictions and limitations that are imposed on the individual (Nagi, 1965). The textural data from one participant, P_6, stated, "The fact that I have a spinal cord injury that doesn't look painful, but it is a beast." This researcher observed this participant as being in obvious pain. In fact, the interview was stopped briefly in order for the participant to take medication. The participant appeared to define her disability through her physical residuals of pain due to a prior spinal cord injury. This may suggest that for her, disability can be viewed as more of a medical issue with residuals that affect activities which in this case, are P_6's daily functions (ability to sit for prolonged periods) and work.

Research Question #3: How do seniors and recent graduates with physical disabilities perceive the contribution of career services in their preparation for the employment process in terms of the job readiness skills such as interviewing, resume writing, disclosure of disability, and how to request reasonable accommodations?
Disability Disclosure

The first theme that emerged from this research question was disability disclosure. Disability disclosure means making a disability known by voluntarily providing information about the disability (EEOC Technical Assistance Manual, 1992; University

of North Carolina, 2004). This study's findings suggest that some participants were not comfortable with the issue of disability disclosure. The findings further imply that disclosing disability was either uncomfortable for the participants or there was uncertainty as to when disclosure was appropriate. The problem of disability disclosure provides a dilemma for some college students with disabilities. As Participant #2 said in her interview:

> I am always sort of not sure how to broach [mention] the whole disabled thing, especially when you're applying for a position. I still haven't really figured out how to do that because you don't want to walk in there and be disabled.

Findings from this study suggest that for some students with physical disabilities, the issue of disability is *lifelong*. Disability appears to be a process of understanding and requires an enormous level of self-introspection. As such, college students with physical disabilities seem to be responsible for immense emotional and physical undertakings to understand their own restrictions and functional limitations, how disability affects learning in an academic environment, as well as how to articulate their unique differences to others. The ability to talk about disability and discern when it is appropriate to disclose is, without a doubt, a lifelong journey for students with disabilities.

Career Services

The second theme that emerged from this research question was career services. Previous studies suggest that a crucial first step towards employment is career development for all college students, including students with disabilities (Anue & Kroeger, 1997). There are challenges for college students with disabilities (Friehe et al., 1996; Silver et al, 1997), such as job preparedness skills, the ability to write a good

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resume, interviewing with confidence, and articulating their abilities before graduation, that are critical to the employment process (Anue & Kroeger, 1997, Fonosch et al., 1982; Norton & Field, 1998). While the majority of participants in this study did not go to work directly after graduation, most participants expressed that their experiences with career centers were limited.

The findings in this study indicate four areas as important to college students with disabilities as they relate to career services centers: (a) college students with disabilities do not have a good relationship with university career services centers; (b) college students with disabilities wish there was more personal assistance offered by the career services centers; (c) networking and personal contacts are important in conducting a job search; and (d) career centers are limited in the knowledge of working with college students with disabilities.

More than half of the study participants indicated that they had been to the university career services center, but their relationship with career services was limited, and they did not receive a wealth of assistance in preparation for a job search or securing job leads. Several participants indicated that they conducted their own self-directed job search by using the Internet or the Google search engine to look for jobs. A few participants indicated that they received help with resumes, but their interaction with the career centers was limited. Several others indicated that their advisors or the DSS director were more helpful with their job search than the career center. One participant indicated that she never used the career center, but relied on her department to assist with finding jobs.

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Another finding in this study suggests that career center staff lack experience in working with college students with disabilities. Researchers Anue and Kroeger (1997), Fonosch et al. (1982), and Silver et al. (2001) suggested that career services providers are not adequately equipped to advise college students with disabilities because of these students' unique needs (Anue & Kroeger, 1997). As a result, career services providers often refer students with disabilities to the disability services providers. The literature is in total alignment with data provided by P_7, who indicated that he did not find career center staff to be knowledgeable about working with students with disabilities. As P_7 stated:

> I went to the career center and spoke with one of the counselors there. This person used to work in the HR department for a big company and has experience with hiring people. He had no experience really with dealing with a disabled person, so I found that pretty interesting.

It seems that the students with disabilities in this study did not feel resources provided by the career centers were comprehensive enough to support their job searches. Additionally, one participant indicated that the career center staff person was skeptical about his ability to perform jobs tasks as a blind person. Anue & Kroeger (1997) and Fonosch et al., (1982) indicate that career service providers often are not equipped to work with college students with disabilities and refer them to the disability services providers. The findings further suggest that career services for students with disabilities can be improved by examining the external factors as well as students' personal issues to understand their needs and consider tailoring current programs and practices towards the fulfillment of those needs (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Fonosch et al., 1982). I concur with

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the literature regarding career services creating tailored programs and services for students with disabilities.

