Inclusive Postsecondary Education Programs of Study for Students with Intellectual Disability

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Abstract

Researchers explored 11 of Florida's inclusive postsecondary education programs (IPSE) for individuals with intellectual disability (ID), during the 2016 and 2017 academic years. The researchers sought to explore, through ethnographic inquiry, the nature of academic access as well as the programs of study available to students with ID within Florida's IPSE programs. Researchers found the majority (73%; *n*=8) of IPSE programs in this study (*n*=11) housed at three universities, three community and state colleges, and two career technical colleges. These eight institutions provided inclusive programs of study where students were enrolled in two or more academically inclusive courses each semester. Three programs of study types emerged from the qualitative data: Liberal Arts, Career Technical, and Transitional. Each program of study type is described as well as the IPSE programs encompassed within each. Beyond student presence in college courses, data elements examined in this study include course progressions, availability of choice of study, service learning, co-curricular requirements and the diversity in and similarities between the three programs of study types. Researchers point to the need for further exploration of the diversity of IPSE programs, the need to operationalize and examine specific elements within IPSE programs, and the impact of credentials offered upon program of study.

Keywords: inclusive postsecondary education, intellectual disability, programs of study, academic access

Students with intellectual disability (ID) have been excluded from postsecondary education due to institutional barriers, stereotypes, low expectations, and lack of understanding by students and family members (Butler, Sheppard-Jones, Whaley, Harrison, & Osness, 2016; Grigal, Hart, & Migliore, 2011; Shogren & Plotner, 2012). They also lag behind their peers in all critical adult outcomes (Grigal et al., 2011). Grigal and colleagues contend it is often assumed that students with ID do not have the skills and abilities needed to access or benefit from college. Ross, Marcell, and Williams (2013) similarly note that students with ID experience dismal post-school outcomes and, as a disability group, are the least likely to participate in postsecondary education (Thoma et al., 2011). Students with ID attend postsecondary education, defined as any institution of higher education, including 2- and 4- year colleges and universities, at a rate of only 30%, compared to 56% of students with other disabilities (Grigal et al., 2011). Additionally, students with ID have higher rates of unemployment and underemployment, and earn lower wages than those in other disability categories and people without disabilities (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2012; Siperstein, Parker, & Drascher, 2013).

Fortunately, interest in postsecondary education for students with ID has recently grown, due in part to the increased inclusion of students with ID and other significant disabilities in K-12 education, coupled with a societal focus on postsecondary education as a desired outcome for all, and increased parental expectations for enrollment in postsecondary education (Butler et al., 2016; Blumberg, Carroll, & Petroff, 2008; Grigal, Migliore, & Hart, 2014). Additionally, the opportunity for students with ID to participate in postsecondary education alongside their peers

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has become an increasing reality, due to provisions within the 2008 reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA; Cranston-Gingras et al., 2015). First, HEOA defined students with ID and removed the barriers associated with high school diploma achievement, often restricting this population's enrollment in higher education. Next, HEOA amendments provided access to federal work-study funds, Pell Grants, and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (Cranston-Gingras et al., 2015; Madaus, Kowitt, & Lalor, 2012). Finally, HEOA also authorized capital investment to develop and expand postsecondary education programs for students with ID through model demonstration programs and a national coordinating center (Lee, 2009).

Grigal and colleagues (2015) note the increasing numbers across the country of students with ID enrolling in and attending college and the crucial need to develop and implement quality inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) programs for students with ID. McEathron Beuhring, Maynard, and Mavis (2013) contend that resultant of the recent changes, IPSE programs for students with ID are in a state of flux: new programs are in development, older programs are phasing out, and others are in the process of redevelopment.

Institutions are starting to take a deeper look at specific programmatic aspects that comprise the IPSE programs. For example, academic access, the core of any meaningful postsecondary education, remains a barrier for students with ID (Grigal, Hart, Papay, Domin, & Smith, 2017). In the *Year Two Program Data Summary (2016-2017) of the TPSID Model Demonstration Projects*, the National Coordinating Center (NCC) reported of 43 programs' course enrollments for 659 students (Grigal, Hart, Papay, & Smith, 2018), 63% of the programs (n = 28) were academically inclusive, where "at least 50% of course enrollments [were] in inclusive college courses attended by students with intellectual disability and other college students" (p. 6). Though this finding represents an increase from NCC's *Year One Program Data Summary (2015-2016) from the TPSID Model Demonstration Projects* (Grigal, Hart, Papay, Domin, & Smith, 2017), where only 56% of 36 programs were academically inclusive, the amount of time an individual spends in an academic environment may not be a sufficient measure of inclusivity (Wehmeyer, Lattin, Lapp-Rincker, & Agran, 2003). What academic access exists beyond time-in-seat for students in IPSE programs?

While the question of academic access is not new for students with ID (e.g., Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] of 1997) (Agran & Alper, 2002), it is new to the postsecondary arena. Hart (2006) identified three types of postsecondary education (PSE) access models: mixed/hybrid, substantially separate, and inclusive individual support. In the mixed/hybrid model, students with ID participate in both academic courses with students without disabilities as well as separate classes, in which only students with ID participate or are enrolled. In the substantially separate model, students with ID participate in classes designed only for students with ID on a college campus and are not enrolled in courses from the general course catalog. Finally, in the inclusive individual support model, students with ID are enrolled and/or participate in, "college courses, certificate programs, and/or degree programs, for audit or credit… [through] individualized services (e.g., educational coach, tutor, technology, natural supports)" (p. 1). In the inclusive individual support model, students with ID are enrolled in general college courses alongside peers without ID. While Hart (2006) provides a holistic lens of inclusion and belonging by utilizing courses, social activity, campus, and employment activities with peers without disabilities to define these models, the models remain focused on environmental access rather than academic access to the academic content.

