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MAKING THE ACCOMMODATION COMMUNICATION WORK: FACTORS
INVOLVED IN DISCLOSURE OF ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES FOR
ACCOMMODATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SETTINGS

DISSERTATION

Presented In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements For The Degree Doctor Of
Philosophy In The Graduate School Of The Ohio State University

by

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* * * * *

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1997


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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the communication of accommodation needs by students of higher education to instructors through interviews with members of three samples: nine faculty, seven students with invisible disabilities, and eight students with visible disabilities. Each participant was interviewed once using standardized open-ended questions on separate interview guides for the faculty sample and for the two student samples. These guides differed because of the two perspectives represented: faculty as receiver and students as the initiators of the request. Data analysis techniques included: (a) memoing, (b) coding and categorizing interview transcripts, (c) writing up, (d) constant comparative of samples, and (e) peer debriefing.

Findings emerged from the data to indicate that the accommodation communication has six elements (a) disclosure, (b) validation, (c) requesting accommodations, (d) the responsibility to accommodate, (e) timing of request, and (f) negotiating accommodations. A student with a visible disability will disclose in an employment interview to (a) relieve tension, (b) establish ground rules, and (c) uncover discriminatory attitudes. Seven rationales for not understanding how, when, and how much to disclose emerged for students with invisible disabilities. Students with disabilities react to the breakdown of accommodation negotiations in four ways, becoming (a) withdrawn (b) passive, (c) an advocate, or (d) adversarial. Improvements to the accommodation communication were suggested by each sample for faculty, administrators, and students. The most prevalent suggestion was for institutionally sponsored formal training of students and faculty on (a) rights, (b) responsibilities, (c) disability types, and (d) accommodations. Issues relevant to

employment also emerged such as disclosure during the interview, qualifications, and career choices.

Recommendations for practice and research were made for adult and higher education, rehabilitation services, human resources, and postsecondary disability service providers. Further research needs to be conducted on adults with learning disabilities and (a) adult development theories, (b) learning styles, and (c) adaptation to postsecondary education. Additional research should be conducted for adults with disabilities on transition from postsecondary education to employment, specifically, (a) disclosure, (b) interviewers reaction to disclosure, (c) differences in accommodation between school and work, (d) new hire success rates, and (e) accommodation costs versus productivity.

Dedicated to
my father who taught me to ask questions
and
my mother who taught me persistence

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1962, only four university campuses were accessible to individuals with disabilities. These campuses had been made accessible to accommodate veterans of World War II. UCLA (one of the four accessible universities) was the school Ed Roberts, a postpolio quadriplegic, was considering applying to because it was accessible. Instead, he entered the University of California (UC) at Berkeley, which had an inaccessible campus in the fall of 1962, because it had a program he wanted to pursue. The disability rights movement began with Ed Roberts's choice of a school based on his right to choose a school based on his academic needs not his disability (Shapiro, 1993). By 1970 Roberts's efforts secured grant funding for the Physically Disabled Students' Program. He earned a Ph. D. from UC at Berkeley and went on to become the Director of Rehabilitation Services for California. The irony is that he had to fight a counselor from this very same agency in order to continue his education. The counselor felt that the money his education cost would be wasted since it was infeasible or unthinkable at the time that he could ever work.

Children with disabilities acquired at a young age or at birth were not guaranteed an education nor was there a legally protected right to an accessible education for non veterans until the seventies. The first step was the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P. L. 93-112) containing section 504. In essence, Section 504 made it illegal for any federal agency, public university, or recipient of federal funds to discriminate against

an individual on the basis of a disability. This opened the door for the discussion of accommodation of students with disabilities by publicly funded educational institutions. A few years later in 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (later renamed Individuals with Disabilities Act or IDEA) (P. L. 94-142) was passed. This law guaranteed the right of all children to a "free, public education."

In the nineties two important events coincided. The first was that almost twenty years had passed since the IDEA became law increasing the number of children with disabilities that have completed their secondary education prepared and encouraged to go on to earn postsecondary degrees. The second event was the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (P. L. 101-336). Even though this law is currently being tested in the courts, many interpret its intent to be that students have a right to be accommodated while pursuing the degree of their choice, not the degree some well-meaning counselor thinks is suitable for someone with a particular disability. These two events, the passage of the ADA and the increase in students with disabilities graduating from high school have increased the numbers of students with disabilities on college campuses throughout this country.

Accommodation on college campuses and accommodation in employment are closely related. The mechanism one student uses to read a textbook will be the same used to read work-related documents. The IDEA provides for an individualized education plan (IEP) formulated by a committee composed of parents, teacher(s), a school official knowledgeable with the particular disability, and a school administrator. This group determines what is the best educational route for the student including what accommodations are necessary to make the educational experience accessible to the student with a disability. No such IEP committee is provided by legal provisions for accommodation needs in employment or higher education. Upon high school graduation, it becomes the students' or prospective employees' responsibility to determine--with

guidance from counselors, possibly--what they need to adapt the tools of the job or education to their use.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (P. L. 101-336) is said to be the most important legislation to date enabling adults with disabilities to pursue equal employment opportunities (Albrecht, 1992). Individuals with disabilities consider this law the protection of their civil rights. These rights are illustrated as issues of accessibility and accommodation to the everyday mundane activities people without disabilities take for granted and those with disabilities have come to know as privileges. Title I (Employment) defines "reasonable accommodation" as what an employer may be expected to do to enable an employee with a disability to carry out the "essential functions of the job" (Weed & McMahon, 1992). "Reasonable" refers to costs incurred by the employer when accommodating an individual with disabilities. What will be considered reasonable has been left to the courts to interpret taking into consideration the monetary resources, size of the organization, and number of employees. It is the responsibility of the (prospective) employee with a disability to describe any and all accommodations that are necessary for "an otherwise qualified individual" to perform the "essential functions of the job" (Weed & McMahon, 1992).

This legislation would not have been necessary if the competition for employment opportunities between individuals with disabilities and individuals without disabilities had been conducted fairly. Many barriers have existed historically to keep individuals with disabilities from working. "Preexisting medical conditions," a term developed by the insurance industry to keep their operating costs in line, acts as a deterrent to employment for workers with disabilities.

Another aspect, "which is most resistant to change ...is that other minority groups have experienced discrimination which is unfair but avoidable, but when it comes to persons with disabilities, prejudice is tolerable and even expected" (DeLoach, 1992,

p.14). The ramifications are widespread for a person with a disability. In an employment interview people with disabilities are often uncertain whether or not to disclose information about their disability and how much information is appropriate. However, the ADA regulations specify persons with disabilities are responsible for describing the type of accommodation they need in employment situations. A fear of offending or frightening or disgusting the potential employer is ever present, along with the fear of being disbelieved or simply dismissed as incompetent. This uncertainty about the reaction of an able-bodied person must be overcome through long term programs designed to change attitudes towards individuals with disabilities.

Some disabilities carry with them a stigma (Goffman, 1963) perpetuated by cultural norms and values that determine acceptability of a person's physical appearance (Fichten & Amsel, 1988). The concept of disability implies that something is lacking, that the person is not whole. This lack of wholeness makes the disabled different from able-bodied people (Goffman, 1963). It is very difficult in this culture to accept someone who is different for any reason. Consequently, many reasons have been put forward to justify not employing someone with a disability (DeLoach, 1992).

Reasons why individuals with disabilities have not been employed are not entirely relevant to this discussion. However, the relationship between a population being underemployed and members of the population's ability to articulate work-related accommodations are important to this discussion. When a stigma is attached to an individual any interaction becomes artificial (Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984). Interpersonal communication between persons with and without disabilities is abnormally strained because of this added ingredient, stigma (Goffman, 1963).

An exploration of how adults with disabilities learn to communicate what they need for accommodation to an employer or instructor has yet to be conducted. The ADA is a newly enacted law introducing the concept of accommodation to educators and

employers in the last few years in a way section 504 did not. The disability rights movement is still in its infancy compared to other similar movements. The notion of self advocacy by the individual with the disability and not a parent or guardian advocating for the person is also a recent notion. For decades individuals with disabilities have been cared for, spoken for, and told what was best for them. There is a need to examine the process by which one learns to advocate for themselves explaining to an instructor or employer what is needed for accommodation in a specific work or education setting.

Individuals go through different stages of realization concerning their transformed abilities and image depending upon their age when becoming disabled (Wright, G. 1980). Factors involved in the path one takes to learn to communicate anything about a disabling condition are varied. Personal transformation will effect the ability to communicate the accommodation needs of a person with a disability in a variety of ways. Uncovering any patterns or trends that groups of individuals with disabilities experience will provide useful information to those that provide services to individuals with disabilities.

Background

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 established individuals with disabilities as a protected class deserving of equal employment opportunities. IDEA and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act established the rights of individuals with disabilities to primary, secondary and postsecondary education.