Based upon the review of the literature, there are disparities in the hiring of college students with disabilities after graduation (Kennedy & Harris, 2005; Leotta, 2003; McNeil, 2001a; Norton & Field, 1998). However, findings from the current study do not support the claim that college students with disabilities are underrepresented in the American workforce. This researcher's motivation to conduct a qualitative study on the phenomenon of disability and employment was inspired by the desire to understand employment disparities of college students with disabilities. As such, the findings discussed in this section have provided this researcher with insight into three major areas highlighted in the study: (a) unanticipated findings as they relate to transition from college to work, (b) disability policy, and (c) implications of disability theory.

The literature consistently elucidated that nationally, there is a disparity in the transition from college to work and the hiring of college students with disabilities after graduation. Previous studies suggested that there is a 30% unemployment rate for college students with disabilities (Cornell University, 2003-2007; Lamb, 2007; Leotta, 2003, p. 1; U.S. ODEP, 2003) as compared to the 4.7% unemployment rate for the general population in the United States (Hernandez et al., 2000; Leotta, 2003; U.S. Department of Labor [DOL], 2006). This disparity was not substantiated by the employment experiences of college students with disabilities in this study.

The transition from college to work was not the first choice or a priority for the majority of the students in this study. The findings further suggested that the urgency to

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enter the workforce was delayed by the participants' quests to continue with their educational pursuits. All of the participants in this study (e.g., P_1 to P_8) were either in graduate school, in law school, possessed a graduate degree, or had plans to obtain a graduate degree after undergraduate school. The homogeneity of their responses indicated that all the participants believed that continuing with their education would improve employment opportunities for their chosen fields.

The social meaning of transition from college to work, while not generalizable to a larger population, can be viewed as significant and unexpected because it is not in alignment with the literature, which indicated that college leads directly to employment. The goal of college students with disabilities to secure gainful employment after graduation according to Anue and Kroeger (1997) was not a shared value for the participants in this study and did not suggest any urgency on the part of the participants to enter the workforce. This finding might cause one to argue that there are no disparities in employment of college students with disabilities, as each participant in this study found more value in advanced educational attainment after graduation. However, the experiences of the eight study participants are not reflective of the national statistics as reported by the Department of Labor (U.S. ODEP, 2003).

The current study's findings did not substantiate a need for the participants to have a more comprehensive knowledge about the ADA and the employment provisions. Disability legislation was promulgated to provide equal access and opportunities to people with disabilities since 1973 with the passing of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Kaplan & Lee, 1995; Kennedy & Harris, 2005; Raines & Rossow, 1994; The

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Rehabilitation Act, 1973; Zames-Fleischer & Zames, 2001). The findings in this study did not corroborate that there was a necessity to rely on disability legislation as a mechanism to enhance or improve the participants' employability. However, the participants, while very familiar with the academic accommodations provided under law, appeared to be limited in their knowledge about the ADA and how the same statute provides employment protections. There appeared to be a serious disconnect between the law that originally was passed to assure equal access to employment and the perceptions of the participants and their acknowledgement of the law only as a conduit for academic accommodations. It is probable that the participants in this study, while they had some knowledge about the ADA, did not have guidance from the DSS office to understand the tenants of the ADA and its implications for their transition to work. As such, they did not have an overwhelming need to inquire more about the employment provisions under the law, as only two of the study participants were gainfully employed according to the Social Security Administration (Social Security Administration, 2007; Virginia Commonwealth University, 2006).

It is my proposition that disability policy issues should be at the forefront for any well-informed student with a disability. Disability policy will only serve to empower college students with disabilities in the event of workplace discrimination. Perhaps this explains the participants' extended academic experiences in an environment that they were familiar with and received accommodations for in the past.

The study's findings support the claim that no single theory can define disability (Mitra, 2006). The participants in this study viewed disability and impairment differently

from each other and from the theories, expressing their own ideas and speaking of disability in terms of acceptance, exclusion, a social dilemma, or in physiological terms. The majority of the participants described themselves in the context of the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1995). They appeared to speak about disability in a positive manner. They were comfortable discussing who they were and who they had become while living with a disability. This researcher suggests that because all but one participant was born with a disability, they had no other frame of reference that would present a pejorative outlook.