McEathron and colleagues (2013) provide a greater depth of insight into PSE programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities through their development of a taxonomy of the characteristics of these PSE programs. In an iterative process of reviewing interview data, program materials, and survey responses from 21 programs, they constructed a taxonomy with four domains (organizational, admissions, support, and pedagogical), 16 components, and more than 100 elements. Within the pedagogical domain, the researchers identified four academic elements of course integration and selection and types of credits and credentials offered. While there was no identification of programs of study available for this population, this taxonomy did provide the first mechanism through which a PSE program's components could be compared and understood. A number of McEathron and colleagues' academic elements were identified and explored in this study.

To date, there has been little research on academic access to college courses, coursework, and the programs of study available to students with ID (Becht, Blades, Burke, & Agarwal, 2020; Neubert, Moon, Grigal, & Redd, 2002; Thoma et al., 2011). Becht and colleagues (2018) conducted a systematic literature review to identify academic access to and progress in college coursework between 1987 and 2017, identifying only four studies that explored methods

in which students with ID were accessing their college coursework. In a broader review of the literature on postsecondary education for students with ID, Thoma and colleagues' (2011) found, "little detail and shared understanding of the nature, goals, and objectives of the various PSE approaches and/or pathways" (p. 187). Becht and colleagues and Thoma and colleagues' reviews support the need for more information regarding the IPSE's programs of study. How are students with ID accessing college coursework? What are the programs of study students with ID are pursuing? Understanding this area of IPSE, and, indeed, responding to this gap in the literature, are crucial to the growth and future of IPSE for students with ID.

Academic Access

Closely aligned to Hart's (2006) inclusive individual support model, the HEOA of 2008 identifies academic access for students with ID who attend comprehensive transition and postsecondary (CTP) programs as a focus on academic components through enrollment or auditing of courses alongside students without disability, offered by the institution, and/or participation in internships or work-based training. The intention of the CTP designation is "to support students with intellectual disabilities who are seeking to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living instruction at an institution of higher education in order to prepare for gainful employment" (HEOA of 2008, 20 USC § 1140 Sec 760(1)(B)). The amount of academic access is also defined as "not less than a half-time basis" (HEOA of 2008, 20 USC § 1140 Sec 760(1)(D)). Academic access, in postsecondary programs, was further delineated by Grigal and colleagues (2015) through the terms *academically inclusive courses* to describe "college classes that are a part of the typical college course catalog and are available to all students in the college" and *academically specialized courses* to describe "courses that have been designed for, and are only attended by, students with intellectual disabilities" (p. 15). The term "Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE)" program is used in this article to mean a program which endeavors to meet the CTP guidelines, and at a minimum enrolls students with ID in not less than a half-time basis in college courses alongside peers without ID, but may or may not have attained CTP approval by the U. S. Department of Education.

Framed through a holistic lens, academic access encompasses more than the courses a student attends. Academic access is embedded within the program of study and programmatic expectations of the IPSE program and the institution of higher education (IHE) in which the program is housed. McEathron and colleagues' (2013) taxonomy of PSE programs supports this holistic view and programmatic expectations in their academic elements within the Pedagogical domain of course integration, course selection, types of credits, and types of credentials.

Florida's Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE)

Since 2010, Florida has been a leader in developing and expanding IPSE programs for citizens with ID. Florida IHEs have been awarded two iterations of Model Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) funding under the HEOA of 2008 and utilized this grant opportunity to form a consortium with the goals of IPSE development, enhancement, and research throughout the state. The current TPSID grant, the Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE), identified three objectives, one of which focuses on providing technical assistance and training toward IPSE development and enhancement. The Consortium, housed at the University of Central Florida (UCF), is comprised of four IHEs: UCF, University of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFSP), Florida International University (FIU), and Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ). IPSE momentum in Florida has also been influenced by vigorous parent advocacy and progressive state legislation resulting in the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities that provides leadership in IPSE, student scholarships, and program development grants to eligible IHEs.

Methodology

The authors investigated 11 IPSE programs to explore the academic access afforded students with ID and the IPSE programs' subsequent programs of study. Ethnographic research is one of the earliest traditions to explore patterns within culture groups (Hays & Wood, 2011). In this study, researchers explored the IPSE cultures from the perspective of the staff. Multiple sources of information (site visits, semi-structured interviews, and program documents) were utilized to enable data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015) while exploring the shared and divergent patterns among the IPSE programs. The researchers sought to answer the following questions:

1. What does academic access look like in IPSE programs?
2. What programs of study are available to students with ID in IPSE programs?

Researcher as Instrument

In this section, the authors strive to demonstrate trustworthiness through the process of researcher reflexivity. In such, the researcher discloses possible personal assumptions and biases (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005) in order to acknowledge the possible effect on the data collection and analysis. The primary researchers involved in the analysis and peer review detail their perspectives and potential biases in this section. The first author brings 30 years of experience as an educator and advocate, as well as a social justice and familial bias toward the need for academic access for students with ID. As the director of the Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (TPSID grant), the author is passionate about students with ID succeeding in college. She watches her 28-year old son, currently enrolled in his second year of a three-year IPSE program, proudly identify his dorm room as his apartment and "home." She believes that with today's instructional and digital technologies, students with ID have the opportunity to learn much from the core content of their college courses irrespective of suppressed reading levels.