One of the implications of minority status within a society is the expectation that the minority member must act in a certain way and fit a particular stereotype. The stereotype is not based on full participation in society but rather the view that the minority is somehow deficient and not up to the superior standards of the members of the majority culture. People with disabilities feel the stigma of being judged inferior. Their experiences parallel those of African Americans and Native Americans in this country. For instance, one characteristic, that of disability, color, or origin, has defined their legal

status in this country. Members of each of these groups have had to fight for civil rights protection because their rights were consistently being violated. It is easy to violate the rights of those thought to be inferior to the majority of individuals in a society. Inferior persons are offered restricted educational and occupational opportunities because to give full opportunity might be to deny a more deserving individual (Mitchell in Jacobs, 1974) of the majority culture.

According to Carol Gill, a disability culture activist, "The barriers to forming a culture are huge....We have very little ... bringing us together, except the disability experience" (Johnson, 1987, p. 4). Gill goes on to discuss the "different backgrounds" and "different ways of looking at things" (Johnson, 1987, p. 4) that have the potential to keep people with disabilities apart. However, she believes many common experiences exist to bind people with disabilities which will create the foundation for a common culture. A study conducted by the International Center for the Disabled found that 74% of the respondents felt a common identity with other adults with disabilities. In addition, 45% see themselves as legal minorities similar to African Americans and Hispanics who enjoy legal minority status (Hill, Mehnert, Taylor, Kagey, Leizhenko et al., 1986).

The primary self concept is embedded in the culture transmitted by the immediate family. This immediate family, historically, kept the "disabled person" separate and secluded, protecting them from the dangers in the outside world. This protection acted to keep adults with disabilities from socializing with peers, with and without disabilities, denying the importance of shared experience to the development of a healthy self concept. People with disabilities have shared four unifying experiences despite the protection and primary culture of the family. These experiences include (a) discovering the effects of stigma, (b) developing a sense of pride, (c) realizing the disabling effects of the environment and attitudes, and (d) living the experience of being identified by the disability first and not as a person.

First, most people with disabilities have experienced the stigma attached to disability. Frank (1988) describes stigma as

negative characteristics imputed to an individual because of membership in a social group or category held to be inferior... Despite their capacity or willingness to participate in 'normal' society, stigmatized individuals are often barred access in such social domains as education, dating and marriage, employment, and use of public facilities. (p. 96)

The group is held to be inferior to those in control, people without disabilities. The reaction by disability rights activists to the stigma of being disabled is to place the responsibility for the stereotyping on the disseminators of the stereotypes. This has been done by individuals with disabilities refusing to see themselves as incomplete persons. Disability culture activists want to take control of their own cultural definition, rallying around the issue of stigma to eradicate it from popular media and research perspectives. One way this has been accomplished is through the efforts of individuals with disabilities to become broadcast and print models for consumer goods, not just spokespersons for fund-raisers.

The second unifying issue for people with disabilities is pride in the beauty of what each can accomplish in a normal everyday way when the physical and attitudinal barriers in the environment are controlled or eliminated. Physical and attitudinal barriers in the environment create the disabling conditions, not the person's physical, mental or cognitive characteristics. Adults with disabilities want the right to be productive members of society. Productive, successful adults with disabilities are seen by people without disabilities as the exception rather than the rule, or as heroic individuals to be admired.

Changing this perception is important and possibly the most tedious. Laura Hershey's story, as described in The Disability Rag, was of her desire to attend a workshop at an inaccessible free university and this was seen as a gross imposition by the program director. The instructor condescendingly offered to instruct her at home (Hershey, 1991). Neither director or instructor realized they were applying the "separate

but equal" doctrine. If she were a racial or ethnic minority they would have known the law has clearly said that separate but equal creates very unequal educational systems. Because she was an adult with a disability these educators assumed they were doing the right thing, looking out for the student's welfare and comfort and that of her able-bodied peers. Productivity and employability, success or simple access, are dependent on the quality of education and exposure to stimulating environments experienced by the individual with or without a disability.

Third, the environment is what is disabling or handicapping. Scheer and Groce (1988, p. 24) define handicap as "the social disadvantage that results from an impairment or a disability" and "reflects the *social* consequences of that disability," not their physical limitations. The disabling attributes of the environment are reflections of public attitudes and public policy decisions. Included in the handicapping elements of the environment are architectural barriers, discrimination, and the inability of the able-bodied to acknowledge the presence of the individual with a disability. Braithwaite (1991) describes numerous scenarios where an able-bodied waitress or store clerk answers the questions of the person with a disability by speaking to the attendant.

The fourth unifying characteristic is rebellion against being identified by the disability and not seen as a person. The medical condition is just that, a physical difference, comparable to height or weight. The prevalent assumption by the able-bodied that adults with disabilities are biologically inferior makes it difficult to establish minority status. Much research has been done to disprove the biological inferiority theories applied to other minority groups (Hahn, 1988). Discrimination against the disabled is emotionally charged with the able-bodied person's fear of becoming a member of this minority group through loss of some physical or sensory function compounding the problem.

Problem Statement

In higher education and in employment adults with disabilities are expected to express their accommodation needs in situations where they may not have had much experience. Almost twenty years have passed since the IDEA became law increasing the number of children with disabilities that have completed their secondary education prepared and encouraged to go on to earn postsecondary degrees. Under IDEA their parents and a team from the school develop and administer an individualized education plan on behalf of the child. At the time the plan was being developed and accommodations were discussed the student was often not present. Once the student enters a postsecondary institution, the responsibility for requesting accommodations falls to the student who has had little or no experience participating in accommodation discussions or with self-advocacy.

Over two thirds, 64% to 79% (Harris, 1986), of adults with disabilities are willing to work (Shapiro, 1990) but are unemployed or underemployed. Individuals born with disabilities or disabled at a pre-employment age, are often not given opportunities to develop "a work personality" (Coker & Coker, 1985). As a result of a lack of employment adults with disabilities have gained very little job experience. Since it is the responsibility of the individual with a disability to describe needed accommodation to fulfill the requirements of a job (EEOC, 1992), with little work experience it will be difficult to accurately or knowingly describe necessary accommodations.

My purpose is to explore how adults learn to communicate what they need for accommodation to an employer or instructor. Situations involving instruction in higher education or training and development opportunities in business and the interview process all necessitate disclosure of some aspect of the disabling condition for the purpose of accommodation. Factors involved in the path one takes to learn to communicate anything about a disabling condition are varied. Individuals go through

different stages of realization concerning their transformed abilities and image depending upon their age when becoming disabled (Wright, G., 1980). The age of an individual upon becoming disabled may effect the way one learns about one's disability and one's ability to communicate it to others. Individuals with disabilities become so immersed in the medical model that they may forget that medical terms and concepts are not universally understood. What one believes is an informative statement may or may not have meaning to lay persons, such as instructors or employers. The amount of time a person has had the disability at the point of interview may indicate the amount of counseling and coaching they may have received on communication techniques. Information necessary to describe job accommodations may hinge on the experience one has had working, educational achievement, and level of self advocacy competency.

Research Question

How does an adult with a disability learn to communicate to an instructor or employer what is needed for "accommodation"?

Subsidiary Questions

Issues involved in this question range from legal precedent to learning theory; from college classroom to workplace training; and from the beginning of the job search process to commencement of work.

- Under which model does a person learn to identify their needs--medical, welfare, socio-political, minority, or advocate?
- Does an individual go through stages to learn self disclosure techniques?
- How does a person's enculturation to the disability experience affect the description of accommodations?
- How does a person's birth culture affect the disclosure process?
- How does the individual self identify?

- What coping skills have been learned or are needed to enable the communication of accommodation?
- Are the emotions expressed and/or felt a deterrent to adequate and appropriate communication of accommodation needs?
- Are barriers to communication internal, external, blatant or subtle?
- What types of information are needed to facilitate accommodation by instructors and employers?
- Does the instructor or employer have a stake in facilitating the self disclosure process?
- How does the instructor or employer facilitate the self disclosure process?

Importance To Adult Education

Adults with disabilities will be enrolling in adult, continuing, and higher education classes in increasing numbers due to the passage of the ADA and the effects of twenty years of protection for children with disabilities under the IDEA (which entitles children with disabilities to a free, public education). Both laws have contributed to a steady increase in students with disabilities enrolling in college. As more adults with disabilities attain employment, training and development opportunities will also be taken advantage of by this new group of employees. Adult educators can take the forefront in disseminating information on how to most effectively facilitate the learning of this legal minority whose learning styles have been ignored. We can also lead in assisting other educators and trainers in means and methods of accommodating various learning needs.

The discussion occurring currently in adult education circles is very interested in power differentials and inclusion. It seems the interest reaches only as far as white men having the power and African Americans and women being systematically denied this power (Hayes and Colin, 1994; Flannery, 1994). The research I am undertaking is important to adult educators who have forgotten that there are other voiceless minorities

in existence. One of these voiceless minorities is the protected class, Americans with disabilities.