P_6 was the only participant who appeared to frame her disability in the Medical Model (Nagi, 1965), which is aligned with the physical, physiological, and pathological symptoms of disability. P_6 expressed being in constant pain, that her disability was a beast, that she hurt all the time, that prolong sitting was painful; and, finally, she disclosed that she was prescribed pain medication to manage her pain. It was noticeable during the interview that P_6 viewed herself in a medical model, as she had to stop the interview to take pain medication, as her physical symptoms appeared to cause her physical discomfort. She stated, "Can we stop for a minute while I take my medicine." It is also plausible that because P_6 was not born with a disability and acquired a disability late in life, she did not have the same coping skills to deal with or manage her disability without medical intervention. As such, living with a disability should be viewed as a personal journey that each individual experiences differently.

This researcher is reminded by the review of the literature that for over 40 years, researchers have tried to define disability (Mitra, 2006), and there is no single definition

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that can be attributed to the targeted population, as evidenced by this study. While a variety of theories and models of disability have provided a framework to view people with disabilities, the study findings are in alignment with Mitra's (2006) viewpoint that there is no single way to define disability. The discussion regarding transition from college to work, disability legislation, and disability theory provided insight into the findings that emerged as significant for the population and for contributions to the literature.

In keeping with this researcher's interpretivist perspective, it appeared that two new assumptions were embedded within the phenomenon of disability and employment. First, advanced educational attainment may be considered as a solution to the participants' decisions to obtain additional credentials to improve their marketability in an urban competitive environment. Two things come to mind in the absence of a direct response to why the participants selected school rather than employment: (a) students with disabilities have conceptualized their marketability through another vehicle, advanced educational attainment, which might suggest that advanced education was a substitute for not having a job coach to assist them with finding jobs; and (b) without any decisive mechanisms for career advancement, the study's participants put into place advanced educational attainment and additional credentials beyond the baccalaureate to sponsor their entrance into the workplace. The academic prowess for college students with disabilities might serve as a mechanism used to gain autonomy and self-sufficiency.

Second, this researcher suggests that the geographical location in a metropolitan area in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States positioned these students in a manner

that required them to be very competitive in order to secure gainful employment. The desire to obtain an advanced degree beyond a baccalaureate was prevalent among all study participants. The impact of the geographical area and the competitive milieu suggests that the study participants wanted to achieve the highest degree possible to allow them to compete for future employment and improve employability.

Several participants indicated that in order to get a job in their intended field, they needed to have a Master's degree. The belief that good jobs come with advanced degrees is aligned with the Social Model of Disability, which suggests that society views additional credentials as important. Other study participants indicated that they wanted to get an advanced degree to get a job in a metropolitan area in the Mid-Atlantic region. Still another participant indicated that because he was a recent immigrant, he needed to obtain an "American degree" to become employable, indicating that he was not able to obtain a position with his degrees from abroad. As such, the study participant returned to school to get another Master's degree. According to the participants in this study, their individual experiences suggest that an advanced degree beyond the baccalaureate was compulsory to secure gainful employment.

Limitations

Two limitations were factors that affected the results of the study. First, the findings in this study represented a small sample at one private four-year urban university and did not appear generalizable to a larger population. Second, there were challenges associated with accessing the participants. The gatekeeper (Creswell, 2005) was the principal individual who provided this researcher with participants and access to the

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research site. The gatekeeper also identified students for the study and determined the type and kind of disability of each participant. While the gatekeeper was critical in gaining access and selection of participants for this study, it was difficult at times to obtain students who were seniors, which is required of purposive sampling criteria.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

Recommendations are framed in three areas that are relevant to the phenomenon of disability and employment in higher education and consistent with the findings of this study. The three areas are: (a) disability support services (DSS); (b) career centers; and (c) higher education administration.

This researcher's goals were to empower this population of college students with disabilities through deliberate and purposeful dialogue about the disparities in employment. The students were empowered as they were allowed to talk about their perceptions about disability, looking for jobs, barriers to employment, and the choices they made about continuing their education after graduation. This study was, for some, the first time they had to voice their opinions about the phenomenon and their personal opinions about disability and employment. As such, recommendations are offered for changes in practice, policy, and leadership based on the findings from this study.