The second author has worked with the Florida Consortium and her IHE's IPSE program since 2010 as mentor, program coordinator, and director. She has provided technical assistance to IHEs throughout Florida and the southeast, and is familiar with the programs in this study. A key assumption held by the second author is that academic access through inclusive coursework is a critical component of IPSE programs that lead to positive post-school outcomes of improved employment, independence, and quality of life. She is particularly interested in identifying the specific IPSE program components that facilitate positive post-school outcomes.

Sampling

Sixteen (16) Florida programs were identified through purposeful homogeneous sampling, where "the researcher purposefully identified individuals or sites based on membership in a subgroup that has defining characteristics" (Creswell, 2012, p. 208). Two defining characteristics for program inclusion were used in this study: (1) students with ID were enrolled in an IPSE program located on the IHE campus, and (2) students with ID were enrolled in academically inclusive college courses (Grigal et al., 2015). Participant programs were identified through the researchers' previous and ongoing statewide technical assistance, conference attendance, and outreach associated with Consortium activities. Researchers collected data from 16 Florida IHEs through structured questionnaires sent via email, site visits, phone and in-person semi-structured interviews, and program-related documents. Five (5) programs were excluded from the study after determining, through interview and questionnaire data, that the students with ID were not attending any academically inclusive college classes. The 11 programs that met the characteristics were at IHEs that ranged from large, metropolitan to suburban and rural institutions and included five universities (U1 - U5), four community/state (C/S1 - C/S4) colleges, and two career/technical (C/T1- C/T2) colleges.

Table 1 reflects descriptive and demographic data collected during the 2016 and 2017 academic years. The student numbers represent attendance during a one-year period, either 2016 or 2017 academic years, and ranged from 2 (C/T^1) to 31 students (U_4). While all programs served students with ID, the methods of documentation varied including an Individual Education Program (IEP) document, medical, or psychological documentation. Additional eligibility requirements included high school completion; independence measures (e.g., ability to navigate campus, manage medication and behaviors); desire to attend college; and IEP goal attainment (for currently enrolled students).

The programs ranged from one to 11 years in existence. Two programs served only students between the ages of 18-22, through concurrent enrollment in the secondary education and PSE systems. These programs relied on supports provided through IDEA funds. Five programs served only PSE students, students who exited the secondary education system and were no longer funded through IDEA. Four programs served both categories of students – concurrent enrollment and PSE enrollment only. As a result, the student age requirements varied considerably from no age limit to a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 30.

The final column, Program Approvals, refers to two sets of guidelines that Florida's IPSE programs strive to meet: the federal Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTP) and the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP). Students who attend CTP approved programs are eligible for federal financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FPCTP, developed and funded by the Florida State legislature and modeled on the CTP, enables students in FPCTP approved programs to access annual scholarship funds through the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities. Without one or both of these approvals, students attending Florida's IPSE programs cannot access federal or state financial assistance.

Data Collection

We collected data from three sources, enabling a methodological triangulation of data during analysis and strengthening the measure of trustworthiness (Brantlinger et al., 2005; Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data sources included semi-structured interviews, both on-site and phone, site visitation, and program documentation (e.g., student program handbooks, student applications, student progress charts, program publications, and websites). Data sources were coded and identified by such when quoted or referenced (e.g., "CT2PS17" refers to the IHE code "CT2," a document named PS [Program of Study], and the year 2017). Self-administered questionnaires were emailed to 16 program directors in the spring of 2016. Sixteen questionnaires were completed and followed up with site or phone interviews by the spring of 2017. Program directors were the primary informants, though participants interviewed included school district staff and PSE faculty. Where questionnaires were not returned within four weeks, follow up phone calls and site visits were conducted. These questionnaires were most often completed through a phone interview. To ensure the information obtained through follow-up interviews was accurate, the first author returned edited questionnaires to IPSE program directors as a method of member checking (Creswell, 2012). Students were not interviewed and researchers collected no student specific data.

The interviews began with emailed questionnaires (Fontana & Frey, 2000) sent via a Microsoft Word document with short-answer open- and closed-ended questions and extended-answer open-ended questions. Thirty short-answer structured and semi-structured open-ended questions were included for this study. The questions included date of program inception; length; student eligibility; the number of academically inclusive, academically specialized, and reverse inclusion courses students take per semester; the number of courses required for program completion; and open-ended questions regarding program description, goals, curriculum, and course progression. The term *program of study* was not intentionally used in the questionnaire or during the interviews.

The first author visited 14 of the 16 programs to allow detailed and nuanced follow-up questions (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Due to time constraints within each program's academic calendar (holidays, breaks, finals week), two programs were not visited. The site visits lasted between three to five hours, and included office meetings, campus tours, and instructional observations. The first author followed up by phone and email for additional clarification of program information where necessary. Data saturation was obtained through the lens of the multiple programs rather than extended time at any one program.

Documents were collected to further illuminate the questionnaires and interview information (Bowen, 2009). Program directors were asked to share documents related to program information, program description, student handbooks, programs of study, program website information, and federal Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP) applications, if applicable/available. Documents were reviewed for evidence or components of programs of study and academic access to academically inclusive coursework available for students with ID.