Handicapism is "a set of assumptions and practices that promote the differential and unequal treatment of people because of apparent or assumed physical, mental, or behavioral differences" (Bogdan & Biklen, D., 1993, p. 69). This particular "ism" is almost invisible. Adult educators know little about people with disabilities. The 1989 edition of the Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education, contains only one chapter concerned with this minority group, "Developmentally Disabled Adult Learners." Readers are informed the chapter will focus on "the visually impaired, the hearing impaired, individuals with mobility constraints, and those for whom an IQ test would indicate a learning capacity less than normal" (Klugerman, 1989, p. 599). Only the last category is considered developmentally disabled.

B. Wright (1960) coined the term "spread" to indicate the assumption made when a person assumes the person who is visually impaired, for example, is also hard of hearing or developmentally disabled. There simply is no medical correlation between mobility constraints, visual or hearing impairments and lack of cognitive ability. According to G. Wright developmental disability refers to "mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or another neurological condition, ...the disability must be substantial" originating before 18 years of age with the expectation that it will "continue indefinitely" (1980, p. 147).

As Lindeman wrote, "*education is life*--not a mere preparation for an unknown kind of future living" (1989[1926], p. 4). And the ADA has affirmed that people with disabilities are entitled to education. It is the job of adult educators to find ways to make education and learning more accessible to adults with disabilities. This study may impact teaching methods and techniques used with people with disabilities. It is one more

marginalized group that adult education and educators need to become aware of and to serve comparably to any other segment of our population.

Definitions Of Terms

Disability "is any physical, mental, or emotional condition that is chronic or long-lasting (not acute or temporary), which is severe enough to limit the individual's functioning, and which results in, or threatens to be, a handicap to productive activity" (Wright, G., 1980, p. 9). According to the ADA a disability "means, with respect to an individual--a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment" (P. L. 101-336; §3)

Reasonable accommodation according to the ADA includes "making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities" (P. L. 101-336; Title I §101.9A). What is reasonable has not yet been defined. It was intentionally meant to make the "reasonable" accommodation relative to other variables.

Academic accommodation requires altering the form of a learning tool or situation to an accessible format. A format is accessible only if the person with the disability can benefit from use of the learning tool or situation in a comparable manner to a student without a disability. Titles II and III extend the ADA to cover public and private postsecondary institutions.

Disclosure is the process of giving intimate information about oneself to another person for a variety of reasons. Here it refers to the information given to an employer or instructor to enable them to accommodate the needs of the person with a disability.

Organization of Study

This study contains eight chapters. Chapters one through three comprise the initial proposal; defining the problem, the literature review, and methodology. Chapters four

through six discuss each of the three samples: faculty, students with invisible disabilities, and students with visible disabilities. The discussion includes the data description and preliminary analysis for each sample without regard to the other samples. Chapter seven is a cross sample analysis of the data. In this chapter a synthesis of the experiences of all participants from the three samples begin to form emergent theory. Chapter eight contains recommendations for three fields, adult and higher education, postsecondary disability service providers, and rehabilitation services. Questions for future research are organized by theme.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section contains an overview of the theory of stigma. The second section reviews research on selected elements of communication. The third section reviews literature related to disclosure. In the fourth section information presented in the first four sections is summarized and synthesized.

Stigma

This section examines studies on attractiveness and stigma. First, the theory of stigma as articulated by Goffman (1963) is presented. The second part of this section contains a discussion of the relationship between attractiveness and stigma.

Concept of Stigma

Frank (1988) describes stigma as "negative characteristics imputed to an individual because of membership in a social group or category held to be inferior" (p. 97). In his seminal piece on stigma, Goffman (1963), defines stigma as: "an undesired differentness from what we had anticipated" (p. 5). People who possess characteristics which make them different deviate from the social norms related to attractiveness and perceived capability. Those who possess the "differentness" are stigmatized while others are "normal," Goffman goes on to write:

an individual who might have been received easily in ordinary social intercourse possesses a trait that can obtrude itself upon attention and turn those of us whom he meets away from him, breaking the claim that

his other attributes have on us. He possesses a stigma, an undesired differentness from what we had anticipated. We and those who do not depart negatively from the particular expectations at issue I shall call the *normals* (italics in original). ...By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances. (1963, p. 5)

The term "normal," while offensive to some and certainly a relative term, is used by Goffman and by others conducting studies (Frank, 1988; Marinelli, 1974; Riscia & Nevid, 1990) related to his work on stigma. "Normal" is a social construct defining a state of being which generally refers to the majority or those people holding positions of relative power. In this case "normal" refers to people who are unimpeded by barriers in their physical, social, or cognitive environments. The social construct of "normal" is necessary to juxtapose against what is also a social construct, "stigma."

Members of the stigmatized group are held to be inferior to those in power, i.e., the normals. They find out that they are members in the inferior group,

Interestingly, the more the child is "handicapped" the more likely he is to be sent to a special school for persons of his kind, and the more abruptly he will have to face the view which the public at large takes of him. He will be told that he will have an easier time of it among "his own," and thus learn that the own he thought he possessed was the wrong one, and that this lesser own is really his. (Goffman, 1963, p. 33)

One of the implications is that "inferior persons" are offered restricted educational and occupational opportunities, on the assumption that to give them full opportunity might be to deny a more "deserving" individual (Frank, 1988; Hahn, 1988; Jacobs, 1974). The individual with a stigma becomes alienated from society. Mainstream individuals or normals decrease interaction and communication with stigmatized individuals. This decrease in interaction is felt to be some fault of the individual with the stigmatizing condition, in this case, a disability. According to Goffman:

The normal and the stigmatized are not persons but rather perspectives. These are generated in social situations during mixed contacts by virtue of the unrealized norms that are likely to play upon the encounter. The lifelong attributes of a particular individual may cause him to be type-

cast; he may have to play the stigmatized role in almost all of his social situations....(1963, p. 138)

Another implication of stigma within a society is the expectation that the individuals who are stigmatized will act in a certain way to fit a particular stereotype. The stereotype is not based on full participation in society but rather the view that the individual who is stigmatized is somehow deficient and not up to the "superior" standards of the "normals" (Goffman, 1963). In fact, "We tend to impute a wide range of imperfections on the basis of the original one, and at the same time to impute some desirable but undesired attributes, often of a supernatural cast, such as 'sixth sense,' or 'understanding'" (Goffman, 1963, p. 5).

If Goffman were writing in the 1990's he would use the term social construct to describe the concept of stigma. Society has constructed the values by which one group plays the "deserving" role and the other group the "helpless" role. The whole notion of stigma assumes the "disabling environment" (Hahn, 1988) is natural and problems encountered by a person with a disability are the result of the impairment (Fine & Asch, 1988). In many of the studies reviewed for this chapter "disability is portrayed as the variable that predicts the outcome of social interaction when, in fact, social contexts shape the meaning of a disability in a person's life" (Fine & Asch, 1988, p. 9).

Attractiveness and Stigma

Stigma is also interpreted as a lack of attractiveness or as Goffman (1963) terms it, "spoiled identity." Attractiveness is an attribute derived from many variables in personal encounters. The most immediate image is one of a physically appealing person. Physical attractiveness is judged in terms of facial beauty, stature, and physical fitness . In addition, attractiveness is considered a criterion for a "good" personality, which can be made up of such personological variables as attitude, intelligence, communication skills and one's ability and willingness to help others or put them at ease. The way individuals are viewed

by others in terms of attractiveness predetermines the opportunities that may come their way.

According to Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma, the person who is rejected by "normals" because of a physical difference will attempt to cover up the difference in some way in order to "pass" as "normal." Frank (1988) writes, "Despite the capacity or willingness to participate in "normal" society, stigmatized individuals are often barred from equal access in such social domains as education, dating and marriage, employment, and use of public facilities" (1988, p. 98). She recorded life histories of three individuals with congenital limb deficiencies to study their reaction to their "stigmatized condition."

The individuals in the study conducted by Frank (1988) coped by developing techniques of self-empowerment and visibility instead of trying to "pass." Self-empowerment consists of a situational assessment to determine strategic behaviors that can be implemented to increase active participation in society despite the "background of stigma, discrimination and functional limitations" (Frank, 1988, p. 112). Visibility occurs with active participation in society. However, participation is not limited to activities deemed appropriate for the individual with the disability by some knowledgeable other. Instead, the activities are determined appropriate because they fit the interests of the individual. The techniques of self-empowerment and visibility developed by these individuals had the effect of increasing their opportunities for communication and interaction with able-bodied individuals.

Weinberg (1978) conducted two experiments in an effort to understand negative attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. The experiments used grade school children and college students (separately) who interacted with individuals with disabilities intimately (roommates) to casual interaction (classmates) to not at all (segregated dorms or schools). In both experiments only in the roommate situation did students begin to see persons with disabilities as similar to themselves. In all other situations, in this study, individuals with

disabilities were seen as different and the differences caused the individuals to be seen as less attractive.