Disability Support Services Providers

Disability Support Services Providers are the experts in disability-related concerns and accommodations in colleges and universities in the United States (AHEAD, 2005). As such, these service providers are critical to the overall academic success of college students with disabilities. The role of the DSS provider at postsecondary

institutions is faced with differing viewpoints (Conway, 2003). Four recommendations of practice are offered. First, DSS providers might consider establishing purposeful relationships with career center staff to establish adjustment-oriented programs (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Boen et al., 1994). Second, based on the study findings, DSS providers may want to consider ongoing in-service training for career center staff that will assist them with their outreach to students with disabilities (Anue & Kroeger, 1997). Third, they may want to consider the alignment of their staff training with the employment needs of college students with disabilities, such as (a) how to disclose disability to employers, (b) how to request reasonable accommodations in the workplace, (c) basic rights of employees with disabilities in the workplace, (d) Title I employment provisions of the ADA, and (e) self-advocacy skills. Fourth, DSS providers should consider working with federal initiatives such as the Workforce Recruitment Program, which provides summer jobs for college students with disabilities.

Career Centers

Three recommendations of practice are offered for career services that traditionally provide students with opportunities for career exploration. The first recommendation of practice relates to Peterson and González's (2000) work that asserted that transition-to-work is an essential requirement to prepare students with disabilities for the workplace. This approach has been used to evaluate a person with a disability to determine functional limitations to employment imposed by the disability (Peterson & González, 2000). According to the findings and the concerns of the participants, college students with disabilities might consider working with career center staff and partner with

DSS providers to understand their unique needs, strengths, and physical limitations as they relate to employment. The study findings suggest that some students did not know how to disclose disability or explain how their disability impacts employment or how to request reasonable accommodations in the workplace.

Career center staff assists college students with job readiness skills such as resume writing, cover letters, interviewing techniques, and job leads. Career development for all college students to include students with disabilities is a crucial first step towards employment (Anue & Kroeger, 1997), but challenges are presented for college students with disabilities (Friehe et al., 1996; Silver et al, 1997). Several participants in this study indicated their frustration with attempts to access services at the career center. P_7 indicated in his interview that the career center staff member he met with did not know how he would perform any jobs because of his blindness. To this end, a second recommendation of practice to be considered is the in-service training relating to issues of disability disclosure and how to request reasonable accommodations. It is important to note that while this study did not include conversations with career center staff, it appears appropriate that any concerns about working with students with disabilities are necessary.

A third recommendation of practice is to consider training and professional skill development that encompasses the issues that surround disability and employment. It is suggested that career center staff be provided with information on successful model programs established at other universities around the country dealing specifically with students with disabilities. Some of the topics recommended for training as suggested by the participants' interviews would be disability employment legislation, the nature of

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disability disclosure, and working with students who have unique needs. Finally, the data provided by the study participants suggests that partnerships with career center staff would be a way of addressing academic accommodations that extend beyond the classroom and include a dialogue about transitioning into employment after graduation.

Higher Education Administration

For over 32 years, policies have required nearly all public colleges and universities to provide qualified students with disabilities appropriate academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and services to ensure equal access to programs and services (ADA, 1990; OCR, 2005). In accordance with policies as enumerated in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the promulgation of such laws to provide accommodations and services to students with disabilities (ADA, 1990; Daddona, 2001; Hernandez et al., 2000; Kaplan & Lee, 1995; Raines & Rossow, 1994; Thomas, 2000) is the primary goal. These services have come at an exorbitant cost to many of our nation's institutions, as these laws are considered unfunded mandates. A recommendation of policy for colleges and universities is to ensure that ample resources and funding for the development of tailored programs and services are at the forefront of higher education leadership and available to those with regulatory and fiduciary responsibilities. The ability of college administrators to put this critical issue into perspective may require great thought and strategic planning that provides career service professionals and other disability service providers the ability to meet the unique needs of college students with disabilities.

Implications for Future Study

Based upon the researcher's review of the literature, traditional research in the area of disability and employment has been driven by statistical data. Most research is an account of the numbers of college students with disabilities enrolled in our nation's colleges and universities, but few studies are qualitative. Dialogues with students with disabilities require a paradigm shift from a quantitative perspective to a more qualitative approach. For years, researchers have discussed and counted the numbers of students with disabilities, but few have solicited these students' perceptions and viewpoints on issues regarding their college experiences, the services they received from DSS providers and, most importantly, the contributions of career centers to their success in finding employment after college. These topics are of great value in exploring outcome measurements for success.