Data Analysis

Data from all three sources were compiled into charts organized by question and then, through constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1965) into programs of study types. As the charted data were reviewed and summarized, and the program of study types began to emerge, the IPSE program documents were explored to further delineate, confirm, or disconfirm (Bowen, 2009) the emergent typology. This often led to more detailed comparison of the various components of the programs of study. The first researcher sought peer confirmation as well as member checking regarding the identified typology of the IHEs' programs of study. The second researcher, not engaged in the data collection, provided peer review and feedback (Creswell & Miller, 2000). An external auditor and researcher in the field of inclusive postsecondary education reviewed the results to provide insight and feedback.

Results

Two questions were explored in this study:

1. What does academic access look like in IPSE programs?
2. What programs of study are available to students with ID in IPSE programs?

A holistic lens was used to view students' with ID academic access by exploring students' physical presence as well as the required and elective college coursework, workshops, activities, and internships identified as a part of the IPSE program, and the type of IHE in which each was housed. Only the 11 programs that met the sampling criteria throughout data collection or after initial informational interviews were included in this analysis.

Academic Access

The expected enrollment of students with ID and physical presence in general college courses were tallied in order to begin to answer the first research question, "What does academic access look like in IPSE programs?" Analysis of the data presented a noticeable variability in the number of academically inclusive courses in which students with ID enrolled. For some programs, academic access was dependent upon students' preferences and goals while other IPSE programs were dependent upon the IHE's program goals and philosophy. For example, one C/S college had a number of program options for students with ID, from nearly all academically specialized courses to a combination of specialized courses and one or two academically inclusive courses, to all academically inclusive courses, allowing students and families to choose a "best fit" program of study. At all but one of the universities, however, students with ID enrolled in primarily academically inclusive coursework every semester.

Figure 1 represents a continuum of academic course enrollment from academically specialized to academically inclusive. The five universities in the study were coded U1-5, the four community and state colleges were coded C/S1-4, and the two career/technical colleges were coded C/T1-2. Of the 11 IPSE programs analyzed, 18% (*n*=2) offered academically specialized courses, where students with ID were enrolled in only one or two general college course electives across the length of the program (less than one each semester) and 36% (*n*=4) offered students enrollment in one general college course per semester. The majority of the IHEs surveyed (*n*=8, 73%) provided a high degree of academically inclusive access where students with ID were enrolled in two or more courses each semester and constituted over 50% of their program of study. Two of the IHEs (C/S1 & C/S2) provided more than one type of program of study (noted by an asterisk) and are represented in the figure more than once, resulting in a percentage total greater than 100.

Programs of Study

As any prospective student will tell you when visiting colleges, each institution varies by size, feel (culture and demographics), the program of study, credentials available (majors and minors), and subsequent options and expectations unique to the campus. While size and feel are important, it is the program of study that must first align with the student's needs and goals. This should be no different for a prospective student with ID.

Questionnaire, interview, and document data of the 11 IPSE programs provided a comprehensive view of the academic access and expectations of the programs of study for students with ID in Florida. Throughout this study, researchers realized a lack of agreement in terminology; curriculum and program of study were used to mean the same thing at different institutions. Program of study was defined by one informant as "limited to a student's course progression" (CS2I16). Program of study is defined in this study as a comprehensive structured framework of academic coursework and co-curricular activities and expectations (which may include vocational, social, and independent living components) such as service-learning, mentoring, and career education, leading to a credential (McEathron et al., 2013).

Three overlapping types of programs of study emerged from the data: (1) Liberal Arts, (2) Career Technical, and (3) Transitional. Figure 2 depicts the three programs of study types and the corresponding IPSE programs in each. The program of study types are composites drawn from the collective data rather than a program of study at any one institution. An overview of each type is described below, including details and differences within the program of study types and the corresponding credentials awarded from each.

The Liberal Arts program of study type emerged from two- to four-year programs in which students were offered an array of subjects from which they learned general knowledge and earned certificates of completion. The Career Technical type emerged from one- to two-year programs in which students were offered specific knowledge in one of a number of industry or subject areas and earned either partial or full completion of industry requirements and potential industry certification (depending upon full completion and industry licensure requirement). The Transitional type was found in one- to three-year programs in which students earned a university certificate or industry certificate.

In the following sections, the descriptions of the three Program of Study types include course unit requirements, program of study components, and credentials earned. The course requirements were the primary determiners of the type of program of study. It is interesting to note that four of the five universities offered Liberal Arts programs of study, while C/S colleges housed both Career Technical and Transitional program of study. Finally, C/T colleges focused solely on the Career Technical program of study. The following sections provide further detail of the programs within each type.

Liberal arts. The term liberal arts is used to reflect an academically focused course of study encompassing a general knowledge of an array of subjects (e.g., the arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences) rather than specific technical knowledge ("liberal arts," n.d.). The Liberal Arts program of study emerged primarily on university campuses (4), with the exception of one at a C/S college campus, and identified as a non-degree seeking programs. All but one IHE enrolled students with ID in two or more academically inclusive general college classes each semester.

Credit unit requirements. Each Liberal Arts program of study required students with ID to take a defined number of courses in core areas, electives, and career-focused courses, as well as co-curricular requirements in employment experiences or internships and campus activities. Programs ranged from one to four years, reflecting both fixed and flexible lengths. The number of units required for completion varied widely by institution, from 12 units in a 1-year program to 44 units in a 4-year program. In some programs, credit units were also given for co-curricular activities such as internships and campus activities and workshops.