In a somewhat similar study to Weinberg's study (1978), Elliot, Byrne, Byrd, McNair, and Werth (1993) investigated differences in graduate students in a rehabilitation counseling program to those in clinical and counseling psychology programs to see if their emotional and cognitive reactions to individuals with disabilities differed. The findings indicated no real differences between trainee groups. The graduate students instead had similar reactions to individuals with depression. Individuals with depression "are devalued and perceived as possessing many negative personal qualities" and of "shirking responsibility" (Elliot, Byrne, Byrd, McNair, & Werth, 1993, p. 172).

In this section the concept of stigma as articulated by Goffman was discussed followed by other research using Goffman's theory of stigma to examine attractiveness of individuals with disabilities to people without disabilities. Frank (1988) reported on the coping mechanisms devised by individuals with disabilities to lessen the effect of stigma on their lives. The discussion of stigma theory and its relationship to communication and disclosure is continued in the remaining sections. The next section discusses communication and selected elements affecting communication. Communication between individuals with and without disabilities is discussed using stigma theory as an underlying foundation for the discussion.

Communication

This section reviews research on various elements affecting communication between people. These elements are also affected by stigma when stigma has been attached to one of the parties to the communication process. The elements discussed are attitude, social distance, and interpersonal behavior.

Communication Defined

Communication, according to Rossiter and Pierce, is a process consisting "of behaviors for coping with messages. These behaviors are: making meanings from messages, and making messages from meaning" (Rossiter & Pearce, 1975, p. 14). Others have determined that "communication takes place when a source transmits a message to a receiver(s) with *conscious intent* to affect the receiver's behavior" (Wenburg & Wilmot, 1973, p. 5; italics in original).

Communication for the purpose of accommodation does consciously intend to affect the receiver's behavior. Participation in an accommodation discussion hinges upon interpersonal communication dynamics and effectiveness. The factors involved in interpersonal communication will be the focus of this section. Interpersonal communication between adults with and without disabilities has been the subject of many studies. Each study examines communication using a different factor, such as attitude, attractiveness, interpersonal behavior, social skills, and proxemics. Other aspects filter into communication such as the stigma attached to the individual with a disability or the values held by participants in the communication. The effect of stigma or values on interpersonal communication depend on the cultural norms or values each individual operates under.

Attitude

Research conducted prior to 1985, which is most of the existing work, perpetuated the deficit model. The deficit model has predetermined that adults with disabilities become socially inept the moment the disabling incident occurs (Hahn, 1988). It stems from the traditional medical model focusing on functional impairments.

Persons who fail to meet prescribed standards of physical attractiveness and functional independence not only are assumed biologically inferior, but they are also exposed to a stigma that depicts them as 'not quite human' (Goffman, 1963, p. 5). ...Like other minorities who have been victims of discrimination, disabled persons have characteristics that permit them to be differentiated from the rest of the population. These characteristics, which may be identified by physical or behavioral cues or by verbal labels, are likely to arouse strong feelings [or attitudes] in

nondisabled observers about their own appearance or autonomy. (Hahn, 1988, pp. 41-42)

Hahn (1988) goes on to describe the socio-political approach:

While disability traditionally has been examined from a *medical* approach that focuses on functional impairments or from an *economic* approach that emphasizes vocational limitations, a new socio-political approach has emerged that regards disability as a product of interactions between individual and environment. From a socio-political vantage point, the difficulties confronted by disabled persons are viewed as largely the result of a disabling environment instead of personal defects or deficiencies. (1988, p. 39-40)

The environment includes "public attitudes as a crucial component of the surroundings with which disabled people must contend" (p. 40). Public attitudes become an important area of research for those interested in making the environment more accessible for people with disabilities.

Makas (1988) surveyed three groups of adults using the Issues in Disability Scale. Groups were made up of (a) professionals with disabilities, (b) "good-attitudes" (able-bodied people selected by the professionals with disabilities) and (c) randomly selected able-bodied college students. The individuals with disabilities thought "'positive attitudes' would mean either dispensing with the special category of disability entirely, or promoting attitudes that defend the civil and social rights of disabled persons" (Makas 1988, p. 58). These are the kind of attitudes desired by professionals with disabilities. Promotion of civil and social rights would eventually lead to a decrease in the stigma attached to disability.

Makas (1988) found for individuals without disabilities positive attitudes toward people with disabilities "reflect a desire to be nice, helpful, and ultimately place the disabled person in a needy situation" (p. 58). This follows Goffman's (1963) notion of stigma, the "normal" person considers the persons who are stigmatized as poor unfortunates who are unable to feel comfortable interacting with others and so must be helped. Makas' finding also lends credence to Kleck's (1968) "kindness norm" theory, which describes this need

of the able-bodied person to believe that the person with a disability needs the able-bodied person's assistance.

Coker and Coker (1985) conducted an extensive review of the literature surrounding "communication apprehension in the physically disabled." This review included over 130 references, all of which focused on an aspect of the cause of the communication deficiency possessed by individuals with disabilities. "Among the contributing factors to a successful interchange that are noted by Lustig and King (1980) are: social sensitivity, utilization of feedback, interaction management, and empathy. On a fundamental level, a competent communicator must then possess an adequate repertoire of social skills and have the ability to choose strategies which are situationally appropriate and beneficial" (Coker and Coker, 1985, p. 8).

According to Goffman's theory of stigma (1963), it is not unusual for a physical characteristic to be interpreted as causing a deficit, in this case, communication apprehension. Beatrice Wright (1983) further developed this concept which originally had been named "spread" in "Adjustment to Misfortune: A problem of social-psychological rehabilitation" written by Dembo, Leviton, & Wright (1956). B. Wright (1983, p. 71) refers to this same phenomenon when she writes, "it is not so much physical deviation as such that creates a feeling of being different as psychological characteristics imputed to the person through the phenomenon of spread." Spread is when one characteristic of the individual is felt to have other attributes. For example, a person with a physical disability is felt to lack social skills or to possess communication apprehension.

Braithwaite, Emry, and Wiseman (1984) found that interactions between persons with disabilities and those without disabilities were "different" (p. 13) and "problematic" (p.14) for their sample of individuals with disabilities. Previous research has determined this difficulty in communication to be due to "learned helplessness"; interaction "pathology" and "less appropriate and empathetic communication" (Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman,

1984, p. 14) between people with and without disabilities. The result of this is to characterize people with disabilities as social isolates by choice (Braithwaite & Emry & Wiseman, 1984).

Attitudes, our predispositions for and against objects and issues, are subject to change. When attitudes change, behavior can also change to reflect them...in order to retain a state of balance, a person's attitude should correspond with his behavior. If however, one can justify his behavior, imbalance is not created. (Wenbug & Wilmot, 1973, p. 196)

Since attitudes can be changed and behavior changes to reflect the change in attitude, examining attitudes becomes very important in an effort to change behavior towards people with disabilities.

Fichten and Amsel (1988) conducted two studies to investigate the type of thoughts a person without a disability has when interacting with a person with a disability. They administered two instruments (College Interaction Self-Statement Test And Social Interaction Self-Statement Test) to able-bodied students designed to measure their thoughts about interactions with students with disabilities. They found that,

When thinking about interaction with a nondisabled person, negative self-referent thoughts seem to be the most important predictors of anticipated comfort and ease; in interaction with someone who has a disability, positive thoughts as well as negative thoughts, especially negative thoughts about the other person, seem to be particularly important. (Fichten and Amsel, 1988, p. 31)

The second study had two objectives. One was to explore the reactions of able-bodied students to students with visual impairments. The second objective was to investigate the reactions of students with disabilities (students with visual impairments or wheel chair users) to students without disabilities. The findings from both studies indicate that "nondisabled participants had more frequent negative self-referent and other-referent thoughts than did participants who had a disability" (Fichten and Amsel, 1988, p. 37). In addition, "nondisabled participants had more self- and other-referent negative thoughts concerning interaction with peers who have a disability than respondents with disabilities

had concerning interaction with nondisabled students" (Fichten and Amsel, 1988, p. 39). In other words, students with disabilities reacted with an equal amount of positive thoughts to both students with and without disabilities. Able-bodied students' negative thoughts increased substantially in encounters with students with disabilities particularly with students using wheelchairs. Fichten and Amsel (1988) concluded "when planning intervention programs designed to promote interaction, it is the nondisabled students' cognitions rather than thoughts of students who have a disability that may have to be altered" (p. 39).

Fichten and Amsel (1988) thought these findings were paradoxical. They were working from the assumption that an encounter with an individual with a disability would produce negative thoughts even in another person with a disability. In contrast, Royse and Edwards (1989) found that individuals with disabilities felt more comfortable in the presence of other individuals with disabilities. Moreover, they found disclosure was not necessary to ensure the comfort level of adults with disabilities in relationships with each other. The result of this study may not be surprising since one of the two authors proposed the study to explore attitudes of individuals like himself who have physical disabilities. The results are not surprising just as the results of studies done by able-bodied individuals uncomfortable with individuals with disabilities are not unexpected either. However it is likely, this study's validity is increased by the researcher exploring a phenomenon he has experienced. These two studies (Fichten & Amsel, 1988; Royse & Edwards, 1989) taken together support the Braithwaite et al. (1984) proposition that communication between adults with disabilities is rewarding because of a perceived similarity that encourages "empathy, and mutual rewards system result[ing] in a cultural identity" (p. 15).