The implications for future study surround the issues of scholarly research in the areas of employment of college students with disabilities. The body of literature indicated that many studies were quantitative and initiated by researchers in the federal sector. Such agencies as the Department of Labor, Department of Education, and the Census Bureau have led the way in research on employment of people with disabilities and college students with disabilities. However, none of the aforementioned entities are embedded in the area of higher education.

Scholars are not adequately researching and discussing this topic. With a reported 1.5 million college students enrolled in the United States, 6% of them report a disability (Horn et al., 1999, p. 1; Johnson, 2006; Justesen et al., 2007; Werner, 1992). While this

study focused on the employment of college students with disabilities in a four-year urban private university, clearly this issue affects those in two-year public institutions as well. As such, a qualitative study addressing the needs of students enrolled in our community colleges is of equal importance. Possibly, the issue of employment at the community college is even more critical to research, as the nation's community colleges are the starting point for many students with disabilities hoping to transfer to four-year universities.

As is clearly evident in this study, phenomenology provides a voice and allows the participants to express their opinions and tell stories of their lived experiences, explaining the phenomenon of disability and employment. The purposeful use of phenomenological research inquiries to study how students with disabilities think and feel provides a clearer portrayal of what we are doing in higher education with this population of students. I strongly encourage more qualitative studies in the following areas: (a) the experiences of college students with disabilities and their perceptions of how state vocational rehabilitation serves as a vehicle to promote employment; (b) the perceptions of college students with disabilities and the role of DSS in employment; (c) the experiences of college students with disabilities in experiential and work-based employment before graduation; (d) how career services staff perceive working with students with disabilities; (e) the experiences of college students with disabilities and their perceptions of the ADA and how the statute has impacted gainful employment; and (f) the psychosocial aspects of disability and the effects on employment.

Furthermore, in order to provide a statistical analysis, quantitative research should be paired with a qualitative study employing a mixed-methods approach in a future endeavor to examine: (a) the socioeconomic effects on college students with disabilities and the effects on employment; and (b) the effects of race, gender, and sex of college students with disabilities on employment. Moreover, longitudinal studies covering the span of a student's academic journey would best serve the entire academic community and other critical stakeholders invested in the success of college students with disabilities.

Finally, a study examining the lived employment experiences in four-year public institutions may provide the ability to discover the various aspects and needs among students with disabilities. A study including a four-year public institution will provide a comparison of the similarities and differences of the lived employment experiences of college students with physical disabilities.

Conclusions

This study explored the phenomenon of disability and employment of college students with physical disabilities at a four-year urban private university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Colleges and universities across the nation continue to document that students with disabilities are disproportionately hired after graduation compared to students without disabilities (Kennedy & Harris, 2005; Leotta, 2003; McNeil, 2001a; Norton & Field, 1998); however, this study did not confirm this to be problematic. The findings of this study did not align with previous research that indicated employment after college as the immediate goal of students with disabilities (Anue & Kroeger, 1997; Frieden, 2003; Kim-Rupnow & Burgstahler, 2004; Leotta, 2003; Norton

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& Field, 1998). Moreover, in this study, it appears that college prepares some students with disabilities for direct transition to advanced educational attainment, but not for conducting a job search immediately after graduation.

The data collected from eight study participants offered different viewpoints and stories about their lived experiences and provided rich descriptions of the phenomenon about disability and employment. Seven themes emerged: (a) Advanced Educational Attainment, (b) Accessibility, (c) Reasonable Accommodations, (d) Barriers/Hindrances, (e) Disability and Impairment, (f) Discrimination, and (g) Career Services. The study's findings indicated that participants have different viewpoints, perspectives, and lived experiences related to the phenomenon of disability and employment. Employment was not a priority or the immediate goal after graduation. Participants' preferred choice was the continuance of advanced educational opportunities beyond undergraduate studies. The advanced educational attainment theme consistently resonated with each participant in the study.

All of the textural data obtained from the study participants and the literature provides a wealth of information to practitioners and scholars in the areas of employment and disability in higher education. It is this researcher's hope that this study will garner the support for continued research in the area of disability and employment, which will address the needs of a population of students that will continue to grow in numbers in institutions of higher education in the United States. Purposeful dialogues within academia on employment of college students with disabilities are the hallmark by which

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higher education can implement change to improve employment outcomes for students with disabilities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Letter to Participants

(IRB # 120639)

Date_____
Dear_____
     You have been contacted by ███████████, ████████████████████████ DSS Director, regarding your interest and participation in my dissertation research study to determine how seniors and recent college graduates with disabilities experience disability and employability as a phenomenon. Your participation in this study will add to the current professional body of knowledge regarding this subject. This project is part of the research phase of my study using a Phenomenological (exploring the lived experiences) research method. This research constitutes partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at the George Washington University, Higher Education Administration Program.