Program of study components. Most students in the Liberal Arts program of study audited their courses. The term credit units, is used here to refer to the number of course hours taken rather than credits earned. As evidenced in Table 2, the Liberal Arts programs of study included some combination of co-curricular activities, such as service learning (employment, volunteer, or campus club involvement) mentoring, tutoring, and online curricula. A few of the IHEs tracked co-curricular activities through institutional credit units as required components of the program of study.

Credentials. Students with ID who completed the Liberal Arts program of study earned a certificate of completion at four of the five IHEs. One IHE's program was newly established and had not yet defined the type of certificate the students would earn. In every instance within this type, the certificates were awarded by the program rather than the IHE, meaning they were not recognized by the IHE.

Career Technical. Career Technical is used to define a program of study that reflects an academically inclusive postsecondary adult vocational (PSAV) program or specific skill designed to instill specific technical knowledge in a chosen vocational field. In Florida, a PSAV program consists of a series of courses that prepare students for entry level employment in specific career fields. The Career Technical program of study emerged at five IHEs: three at C/S colleges and two at C/T colleges. The Career Technical program of study was generally completed in one to two years, depending upon the Industry chosen or additional time needed to complete the requirements. Table 3 presents the variety of academically inclusive and academically specialized Career Technical programs and certificates available through the Career Technical program of study.

Access to the Career Technical program of study varied greatly by IHE. Industry programs of study included Nursing Assistant, Auto Collision Repair, Child Care, Culinary Arts, Commercial Driving, Diesel Engine Repair, Electrical, Facial Specialty, Massage Therapy, Refrigeration Air Conditioning and Heating, and Welding, Customer Service, Creative Arts, National Retail, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), and ServSafe. While three of the IHEs imposed few limits on students' (with ID) access to Career Technical programs of study, two limited the programs of study. One IHE limited students to industries such as Creative Arts and Hospitality, where extra supports and strategies were provided (C/T2) and another IHE limited students to discrete certificates such as CPR, First Aid, and Red Carpet Customer Training (C/S3), where they felt students could be the most successful.

While each of the five Career Technical programs of study offered academically inclusive programs of study in which students were taking courses for industry certification alongside their peers without disabilities, two also offered an academically specialized program of study (C/S2 and C/S3) in which only students with disability were enrolled.

One IHE (C/S2), encouraged students with ID to enroll in academically specialized PSAV noncredit courses as a prerequisite or in conjunction with their credit-bearing PSAV standard industry courses to gain a broad entry-level of skills and the support necessary to succeed in the standard PSAV Industry courses. Another IHE (C/S1) utilized a standard academically inclusive Industry certification National Retail Certification (NRC), embedded supports and skills, and identified it as a prerequisite certification required of all students with ID. Once students achieved the NRC, which occurred in the first year, they were able to move on to additional Career Technical programs of study. The reader should note that the NRC is listed under the academically specialized program because the standard courses were revised and redeveloped specifically to support students' (with ID) access to the content. All students were expected to pass the NRC exam.

Credit and noncredit requirements. Four of the five IHEs with Career Technical programs of study used the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE;

2018a) Standard PSAV Curriculum Frameworks to identify the Career Technical credit requirements for each Career Technical program of study offered. Students enrolled in a standard Career Technical program of study and took courses for credit to earn the FLDOE requirements. Licensing exam requirements were individual to the industry, some a requirement, others not.

For example, one of the Career Technical programs of study offered was 3-D Animation comprised of four required courses (FLDOE; 2018b). Students with ID enrolled in 3-D Animation were required to successfully complete each course and each standard within the course in order to receive the Career Technical certificate. Students used accommodations to access the material including text-to-speech technology or supplemental supports such as YouTube videos to facilitate learning but the course content could not be modified.

The fifth IHE (C/S3), that housed an Career Technical program of study, focused on vocational preparation skills rather than the PSAV Curriculum Frameworks and identified discrete certificates, generally requiring only one course each, such as First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, and Red Carpet Customer Training. Students were required to take a vocational preparation workshop each semester from an offered series. Students also took Adult Education and Continuing Education courses on campus (e. g., Art, Child Care, ServSafe Food/Nutrition, Reading and Civics) and incorporated a 'mini-audit' of a college course or in a vocational area each semester (e.g., sociology, automotive, welding, health care). The mini-audit allowed students to visit the class as much as they wanted without formally enrolling in the course or responsible for content.

In addition to the program of study credit requirements, a number of the Career Technical programs of study also included noncredit or institutional credit unit requirements, including internships, campus activities, tutoring, and online modules. Three Career Technical programs of study required students to participate in face-to-face and online workshops or modules on self-determination (Standing Up for Me), customer service (Skills USA Customer Service Certificate), social skills, life skills, counseling, and tutoring, as well as participation in a school-based enterprise and social or recreational college inclusion activities.

Credentials. Student progress within the Career Technical program of study was measured by the successful completion of requirements within each course. The programs are approved by each industry and students receive certification upon successful completion of all requirements and licensure upon successful completion of the industry licensure test, when required. The following are some examples of recognized industry certificates students earned between the 2016-2017 academic year: Automotive and Collision Repair Workforce Certificate (Standard); Career Education Workforce Certificate (students with disabilities only); Childcare (Standard); and Welding (Standard).

One IHE (C/T_2) allowed partial requirement completion to be considered a successful completer, employable in their field, and received a Program Completion Certificate. Additionally, students were not required to pass the industry certification exam to be a program completer (CT_2PS17). The C/T college felt strongly that their students were employable with the skills they have mastered without achieving the industry recognized credential.