Social Distance

Social distance is space in the form of a territorial boundary. Individuals can be very protective of their territory or space which can be personal, bound by the family, or some other social unit. Hall (1959) describes it in these terms:

Every living thing has a physical boundary that separates it from its external environment. ...Literally thousands of experiences teach us unconsciously that space communicates. Yet this fact would probably never have been brought to the level of consciousness if it had not been realized that space is organized differently in each culture... startling variations are discovered--differences which we react to vigorously. Since none of us is taught to look at space as isolated from other associations, feelings cued by the handling of space are often attributed to something else. (pp. 189-190)

Proxemics is "the knowledge and study of interactional distances common to our culture" (Holmes, Karst, & Erhart, 1990, p. 25). Social distances are used to measure "people's willingness to interact with members of potentially stigmatized groups such as people with disabilities" (Sigelman, 1991, p. 139). Holmes, Karst, & Erhart (1990) wrote a discussion of the value of proxemic research for teaching social distance strategies to individuals with disabilities. Their remarks include both perspectives in a social encounter, individuals with and without disabilities. One observation they make is that individuals without disabilities may not comply with interactional rules simply because they are unsure of which "rules to apply when encountering a person with a physical disability" (p. 25). On the other hand, a person with a disability may not have the sensory input necessary to know what proxemic rule applies. This would be true for those that are visually or hearing impaired. Assistive devices for mobility impairments may provide artificial barriers to communication, too. Holmes, Karst, & Erhart (1990) contend that "differences in distances were 'caused' not by stigma, but by" (p. 26) peoples' uncertainty about which rules applied to a situation. This uncertainty can be mitigated by teaching adults with disabilities to understand proxemic rules and techniques to follow to maintain the proper social distance, accommodating for their particular disability. When an individual with a disability

understands the nature of proxemics he/she will be able to control interactions with others. This might enable able-bodied individuals to feel more comfortable interacting with adults with disabilities which in turn could increase interaction and communication opportunities between people.

If the rules of proxemics are not known by participants of an interaction, either one or both of the parties may assume that communication is not desired by the other person or that a different type of communication is warranted. These crossed signals will perpetuate the notion that adults with disabilities are incapable of proper communication (Coker and Coker, 1985). The able-bodied person who is uncertain of proper distance and rules will avoid situations that make them uncomfortable and find reasons to blame the person with a disability for the discomfort (Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984). It is natural to blame the other person for our discomfort in an interaction rather than accept responsibility ourselves and begin looking for ways to improve the quality of such interactions.

Sigelman (1991) measures social distance in terms of attitudes. Does a "normal" person want to interact with a stigmatized person? Which stigmas are more tolerable so the distance is narrower? She recruited 24 college students to interview people leaving a shopping mall. The students used a standardized script which incorporated questions measuring social distance on a scale developed by J. Tringo in 1970. The nine points on the scale ranged from "would marry" to "put to death" the person.

Sigelman (1991) found the tendency of the respondents was to portray themselves as "more tolerant than most people are" (p. 148). The assumption that follows is that people are concerned "with feeling good about themselves" and making a "favorable impression on others" (p. 149). One implication is that this misleadingly positive view toward social acceptance and integration of people with disabilities gives one an "on paper" sense that stigma is no longer associated with disability and that no father would mind if a "blind man wanted to marry his daughter." These findings support those of Riscia and

Nevid (1990), who found no difference in self disclosure rates to counselors with or without disabilities, which was motivated by the respondent's desire to make a good impression and act in a politically or socially correct manner for the benefit of strangers. Sigelman's (1991) study has implications for the Holmes et. al (1990) study. One implication is the amount of training in proxemic rules to accommodate disability will make little difference, if the attitudes toward the stigmatized person include maintenance of formal and distant relations based on notions of what is socially correct.

Interpersonal Behavior

Society's definition of attractiveness and stigma, affect the quality and quantity of interpersonal communication between members of in groups and out groups. A study conducted by Stephan, Stephan, Wenzel, and Cornelius (1991) used intergroup anxiety theory as a basis for examining stigma and self disclosure. "Intergroup anxiety theory ...suggests that the level of intergroup anxiety depends on the prior relations between the groups, relevant intergroup cognitions (e.g. prejudice, stereotypes, perceived similarity), and situational factors (e.g. structure, group ratios)...Intergroup anxiety can lead to avoidance of outgroup members and to amplified emotional and evaluative reactions" (Stephan, Stephan, Wenzel, & Cornelius, 1991, p. 1370). The researchers tested the theory using individuals with and without disabilities and people with and without color.

Again, able-bodied college students were asked to portray individuals with physical disabilities. The data from the studies showed:

- In the first study, able-bodied students disclosed less positive and neutral information about themselves to a handicapped partner than to an able-bodied partner. ...In the second study, Caucasians disclosed information about others less readily to a Black partner than to a Caucasian partner, particularly if the partner was dissimilar to them. (Stephan, Stephan, Wenzel, & Cornelius, 1991, p. 1375)

In other words there was a reduced tendency to disclose information to a dissimilar person. One possible explanation for this is that subjects could have concerns over being

disliked or misunderstood. The first study Stephan, Stephan, Wenzel, and Cornelius, (1991) conducted looked at disclosure from the perspective of the able-bodied student. The main concern being the anxiety level of able-bodied individuals who are known to have increased anxiety levels when interacting with individuals with disabilities.

In addition to increasing anxiety levels in able-bodied people, stigmatized individuals should, according to one stereotype, be depressed and maladjusted individuals (Goffman, 1963). Depression is not viewed as an attractive quality in individuals. This perceived state of depression causes others to limit interactions with individuals with disabilities. Individuals without disabilities react to the actual behaviors of adults with disabilities, while looking for evidence of the stereotypical behavior believed to exist (Goffman, 1963; Wright, B., 1983). Interactions in which the individual with a disability behaves in ways that confirm the stereotype, will reinforce negative attitudes. On the other hand, positive attitudes can be fostered when adults with disabilities behave in socially acceptable ways (Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991).

Using actors to play the role of adults with disabilities, two studies investigated depressed versus socially appropriate behavior when individuals with or without disabilities exhibited such behavior (Elliott, MacNair, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991; Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991). The first study (Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991): "Examined the interpersonal responses of persons engaged in dyadic interactions with confederates who enacted either depressed or socially appropriate roles and appeared either with or without a physical disability" (p. 1293). In the second study (Elliott, MacNair, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991), subjects viewed video tapes of able-bodied actors playing the part of individuals with and without disabilities and behaving either in depressed or socially appropriate roles. Their experiment included the added condition of: requiring the subject to meet the actor, giving the subject the choice to meet the actor, or no mention of the possibility of meeting the actor.

The findings of both studies (Elliott, MacNair, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991; Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991) indicated that individuals with disabilities received higher positive evaluations only in socially appropriate situations. Additionally, individuals with disabilities that exhibit depressive behaviors are avoided and held accountable for their behavior. Subjects interacted less with the depressed confederate regardless of physical condition. Subjects did speak more to the actors pretending to have disabilities, generally, but not enough to reinforce the "kindness norm." No explanation was given for why subjects would speak more frequently to actors in a wheelchair.

The second study (Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991) also found that the "kindness norm" had no effect on the way the subjects viewed the actors who played the role of persons with disabilities. Kleck (1968) coined the term "kindness norm" to describe the positive biases displayed toward stigmatized people during interactions despite increased anxiety and suppression of nonverbal cues.

Other studies (Coker & Coker, 1985; Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984) assume that when adults with disabilities use effective social strategies able-bodied adults are more comfortable in their presence. However, it could be "positive reactions in response to a person with a disability may be triggered by a subjects' sincere surprise that the person with disability is not conforming to stereotypic expectations (Elliott, MacNair, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991, p. 63).

Fichten, Robillard, Tagalakis, and Amsel (1991) conducted a study to explore the thoughts and feelings about casual social interaction between students without disabilities and those with visual impairments, hearing impairments, and who are wheelchair assisted. The researchers administered instruments (General Information Form, the ease measure and the Cognitive Role-Taking Tasks) to college students with disabilities and those without disabilities. The Cognitive Role-Taking Tasks contains brief descriptions of interaction situations between individuals with and without disabilities. Subjects are asked

to respond to the situation descriptions by listing their thoughts and then indicating their comfort level using a six point scale.

The researchers (Fichten, Robillard, Tagalakis, & Amsel, 1991) concluded that students without disabilities prefer to avoid interaction with students with disabilities. Such interactions make the able-bodied student uncomfortable because of anxiety over what to say, pity, and thoughts that the student with a disability will feel out of place in conversation with an able-bodied student. Another interesting finding is that able-bodied students made no distinction between disability type, in this instance visual or hearing impaired, or wheel chair assisted. On the other hand students with disabilities made little distinction between interactions with students with or without disabilities, except for individuals with hearing impairments who were a little less comfortable interacting with people with hearing.