     Your personal experiences as a college student with a disability make you a wonderful source of information. Your personal insights as a co-researcher will help me better understand the essence of your experiences as it emerges through our discussions as to whether or not disability plays a role in obtaining employment. Your feelings and lived experiences are most important to the study. Please feel free to ask me any questions at any time. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or need a break, please let me know. Most importantly, please advise me if you need any reasonable accommodations to fully participate with this process. Please feel free to reach me by
E-mail at bcoleman@gwu.edu or by telephone at ██████████ (cell) if for any reason you need to talk to me, or you may reach my dissertation chair, Dr. Mikyong Minsun Kim, Associate Professor, at ██████████ or by E-mail at kimmi@gwu.edu.

     At no time will names, social security numbers, specific medical or psychological diagnoses, or any confidential medical records enter the final work thereby, protecting your anonymity. I will be taking hand written notes and taping our conversation to insure accuracy. Before presenting the final work you will receive a copy for review. I will compare and contrast answers with other students. After analyzing all of the data; I will present my written findings to my professor. I value your input and participation. Thank you for your participation and support with this study.

Best regards,

Brenda C. Williams, MAEd & HD

Appendix B: Data Collection Instrument: Interview Questions

(IRB # 120639)

Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to reveal the phenomena of disability and employment of college students with physical disabilities. The study addressed the following questions: What are the *lived experiences* of seniors and recent college graduates with physical disabilities? What are their perceptions of how their disability influences their ability to obtain employment opportunities after graduation from college? How do seniors and recent graduates with physical disabilities perceive the contribution of career services in their preparation for the employment process in terms of the job readiness skills such as interviewing, resume writing, disclosure of disability, and how to request reasonable accommodations?

The following questions are ordered in a sequence of clusters based on the main research questions, but the order may be altered based on the content.

Interview Questions

1. What jobs have you held? Please describe your experiences when looking for those jobs.

2. What experiences did you have during the interview process?

3. What experiences do you feel have assisted you in conducting a job search?

4. What experiences did you see as a help or a hindrance when looking for a job?

5. What barriers do you feel you have had in conducting a job search?

6. Please tell me what you think about your experiences with the career services center in preparation for your job search, such as readiness skills before graduating? [Follow up with, how do you feel about those experiences?]

7. What special career enhancing programs are you aware of that will help improve your employability?

8. What did you think about the career services you received at your university?

9. What experiences have you had when asking for reasonable accommodations to fully participate in the employment process?

10. What specific accommodations did you asked for and how did you feel about the process and the outcomes?

11. Under what circumstances have you ever felt your disability has become an issue? [Follow up with, how did you feel?]

12. Tell me about your feelings concerning your ability to handle the job search?

13. Tell me about any feelings you had when looking for a job or during an interview? Please explain the feelings you had at that time. [Follow up with, reflecting back how you feel now?]

14. Is there anything that you can tell me that would surprise me about your experiences with job search processes, requesting reasonable accommodations, and campus career services?

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Research Consent Form (IRB # 120639)

TITLE:
TRANSITION FROM COLLEGE TO WORK: LIVED EMPLOYMENT
EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF SENIORS AND RECENT COLLEGE
GRADUATES WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES SEEKING EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES

GW IRB number: **120639**

Principal Investigator: **MIKYONG MINSUN KIM**   Telephone number: ███████

Sub-Investigator: **Brenda C. Williams**   Telephone number: ███████

██████████████████

Sponsor: *NA*

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1) **INTRODUCTION**

You are invited to participate in a research study under the direction of Dr. MIKYONG
MINSUN of the Department of Education Leadership, Higher Education Administration
Program at the George Washington University (GWU). Taking part in this research is
entirely voluntary.

2) **WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?**

        You are being asked to take part in this study because your *lived experiences* as a
student with a physical disability which will assist me in conducting my dissertation
research to determine how seniors and recent college graduates with physical disabilities
experience disability and employability as a phenomenon. Your participation in this study
will add to the current professional body of knowledge regarding this subject. This
project is part of the research phase of my study using a Phenomenological research
method.