Transitional. Transitional is used in this study to describe a program of study that reflects a convergence of life skills required to successfully transition to adult life such as independence, employability, self-determination, and/or civic participation rather than a specific field or career. "Students have the opportunity to take classes to increase their employment readiness, their independent living skills, and their ability to advocate for themselves" (U_1HB16, p. 3). The Transitional program of study emerged from two IHEs; one at a university (U_1) and one at a C/S college (C/S_2). The programs of study differed significantly at each institution and ranged between one to two years in duration.

C/S_2 designed a program of study for students (with a disability) undecided in their career goal, "allow[ing] students to pursue a credential in Career Education [and covering]... career planning, soft skills, advocacy, academic skills, and specific employment training through on and off campus internships" (CS_2PS16, p. 2). The program of study included a sequence of five non-credit-bearing courses (Orientation to Campus, Career Exploration, Advanced Training in Related Occupations, and Internship), up to 12-hour units of academically inclusive electives and a variety of campus workshops as required co-curricular activities. The 12 credit units of general college courses were expected to focus on a career interest as an area of career specialization (CS_2 PS16).

U_1 offered three Transitional programs of study (Supported Employment, Supported Community Living, and Supported Community Access), designed specifically for "individuals with developmental disabilities ….to develop their academic, vocational, and social skills at the postsecondary level" (U_1PS16, p. 2). Of note is that U1 was the only university in which students' certificates were earned primarily through

credit-bearing academically specialized courses, though students did audit one to two academically inclusive courses over the two-year program. Each program of study at U_1 included a sequence of 11 academically specialized credit-bearing courses, two academically specialized credit-bearing electives, one to two academically inclusive audited courses, service learning, and campus activity requirements. General requirements for each of the three programs of study included courses such as Increasing Personal Effectiveness, Career Exploration, Learning with Technology and Health Fitness for Life.

Credentials. Students who completed any of U_1's three programs of study earned a university recognized certificate. C/S_2 offered an FLDOE approved PSAV Career Education Workforce Certificate, designed for students with disability still undecided in their career goal.

Conclusion

In this ethnographic study, we explored academic access for students with ID in 11 of Florida's inclusive postsecondary education programs. Two questions guided this inquiry: (1) What does academic access look like in IPSE programs, and (2) What programs of study are available to students with ID in IPSE programs? A holistic lens was used to view students' access to academics as embedded within the program of study. Academic access was evidenced through physical presence in college courses and required co-curricular activities such as mentoring, campus social activities, and non-credit workshops.

Seventy-three percent of Florida's IPSE programs expected students with ID to be enrolled in two or more general catalog courses each semester. This level of academic inclusivity is slightly above Grigal and colleagues' most recent report of 63% of TPSID programs that provide academically inclusive programs (2018). Course enrollment however, as a measure of academic access, is only a measure of students' presence in academically inclusive courses and does not account for academic engagement, success, self-determination, or the intentional access strategies and supports provided (Dukes, Madaus, Faggella-Luby, Lombardi, and Gelbar, 2017). Research is needed to explore the engagement and support mechanisms that allow students with ID to learn and progress in the general college courses as well as the requisite self-determination and the co-curricular college activities.

Three types of programs of study emerged from Florida's IPSE programs; Liberal Arts, Career Technical, and Transitional. In general, the Liberal Arts and Career Technical programs of study provided the most opportunity and expectation of academic access alongside peers without disability through inclusive course enrollment. While the Transitional programs of study reflected less expectation of academic access alongside their peers without disability, it focused on evidence-based practices and predictors of post-school success such as youth autonomy, social skills and self-determination (National Technical Assistance Center on Transition, 2015). The diversity in the programs of study offered provides students with options when choosing an IPSE program, though such diversity also creates confusion in student expectations and completion outcomes. Further, inquiry into the program of study typology and student employment outcome data is necessary to identify efficacy of the programs of study types.

Outcome credentials varied across the three program of study types in both credit units earned and certificate sources. Where students enrolled in credited courses, the industry or institution awarded a recognized certificate. Where students audited or took non-credit courses, the programs awarded a non-recognized certificate. In four of the five Liberal Arts programs of study, the credential was earned through audited or non-credit courses, identified as a non-university recognized "certificate of completion" and awarded locally by the IPSE.

While the Career Technical program of study type was the only one to offer partial or complete alignment to existing recognized credentials, IPSE programs that fell in this type also awarded completion and workforce certificates. Some programs offered a number of outcome levels. This flexibility in certificate outcomes was dependent upon the industry chosen, whether courses were taken for credit or audit, and the number of requirements the student was able to meet. For example, students who enrolled in an Career Technical program of study for credit and met all the requirements earned industry standard certifications in areas such as child care, welding, auto collision repair, national retail, 3-D animation, and ServSafe. Students who enrolled in an Career Technical program of study and audited courses earned certificates of completion.

The credentials awarded within the Transitional programs of study were unique to students with a disability and awarded by the IPSE program rather than the IHE. One university established three credentials based upon primarily credited, though academically specialized, college courses and a C/S college awarded a non-credit academically specialized workforce certificate.

Employment outcome data is needed from each of these programs of study to identify efficacy. Finally, the predominance of auditing or visiting courses in the universities and state and community colleges, instead of credit-bearing courses, also creates confusion regarding just how to measure progress for this population in PSE and raises the question of the expectations for this population in PSE. Do we expect these students to be able to access and progress in the college content or are we, as Grigal, Hart, Smith, Domin, and Weir (2017) suggest, "reinforce [ing] the widespread presumption that students with ID cannot succeed in typical classes" (p. 19)?