In this section communication was examined. Attitudes of people involved in the communication process can affect the likelihood that information will be exchanged and the quality of that information. Social distance was discussed in terms of the attitudes of persons without disabilities towards people with disabilities causing them to avoid people with disabilities. Social distance was also examined in terms of the physical space maintained between any two or more people in an interaction. Finally, interpersonal behavior was discussed in terms of socially appropriate behaviors between members of different groups. The next section of this chapter is on self disclosure, a specific type of communication.

Self Disclosure

In this section disclosure, a specific form of communication is discussed in three parts. The first part describes the nature of disclosure, while the second part examines the functions of disclosure. The final part of this section looks at the effects of stigma on disclosure.

Description

Self disclosure involves the verbal presentation of information about the nature or cause of a personal experience to another person. Self disclosure is "any information exchange that refers to the self, including personal states, dispositions, events in the past, and plans for the future" (Derlega & Grzelak, 1979, p. 152). Self disclosure's importance is derived from the amount of comfort the receiver of the communication receives from the disclosure (Chelune, 1979). One purpose is to increase interpersonal intimacy and decrease interpersonal distance however it can produce the opposite effect, rejection (D. Wright, 1982a). It is also assumed to be reciprocal in ordinary social relationships.

Functions of Self Disclosure

According to Derlega and Grzelak (1979) self-disclosure serves different functions which are: expression, self-clarification, social validation, relationship development, and social control. The social control function of self-disclosure is used to achieve specific results, operating for a controlling, or even exploitive purpose. The relationship development function is a vehicle for promoting, maintaining or increasing intimacy in a relationship. Social validation is used to elicit feedback in order to validate a person's self concept. When individuals talk about their beliefs and opinions to make their position clear, it is known as self-clarification. Expression is simply verbalizing current feelings about a facet of a relationship or situation that has recently occurred.

Derlega and Grzelak (1979) were writing about the functions of disclosure in interpersonal relationships from the perspective of the able-bodied. The function of self disclosure varies according to the nature of the relationship between the person giving and the person receiving the information and as the relationship develops. Disclosure for purposes of self-clarification or self-expression have been found to be more intimate than when the purpose is to gather information or for social control (Prager, Fuller, &

Gonzalez, 1987). In other words, "self disclosure becomes more private and personal as acquaintance increases" (Prager, Fuller, & Gonzalez, 1987, p. 5).

Most of the work on disclosure comes from work with able-bodied individuals in the area of interpersonal relationships from the effect disability has on casual interaction, friendship, love, and sexual relationships (Archer & Stephenson, 1983; Chelune, 1979; Derlega & Grzelak, 1979; Vera & Betz, 1991). The work done on disclosure and disability, most often examines the effect disability has on the level of disclosure of able-bodied individuals to the counselor if the counselor has a disability and the client does not (Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder & Byrne, 1991; Elliott, MacNair, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991; Stephan, Stephan, Wenzel & Cornelius, 1991).

Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman (1984) investigated the "uses and functions of disclosure" (p.15) as perceived by the adult with a disability when interacting with an able-bodied person. They asked adults with disabilities about the purposes of disclosure. They found interactions between persons with disabilities and those without disabilities were "different" (p. 13) and "problematic" (p. 14) for the participants in their study. Braithwaite, Emry & Wiseman (1984) found four factors involved in the decision of a person with a disability to disclose: (a) weighing the positive and negative reactions to disclosure in a given situation; (b) determining the value of disclosure to the relationship; (c) reduction in uncertainty and tension for the adult with a disability; and (d) reduction of the tension and uncertainty able-bodied adults feel when interacting with a person with a disability.

The first factor weighing the positive and negative reactions to disclosure is "guided by two conflicting normative prescriptions: to be open and frank about their disabilities or to avoid the costs of disclosure by not talking about their disabilities" (Braithwaite, Emry & Wiseman, 1984, p.16). The risks to the individual with a disability include "feelings of inferiority and misunderstandings [that] can result from disclosures regarding our subjects' disabilities" (p. 16). After disclosure some of the risks the individual with a disability is

fearful of are: being perceived as helpless or sick, and/or the able-bodied person becoming sympathetic, and "because the disabled persons have restricted opportunities to interact with able-bodied persons, they may be less adept at knowing when and how to disclose" (Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984, p. 17). Braithwaite, et. al found adults with disabilities felt more comfortable with other adults with disabilities, because there was no obligation to make the other person feel better about the disability. Interactions and communication took place between similarly situated people.

Adults with disabilities use disclosure for purposes beyond those described by Derlega and Grzelak (1979). For instance, in a position paper prepared by Coker and Coker (1985) exploring the relationship between communication apprehension and physical disability, they defined self disclosure as "a strategy for minimizing the strain often present in *normal*-stigmatized interactions" (p. 17, authors' italics). They go on to write:

Whether dysfunctional communication between the visibly handicapped and nonhandicapped person is due to the disabled individual's: (1) actual physical limitations, (2) mental or emotional attitude about communication, (3) reaction to stigmatization and uncertainty exhibited by the able-bodied person, (4) communication strategies to appropriately adapt to situations, the issue of concern here is that ineffective communication often occurs between these parties and hinders successful interpersonal and social relationships, particularly on the part of the physically disabled. (Coker & Coker, 1985, p. 10)

The perspective that the responsibility for dysfunctional communication lies with the person with the disability is prevalent in the literature. Research shows that social interaction is easier for able-bodied people after the person with a disability self discloses (Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984; Coker & Coker, 1985; Royse & Edwards, 1989). Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman (1984) warn researchers against ethnocentricity in conducting research on people with disabilities. The most frequently used perspective in research conducted on self-disclosure and disability was to investigate how the able-bodied (dominant) culture was affected by social interaction with a person with a disability (Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984; Coker & Coker, 1985; Fichten, Robillard,

Tagalakis, & Amsel, 1991; Fichten & Amsel, 1988; Frank, 1988; Makas, 1988; Royse & Edwards, 1989). Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman (1984, p. 18) state:

The reason for the wealth of research may be due to a subtle ethnocentric bias in our investigations of disability-disclosure, i.e., we seem to be more concerned with the able-bodied person's perceptions and feelings rather than the disabled person's ones.

Little research has been done on the preferences of the person with a disability for self disclosure (Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984; Royse & Edwards, 1989).

Coker and Coker (1985) conclude the lack of acceptance by able-bodied people of people with disabilities is due to social skill deficiencies of the disabled.

Developing the skill of disclosing about a disability potentially limits the strain on the relationship, particularly in the initial stages of initiating, experimenting and intensifying. Initially, communicators try and reduce uncertainty about another before the other is 'cleared' for an encounter. Often disabled persons never get the initial clearance because of stigmatization, if they do, disabled individuals should be encouraged to self-disclose about the disability so that uncertainty on the part of the able-bodied can be reduced. (Coker & Coker, 1985 p. 18)

In other words, disclosure between an able-bodied person and one with a visible disability involves giving personal information about the nature or cause of the disability to another person in an effort to relieve the receiver's anxiety; anxiety which stems from the stereotypic beliefs generated by the stigma attached to disability in this society. The success of self disclosure for a person with a visible disability is measured by the amount of comfort the receiver (usually an able-bodied person) of the communication receives from the disclosure. According to Goffman (1963) the person with the disability or stigmatizing condition is put in the position of responsibility for the able-bodied person's comfort because one's differentness--in the form of disability--makes the able-bodied person uncomfortable.

D. Wright (1982b) suggests that personological attributes such as race or cultural background may influence self disclosure between clients and counselors. Her paper examining self disclosure of Black college students, warns counselors to be aware of the

assumptions held about groups of people different from oneself. There may be a correlation between the assumptions made about Blacks and those made about people with disabilities. For instance, the assumption is made that a client's problems stem from the client's racial or cultural background. Making assumptions has also been known as stereotyping, and in disability rights movement as labeling. As Zola put it when discussing negative functions of labeling:

Call a person sick or crazy and all their behavior becomes dismissable. Because someone has been labeled ill, all their activity and beliefs--past, present, and future--become related to and explainable in terms of their illness. Once this occurs, society can deny the validity of anything which they might say, do, or stand for. (1993, p. 17)

When a counselor assumes a client's difficulties stem from their racial, cultural, or minority background, "their behavior becomes dismissable." Whether the assumptions are based on paternalistic attitudes, or being color-blind unchecked beliefs by the person receiving the disclosure can limit the counselor's understanding of the purpose of the disclosure (D. Wright, 1982a).