        This research constitutes partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of
Education degree at the George Washington University, Higher Education
Administration Program. Additionally, you are invited to participate in this study because
of your personal insights as a participant will help me better understand the essence of

your experiences as it emerges through our discussions as to whether or not disability plays a role in obtaining employment. Your feelings and lived experiences are most important to the study. Your personal experiences as a college student with a disability make you a wonderful source of information.

The purpose of this study is to understand and reveal the phenomena of disability and employment of college students with disabilities. The study examined how seniors and recent graduates with disabilities perceive how their disability influences their ability to obtain employment opportunities after graduation. In addition, this study will examine barriers to employment and the available programs that improve employment opportunities of college students with disabilities.

The research will be conducted at the following location(s):

A total of 8 participants at approximately **one** institution will be asked to take part in this study. You will be one of approximately **8** participants to be asked to take part at this location.

3) <u>WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY?</u>

If you choose to take part in this study, the following will be requested of you:
- You will be asked a series of questions of 14 questions that surround the issues of your *lived experiences* and perceptions of how your disability influenced your ability to obtain employment opportunities after graduation from college.
- Furthermore, I would like to understand what you perceived were the contributions of career services in your preparation for the employment process in terms of the job readiness skills (i.e., interviewing, resume writing, disclosure of disability, and how to request reasonable accommodations).
- During the interviews, I will be tape recording all of your responses as well as taking notes.
- After the interviews, I will have the tapes transcribed.
- Once the tapes have been transcribed, I will arrange a second meeting with you to review the transcripts for accuracy and any other comments you may have.

The following activities are specifically research related: (The activities are required on site)
1) Recruitment: Recruiting students for this study will be done by the Disability Support Services Director at   . Students with physical disabilities will be identified;

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2) Enrollment: Those students with physical disabilities will then be enrolled in the study and provided with a letter to introduce the study and a consent form;
3) Interaction: The interaction for this study will consist of in-depth interviews
4) Follow up: As a phenomenological researcher, I will conduct a brief follow-up interview with each participant allowing the participants to review interview transcripts for accuracy and or to allow them to provide any additional information.

The total amount of time you will spend in connection with this study is 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete an initial interview and a follow-up interview.

4) <u>WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?</u>

Minimal Risk Statement:
There are no physical risks associated with this study. There is, however, the possible risk of loss of confidentiality. Every effort will be made to keep your information confidential, however, this can not be guaranteed. Some of the questions we will ask you as part of this study may make you feel uncomfortable. You may refuse to answer any of the questions and you may take a break at any time during the study. You may stop your participation in this study at any time.

5) <u>ARE THERE BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?</u>

You will not benefit directly from your participation in the study. The benefits to science and humankind that might result from this study are:
- That all college students with disabilities will be empowered to sucessfully enter the workplace and become productive, gainfully employed members of the community which many are preparing for with completion of a college degree.

6) <u>WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?</u>

You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to**.** Should you decide to participate and later change your mind, you can do so at anytime. However, should you need a reasonable accommodation to fully participate in this study, please notify me of the type of accommodation you may need. Note: (This is in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

7) <u>WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?</u>

You **will not** be paid for taking part in this study.

8) **CAN I BE TAKEN OFF THE STUDY?**

The investigator can decide to withdraw you from the study at any time. You could be taken off the study for reasons related solely to you (for example, not following study-related directions from the Investigator) or because the entire study is stopped.

9) **HOW WILL MY PRIVACY BE PROTECTED?**

If results of this research study are reported in journals or at scientific meetings, the people who participated in this study will not be named or identified. GW will not release any information about your research involvement without your written permission, unless required by law.

10) **PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS**

The Office of Human Research of George Washington University, at telephone number (202) 994-2715, can provide further information about your rights as a research participant.   If you think you have been harmed in this study, you report this to the Principal Investigator of this study. Further information regarding this study may be obtained by contacting Dr. Mikyong Minsun Kim (the principal investigator and dissertation chair), at telephone number ███████████████. For problems arising evenings or weekends, you may call Brenda C. Williams at ██████████ student researcher or the ████████████████████

*Please keep a copy of this document in case you want to read it again.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign below:

11) **DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT**

I understand the information printed on this form. I have discussed this study, its risks and potential benefits, and my other choices with _____. My questions so far have been answered. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study and my understanding that I can withdraw at any time.