Research is needed to facilitate guidance towards programs of study, what to expect of students with ID in audited courses and how to support students to succeed in the expectations and identifiable accountability measures. Additionally, research is needed to move the field forward toward valid measures of student engagement and learning in PSE. Academic access and subsequent progress is a core metric of success for students without ID, through grade point averages (GPA) and Student Academic Progress (SAP) measures. Academic progress must be one of the core metrics by which true access and progress for students with ID is identified. Research is needed to understand academic access for students with ID at a deeper level, both access to the course content and the students' growth within the content. Physical presence on and access to college campuses for students with ID is not education. We must validate the programs of study offered through IPSE opportunities by strengthening the access to and measuring the progress in the course content.

The implications of this study point toward a few critical choices for the field. How committed are we, as a field, to academic access for students with ID at the postsecondary level? How will we choose to define academic inclusivity? Are we to limit options for students with ID to focus on technical educational options (Williams, 1989)? We are at a crucial juncture in expansion and sustainability of inclusive postsecondary education programs and the way in which the field will define IPSE programs, whether as a physical location or as access to and progress in content and learning with nondisabled peers, will have a profound impact on current and future students and programs. Students with ID are enrolling in academic college coursework across the country through planned individualized supports and intentional academic access (Grigal et al., 2011). If students with ID are to fully access higher education, then academic access for these students must be intentionally planned, progress measured, and outcomes reported.

Limitations

The decisions made in designing this study and throughout the data collection and analysis undeniably led to limitations. First, is the recognition that, IPSE is an evolving field and the data from this study provides only a snapshot in time: a static understanding of programs during the time in which the data were collected (2016 and 2017 academic years) (McEathron et al., 2013; Thoma, 2013). Florida's IPSE programs are experiencing ongoing program improvement and evolution. For example, since these data were gathered, one university program closed, another expanded their program of study available for students with ID, and at least three have restaffed nearly their entire programs resulting in some cases significant programmatic changes. Correspondingly, though many of Florida's IPSE programs were included in this study, this sample does not represent all of Florida's IPSE programs.

Grigal and colleagues' (2015) definition of academically inclusive courses was used to define academic inclusivity. Subsequently, the work-based training component addressed in HEOA as one of the components of academic participation was not included in the inclusivity rating within this study. This may have unintentionally decreased some program's academic inclusivity ratings.

As a qualitative study, the results are not generalizable to other regions of the country but rather, are particularizable through the details and depth of the study results. To enable the emergence of the diversity of programs across the state, we chose to saturate the data across a larger number of sites instead of within a few sites. This choice was made at the expense of thick description and data saturation at each site. As such, readers should interpret the results with this caution in mind. Additionally, the finding of only two programs represented in the Transitional program of study type, may have been the result of the lack of thick description. The Transitional program of study type should be explored further.

Given that, the primary understanding of IPSE programs stemmed from each researcher's experiences with their own IPSE programs, it is possible that bias was not completely bracketed. Additionally, the diversity of the programs of study and the IPSE programs and institutions themselves, at times, presented difficulties in understanding and representing the various program components. Fontana and Frey's (2000) musings, "asking questions and getting answers is a much harder task than it may seem at first. The spoken or written word has always a residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we word the questions" described the challenges well (p. 61). Challenges primarily re-

lated to the lack of common terminology across the program types and the vast programmatic differences in universities, state colleges, and career/technical colleges. For example, the phrase "program of study" was met with varied interpretations from academic coursework alone to the entire outline of an IPSE program's activities and requirements. Finally, the authors strived to check data for accuracy through member checks and peer review, the differences in procedures, protocols, and programs between universities, state and career/technical colleges added to the complexity of the data.

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Table 1

Descriptive Program Data by IHE

IHE Code	Program Inception	# of Students	Age Requirements	Served	Eligibility Requirements	Additional Requirements	Program Length (Y)	Program Approvals
U_1	2016	8	18^	PSE	Documented, ID/DD	Completed K-12, Navigate campus and meet personal needs	2-4	CTP & FPCTP
U_2	2011	30	18-22	CE	ID, enrolled K-12	Working on transition IEP goals	4	
U_3	2015	10	No Age Limit	PSE	Documented ID	Completed K-12, Student's desire to attend college, Learn to function independently on campus	3	FPCTP
U_4	2006	31	18	CE & PSE	Documented ID, was eligible for special education services	Student's desire to attend college, navigate campus and manage and administer medicine	2-4	
U_5	2010	7	18-22	CE	Documented ID. enrolled K-12	Student's desire to attend college, willingness to learn public transportation	2	
C/T_1	2014	2	18-24 ^	CE & PSE	Documented ID or DD (IEP/doctor)	Independent, does not require 1:1 instruction	1-2	CTP & FPCTP
C/T_2	2015	4	18-23	PSE	Documented ID, Standard or Access Diploma	Independent in Self-care, self-reliance, ability to access transportation to school.	2-3	FPCTP
C/S_1	2009	9	None	CE & PSE	Documented ID, IEP	Independent self-care, behavior management, May not require 1:1 supervision	1-3	FPCTP
C/S_2	2011	21	18 ^	CE & PSE	Documented ID, Standard or Access Diploma	Navigate to / from campus (commuter school), bring or purchase meals and attend scheduled classes.	1-2	
C/S_3	2013	6	18-30	PSE	IQ<70, Documented ID, No Standard Diploma	Navigate campus, Effective communication, handle stress, demonstrate benefit and behavior consistent with college expectations	1-2	FPCTP
C/S_4	2013	5	18^	PSE	Completed K-12, Documented ID	Independent in adult daily living needs, No evidence of aggressive behavior	1-2	

Note. IEP = Individual Education Program, ID = intellectual disability, CE = concurrent enrollment, PSE = postsecondary education only.