Effects of Stigma on Disclosure

Riscia and Nevid (1990) examined the relationship between disability and attraction and its effect on disclosure. It is believed that disclosure is facilitated when the recipient of the information is attractive to the person sharing the information (Cozby, 1973; Riscia & Nevid, 1990). The researchers used male college student volunteers to act the part of counselors. The same male volunteer actors played three different roles, a person with: a visual impairment, a physical impairment, and no impairment. The purpose of the study was to examine enhancement or stigmatizing effects of disability on attraction or willingness to disclose. They found no difference in the tendency of subjects to self disclose to counselors in any of the experimental conditions. Subjects completed a post experimental questionnaire. The conclusion reached was that there is "no evidence of stigmatization" (p. 236) and "if any enhancement effect exists, it may not extend beyond

the tendencies of participants" (p. 236) to support persons with disabilities simply to enhance the counseling process.

The researchers acknowledge "several methodological constraints" (p. 237) in their study such as attractiveness being associated less with men and more with women. Volunteer actors were men. Another constraint was the use of "a prepared script and fixed order of information exchange in the counseling exchange [that] may have restricted verbal output from participants or dampened spontaneity of response" (Riscia & Nevid, 1990, p. 237). There are additional problems with this study. First, they did not use individuals with disabilities. Someone sitting in a wheel chair with a healthy, conditioned body might not elicit the same response as someone whose muscle tone was slack or exhibited other physical and functional limitations of a person with paraplegia. People tend to relate their experiences in body language and facial expressions as well as verbal cues such as inflections which are affected by the person's psychological and physical state. All of which were systematically controlled for in this experiment.

Second, in measuring self-disclosure two measures were used. One counted the number of times "personal information about oneself" (p. 234) was divulged, the other measured the length of disclosure time. "Silences and pauses were eliminated" (p. 234) from consideration as an indicator of self disclosure. Silence and pauses could be an indicator of comfort level, honesty, and the degree of difficulty someone has when disclosing personal feelings and experiences to another person. The length and frequency of silences and pauses can be measured. Data collected on silences and pauses may be an indication of willingness to disclose and can be compared to frequency and length of disclosure periods as well as to measures of intimacy.

Stigma theory maintains that an individual seen as different by society will be hesitant to disclose personal information to counselors or potential friends or colleagues. These same colleagues and counselors having been exposed to society's stereotypical

notion of the individual with a disability will react to disclosure in ways commensurate with the myths associated with the stereotype.

This section contained a description of the functions of disclosure for individuals with and without disabilities. Secondly, a discussion of stigma's effects on disclosure occurred. The next and final section synthesizes and summarizes previous sections.

Summary and Synthesis

This chapter first defined and explored the concept of stigma as elaborated by Goffman (1963). The next sections on communication and disclosure examined the role stigma has when affecting one of the participants in the communication process. Goffman, in articulating his theory of stigma and its effects on individuals, was not creating the construct of stigma out of thin air. He simply was recording his observations of interactions between people and from academic and literary writings. He observed one who is "normal" with one who is "different" in some noticeable way play roles dictated by society's rules of interaction with those who are different. The people Goffman wrote about possessing stigma were not only people with disabilities but also African Americans, prostitutes, "foreigners" and others. Goffman's definition and description did not make the phenomenon worse or better. It simply verified the existence of the phenomenon of stigma. He wrote his book on stigma in 1963. By that time African Americans were frustrated and angry enough with living day in and day out with the stigma of being black in a country that thinks of itself as white, that their civil rights movement was well under way.

It would be another decade before any noticeable legal protection would be given to another group who is "different," people with disabilities. If stigma and its effects were not as Goffman describes there would be no need for civil rights protection to ensure employment and educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This legal protection began with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which was expanded by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The ADA states in order for a person with

a disability to receive an accommodation at work or for education the individual with a disability must disclose enough information about the disability and the needed accommodation for the employer or educator to comply with the request.

Disclosure is not a simple matter. Once the disclosure of disability has been made the individual is subject to discrimination. This discrimination is the result of the stigma our society attaches to the state of being disabled. Stigma, if attached to an individual, affects all types of communication and all elements of the communication process the individual takes part in. Communication occurs in many forms between people, verbally, visually as in body language, and through spatial relations. Disclosure is a specific type of communication taking place between two people and it is of an intimate nature.

Interpersonal communication is hampered by any stigma. Stereotypical expectations of how adults with disabilities feel about their condition still exist. People still avoid contact and communication with members of this group. While research shows it is the responsibility of the person with the disability to make the "normal" person feel more at ease and comfortable in their presence (Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984; Frank, 1988; Goffman, 1963; Royse & Edwards, 1989), the "normal" person is not the one risking rejection.

Ever more the responsibility for initiating communication is up to the person with a disability, since the ADA makes (and rightfully so) disclosure for accommodation the responsibility of the person with a disability. In order to communicate what an individual needs for accommodation, the individual must disclose some information about the disability. People are hesitant to disclose because of the stigma attached to most disabling conditions by society (Schneider, 1988). According to Goffman (1963) any difference between people has the potential to create stigmatizing experiences. These experiences occur when one person's attitudes about others are shaped by "highly negative personal qualities" (Schneider, 1988, p. 66) associated with the condition producing the stigma.

Our preconceived notions of what a person with a disability behaves like, thinks like, and looks like produce strains on communication between persons with and without disabilities. These strains occur in the various areas discussed here under the main topic of communication i.e., attitude, attractiveness, interpersonal behavior, and social distance. The strains on communication are caused by the stigma our society has created around disability (Goffman, 19963; Hahn, 1988; Schneider, 1988; Zola, 1993).

In four studies (Royse & Edwards, 1989; Frank, 1988; Makas, 1988; Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984;) adults with disabilities were asked about their attitudes toward an aspect of communication with an able-bodied person. Two studies (Fichten, Robillard, Tagalakakis & Amsel, 1991; Fichten & Amsel, 1988) asked both able-bodied students and students with disabilities about their attitudes toward disclosure and interaction. Holmes, Karst, and Erhart, (1990), discussed the communication dilemma from the perspective of proxemic rules, noting the difficulties experienced by both sides.

Sigelman (1991) stopped able-bodied people at a mall to learn about perceptions of tolerance. She found that people portrayed themselves as more tolerant of people with disabilities when responding to a questionnaire on issues such as the marriage of a child to a person with a disability. Coker and Coker (1985) did not bother with even using an actor or asking able-bodied individuals questions; they simply spoke for adults with disabilities deciding what their needs were. The majority (Coker & Coker, 1985; Elliot, Byrne, Byrd, McNair, & Werth, 1993; Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991; Elliott, MacNair, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991; Fichten & Amsel, 1988; Fichten, Robillard, Tagalakakis, & Amsel, 1991; Riscia & Nevid, 1990; Sigelman, 1991; Stephan, Stephan, Wenzel, & Cornelius, 1991; Weinburg, 1978) of researchers conducted their studies from the perspective of individuals without disabilities. That is, what effect will interacting with a person with a disability have on an able-bodied person. Four studies (Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder & Byrne, 1991; Elliott, MacNair, Yoder & Byrne, 1991; Riscia & Nevid,

1990; Stephan, Stephan, Wenzel & Cornelius, 1991) used actors to pretend they were students or counselors with disabilities to test the reactions of able-bodied people.

The perspective of the person with a disability was important to this study. All the more so due to the number of studies using actors to portray a person with a disability (Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991; Elliott, MacNair, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991; Riscia & Nevid, 1990; Stephan, Stephan, Wenzel & Cornelius, 1991) and the number of studies concerned with the able-bodied persons comfort level (Coker & Coker, 1985; Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder & Byrne, 1991; Elliott, MacNair, Yoder & Byrne, 1991; Fichten & Amsel, 1988; Fichten, Robillard, Tagalakis & Amsel, 1991; Riscia & Nevid, 1990; Sigelman, 1991; Stephan, Stephan, Wenzel & Cornelius, 1991). The evidence is that "Most of what professionals know about living with disability is a product of research done from perspectives outside this experience--research by able-bodied experts who often give priority to their scientific theories and research techniques rather than to the words and perceptions of the people they study" (Schneider, 1988). In the case of the research on disclosure, it has been concerned with the perceptions only of the able-bodied and their comfort level.

First, researchers talk about persons with disabilities. not to them. Not only are persons with disabilities talked about, but the research is conducted from the perspective of persons with ablebodies, for example, how persons with ablebodies feel when communicating with those with disabilities. (Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984, p. 5)

This statement of the research perspective at the time Braithwaite, Emry, and Wiseman (1984) wrote acts as a warning for me. Many times the complaint from adults with disabilities is that it is the attitudes of able-bodied people that make their physical condition disabling (Jacobs, 1974; Lane, 1992; Shapiro, 1993). Many studies are based on the premise that individuals with disabilities are somehow lesser beings than their able-bodied peers (Schneider, 1988). This has been born out in many of the studies discussed here. Since, I am very interested in the perception and experience of the individual with a

disability, two samples of adult students with disabilities have been interviewed. The difference in the samples is whether the person has a visible or invisible disability. Sample composition and selection as well as other methodological issues are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter three presents a description of the methodology chosen, the researcher's rationale for the methods used, as well as data collection and analysis procedures.