_____   _____
Subject's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

_____   _____
Principal Investigator's Signature   Date

Appendix D: Epoché (bracketing)

(IRB # 120639)

The study was the discovery of self and meanings of the researcher's experiences (Moustakas, 1994). A heuristic process in phenomenological research "relates to the researcher being present throughout the process while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth; the researcher also experienced growing self-awareness and self-knowledge" (p. 17). As such, the question or problem the researcher seeks to examine is a challenge in understanding their own experiences and personal connection to the phenomena. This researcher has been regarded as a person with a disability (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) due to facial paralysis. For this reason, my biases and personal perceptions about disability were monitored and reflected more extensively in a personal reflective journal. Thus, I was cognizant to step back and be deliberate in analyzing my own experiences of discrimination as they relate to this study.

Finally, the last bias of this researcher was separating my previous occupation as a vocational rehabilitation counselor from that of a *researcher*. There is a tendency for me to counsel students with disabilities which is not my role in this study. My biases were closely monitored and commented on in my journal and in the delimitations of the study.

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This researcher made journal entries on personal experiences with the phenomena and use reflection to maintain objectivity in conducting the study.

Appendix E: Personal Reflection

As typical in phenomenological research, the researcher provides, "outcomes of the investigation in terms of social meaning and implications as well as personal and professional values" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 155). The goal of this phenomenological research study was to provide a voice for the participants and their lived experiences with employment and disability.

During my initial pursuit to understand the phenomena about disability and employment, I wanted to go to the source to understand the challenges college students with disabilities faced when looking for employment. The purpose of this study was to understand and reveal the phenomena of disability and employment of through the eyes of college students with physical disabilities, which I feel was achieved. Through the epoché process, I was able to free myself from any preconceived notions about the phenomena. I was able to maintain my role of researcher and not provide an environment that was therapeutic due to my background in vocational rehabilitation counseling. I did employ compassion and care in the interviews after hearing many stories that were candid and emotionally presented when participants described their experiences and disclosure about disability. This journey and discovery of the lived experiences of college students with physical disabilities provided me with great insight into an overarching social problem in the United States.

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Appendix F: Glossary of Disability Terms

The following terms are used within the disability community as well as when referencing people with disabilities. According to the Jobs Accommodation Network (JAN), a federal disability agency, it is important to use proper disability etiquette (http://www.jan.wvu.edu/links/disres.htm#Etiquette). The following glossary of terms is adopted and adjusted from the Disability Etiquette Handbook from the City of San Antonio Disability Access Office (http://www.sanantonio.gov/planning/disability_handbook/deh12.asp). As such; the following terms are preferred in writing or speaking about people with disabilities and the study participants:

Acceptable Terms	Unacceptable Terms
Person with a disability.	Cripple, cripples—the image conveyed is of a twisted, deformed, useless body.
Disability, a general term used for functional limitation that interferes with a person's ability, for example, to walk, hear or lift. It may refer to a physical, mental or sensory condition.	Handicap, handicapped person or handicapped.
People with cerebral palsy, people with spinal cord injuries.	Cerebral palsied, spinal cord injured, etc. Never identify people solely by their disability.
Person who had a spinal cord injury, polio, a stroke, etc., or a person who has multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, etc.	Victim. People with disabilities do not like to be perceived as victims for the rest of their lives, long after any victimization has occurred.
Deafness/hearing impairment. *Deafness* refers to a person who has	Deaf and Dumb is as bad as it sounds. The inability to hear or

Acceptable Terms	Unacceptable Terms
a total loss of hearing.	speak does not indicate intelligence.
Hearing impairment refers to a person who has a partial loss of hearing within a range from slight to severe.	
Deaf Oral describes a person who is deaf, but has speech.	
Hard of hearing describes a hearing-impaired person who communicates through speaking and speech-reading, and who usually has listening and hearing abilities adequate for ordinary telephone communication. Many hard of hearing individuals use a hearing aid.	
Use a wheelchair or crutches; a wheelchair user; walks with crutches.	Confined/restricted to a wheelchair; wheelchair bound. Most people who use a wheelchair or mobility devices do not regard them as confining. They are viewed as liberating; a means of getting around.
Able-bodied; able to walk, see, hear, etc.; people who are not disabled.	Healthy, when used to contrast with "disabled." Healthy implies that the person with a disability is unhealthy. Many people with disabilities have excellent health.
A person who has (name of disability.) Example: A person who has multiple sclerosis.	Afflicted with, suffers from. Most people with disabilities do not regard themselves as afflicted or suffering continually.
	Afflicted: a disability is not an affliction.
Little person; person of small stature.	Midget; dwarf; dwarfism.