Table 2

Liberal Arts Programs of Study

Components	U_2	U_3	U_4	U_5	C/S_4
Required Courses (Audited)	First Year Experience, Personal Adjustment	Introduction to College	None	None	Marketing the Individual, College Success, Intro to Computers, Interpersonal Comm. Rec & Leisure
Course Choices by Area (Audited)	Computing & Technology, Communication, Social Inquiry, Sciences, The Arts, Health & Nutrition, Business & Finance, Electives	Leadership & Personal Exploration, Interpersonal Communication, Social Studies, Art, Music, & Humanity, Vocational Exploration, Personal Interest	8-24 Courses in subject /career area of focus	4 - 6 Courses in any subject	None
Service Learning Requirements (Institutional Credit Units)	Job Shadowing, Community Employment, Internships	Internships, Paid Employment	Applied Career Exploration	Community Service, Campus Clubs, Internship, Employment	Volunteering, Internship/ Employment
Program Activity Requirements (Institutional Credit Units)	Peer Coaching, Academic, Mentoring, Faculty Advising, Job Coaching, Sessions, Summer Residential Monthly Student Meetings	Mentoring & Tutoring Sessions, Campus Club Membership	Inclusion Mentorship, Student Life Academic Advising, Community Travel & Mobility, Civic Engagement, Physical Fitness	Library Reading, Computer Lab, Academic, Peer, & Community Mentors, Campus Activities, Fitness Center, Community Experience, Program Class,	Community Events, Workshops, Disability Mentoring Day, Community-Based Instruction, Resource Meetings
Online Curricula	Life Centered Education Transition Curriculum			Skills to Pay the Bills, Life-Centered Education, Math, MindPlay Reading	

Table 3

Career Technical Program of Study (PoS)

IHE Code	AI PoS	AS PoS	AI Courses/Activities AI Program	AS Programs	Specialized Certificate (non-credit courses)	Career Technical Certificates (credit bearing)
C/T$_1$	Yes	No	Any industry certificate program per student skills		Program Completion	Any offered Industry Certificates, Industry Certification Skills, USA Customer Service Certification
C/T$_2$	Yes	No	Creative Arts or Hospitality Industries		Program Completion, Creative Arts, Baking, & Pastry Arts	ServSafe, Creative Arts or Hospitality
C/S$_1$	Yes	No	Any industry certificate program offered	National Retail Certification		National Retail Certification and choice of any other
C/S$_2$	Yes	Yes	Any industry certificate program offered	Florida DOE Workforce Certificate	Program Completion& Florida DOE Workforce Certificate	Any industry certif-icates from which student can benefit
C/S$_3$	Yes	Yes	Mini-Audits, Adult Ed., Continuing Education		Program Completion	First Aid, CPR, Red Carpet Customer Training

Note. AI = Academically Inclusive, AS = Academically Specialized, Ed. = Education, DOE – Department of Education.

Figure 1

Academic Course Enrollment

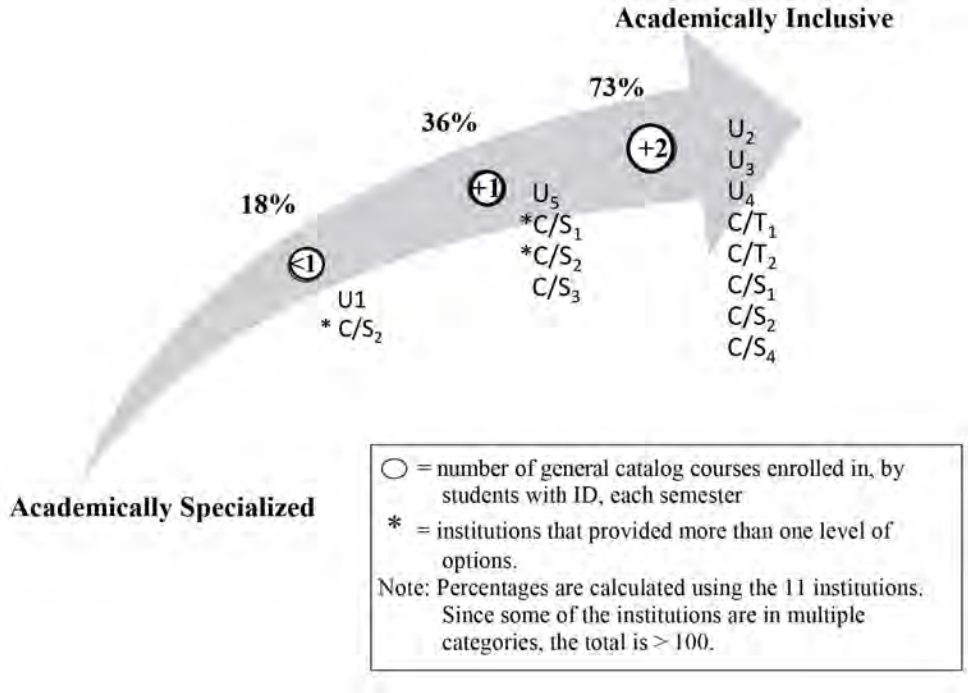

Figure 2

Program of Study Typology