Rationale

This section explains the methodology used in this study followed by discussions of the use of voice and my assumptions. The last two sections support the choice of grounded theory. Permitting the voice of participants to be heard by including in the findings section snippets or representative responses of answers to questions is one way of increasing the voice of underrepresented groups of people in research. Grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) allows the participants' words and researcher's thoughts to intermingle within the researcher's mind to become naturally forming categories limited only by the imagination of the researcher and the eloquence of the participant.

It is necessary to state the researcher's biases to enable the reader to discern the researcher's assumptions from participants' words. If these are not stated the reader might assume the findings clustered naturally into various categories in some way unaffected by my personal views. But try as one might there is no such thing as research that is bias free and objective.

Methodology

Glaser and Strauss (1967) articulated their concept of grounded theory in The Discovery Of Grounded Theory: Strategies For Qualitative Research. Their definitions and methodology for research using grounded theory are the foundation of this study.

Grounded theory methods allow a variety of sources to merge together to make meaning. Literature, intense interviews, immersion in the topic, and the experience of the researcher are all needed for the development of theory and “systematic discovery.” This immersion does not include an extensive literature review of a theory in existence but instead requires the researcher to understand the literature so that it can inform the study, not guide it. They suggest,

To generate theory... the best approach [is] an initial, systematic discovery of the theory from the data of social research. Then one can be relatively sure that the theory will fit and work. ...By ‘fit’ we mean that the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study; by ‘work’ we mean that they must be meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behavior under the study. (p. 3)

Glaser and Strauss (1967) warn against doing a thorough literature review. The danger: a study could become proof for some previously stated theory or hypothesis. The researcher should have a basic foundation in the literature before beginning the study. The preliminary literature review that I conducted produced a basic foundation for this study ensuring that the study had merit. Glaser and Strauss (1967), suggest that as themes emerge the literature should be looked to for support, clarification, or further questions. During the write up of the data, I began to review literature pertinent to explaining or further exploring emerging themes and areas I needed to clarify.

The importance of theory emerging from the data is that it enables the theory to be understood and used by practitioners. It also allows new ways to conceptualize relationships which is the beginning of new theory, thus providing an alternative to testing hypotheses to prove or disprove existing theories. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested

conducting basic literature reviews, not extensive ones prior to data analysis, "It makes no sense to start with 'received' theories or variables (categories) because these are likely to inhibit or impede the development of new theoretical formulations" (p. 50). They continue by pointing out "literature can be used to stimulate theoretical sensitivity by providing concepts and relationships that are checked out against actual data" (p. 50). After the data was categorized and the write-up as analysis (discussed in more detail later in the chapter) was begun, I began again to read work concerning adults with disabilities in higher education. This was done in an effort to check the "fit" of the categories and to check the relevance of the descriptive model that emerged from the data.

Using grounded theory methods does not guarantee the emergence of theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) used Goffman's (1963) work on stigma as an example of grounded theory. He had much experience and had been "thinking" about the problem for many years, used case studies and autobiographies before "showing how this material can be economically described within a single conceptual scheme" (preface). I have worked on the problem of communicating accommodations needs for a few years, but as a beginning researcher my findings may not include a new "theory." In fact, my findings include models describing phenomena that are part of the accommodation communication. Additional exploration is needed before a full theory can emerge and be articulated. Wolcott (1994) wrote about transforming data by three different means--description, interpretation, and analysis, reminding us that novice researchers can be expected to describe phenomena in novel ways but not necessarily to be able to interpret or analyze the findings in the same manner as an experienced researcher.

Voice

"First, researchers talk about persons with disabilities, not to them. Not only are persons with disabilities talked about, but the research is conducted from the perspective of persons with ablebodies, for example, how persons with ablebodies feel when

communicating with those with disabilities" (Braithwaite, Emry, & Wiseman, 1984, p. 5). In much of the literature I have read on disclosure, situations are manipulated in an effort to measure some variable related to disclosure, like the effects of attractiveness of an individual with a disability on the comfort level of a person without disabilities (Riscia & Nevid, 1990).

Often experiments are designed that fabricate situations with actors playing the role of a person with a disability. Four studies (Elliott, MacNair, Herrick, Yoder, & Byrne, 1991; Elliott, MacNair, Yoder & Byrne, 1991; Riscia & Nevid, 1990; Stephan, Stephan, Wenzel & Cornelius, 1991) used actors to pretend they were students with disabilities or counselors to test the reactions of people without disabilities when communicating with a person with a disability. Manipulating situations to simulate contact between people with and without disabilities has historically been done to measure the comfort level of people without disabilities to encounters with people with disabilities. Instead of generalizing findings from the dominant society to all other cultures, representatives of marginalized people are arguing for research that includes the perspective and voice of non mainstream people (Hayes & Colin, 1994).

In this century, extermination has "been widely accepted with regard to individuals with disabilities" (Hahn, 1991, p. 18) through such organizations as The Euthanasia Society of America (Lane, 1992) and the Breeder's Association (Shapiro, 1993) and by starving newborns with disabilities like the Baby Jane Doe case in 1983 (Coulter, 1993; Shapiro, 1993). Euthanasia is an extreme form of silencing. But given the fact that it still occurs today, it is the clearest example of why it is important to allow people with disabilities to speak for themselves.

The voice and perspective of the participants must be evident in the data description for field work in a natural setting to be genuine. Portraying participants in their own words is one way to lessen manipulation. The issue of voice has become prevalent among

marginalized groups throughout this country, but no group has been systematically denied a voice more than people with disabilities.

It is important to acknowledge the voice of adults with disabilities. "Most of what professionals know about living with a disability is a product of research done from perspectives outside this experience--research by able-bodied experts who often give priority to their scientific theories and research techniques rather than to the words and perceptions of the people they study" (Schneider, 1988, p. 65). Most work done in the area of disability policy or research uses the medical model, "namely, clinical and therapeutic viewpoints" because its purpose has been the "improvement of medical and surgical treatment" (Schneider, 1988, p. 65). This means that experts and caregivers speak for the person with a disability.

Using grounded theory methods allowed the voice of the person with a disability to be heard. The phrases uttered, the words contained within those phrases, and words used to describe the participants and their perspectives make up the data analyzed. Key words spoken by participants emerged from the data becoming category labels for the data reported in the findings section.

Assumptions

The importance of identifying the researchers innate assumptions about life and the byproducts of living cannot be stressed enough. This is an area of further development for me because I am not yet able to conceptualize and articulate all of my assumptions. My goal was to become the medium by which the voice of participants was expressed and heard. Since I can not eliminate my biases and assumptions, I at least tried to acknowledge them.

By acknowledging my assumptions I hoped to enable a reader to discriminate between my world views and the world views of the participants in this study. If a reader cannot determine my words from the participants' words then I have not succeeded in

being a conduit of the voice of students with disabilities or of faculty participating in this study.

1. *It is impossible to be neutral in any research endeavor.* However it is necessary to try and control one's predetermined notions about situations and people to the maximum extent possible. According to Peshkin (1988) it is possible to control one's subjectivity by learning to identify it. He writes that a researcher can identify moments when one is straying far from a neutral stance. I chose to keep a journal as a way to vent these emotions (see Researcher's Journal). These moments occur when emotional involvement becomes extremely negative or positive which is evident when the researcher wants to stay in the situation or cannot wait to get out. This can be controlled by keeping a journal where these feelings can be aired or having a safe person to discuss these feelings with.

2. *This study and the data collected can be interpreted from many perspectives.* The study includes the perspectives of people with visible and invisible disabilities. These perspectives are most important to this study. However, faculty and administrators that advise and teach adults with disabilities in institutions of higher education are included in the study. My perspectives cannot be eliminated, as writer or instrument of data analysis and interpretation.

3. *My perspective is predominately influenced by who I am and my past experiences.* This perspective includes a sense of responsibility for the atrocities perpetuated against adults with disabilities. I am responsible because I am a member of the dominant culture that, regardless of gender, has systematically denied access to education and employment to this group of adults for "their own good".

4. *Until all people enjoy equivalent opportunities none of us have equal rights and responsibilities.* Implicit in this statement is the concept that I believe adults with disabilities do not enjoy the same rights and privileges as people without disabilities. I believed I would find evidence of this during the data collection and analysis, and I did. However, I

was open to the possibility that some of the people I interviewed didn't see themselves as victims of discrimination, which I also found. It was important that participants speak for themselves, their words becoming the data interpreted for this study, not to further a cause.

5. *"The 'sense making' is always value constituting--making sense in a particular way, privileging one ordering of the 'facts' over others"* (Richardson, 1993, p. 12). The values I hold have already become part of this work. These values influenced choices made as to type of study, participants, research method and other components of this research. Stating that I am aware of the presence of my values in this study does not eliminate the influence these values have on the way I conduct this study or report the results.

6. *Disabling conditions can be the focal point of a disability culture.* There are many aspects to a disability culture. There are people with disabilities who believe they have a culture and there are those who scoff at such a preposterous idea. Assuming a belief in a disability culture, what are the unifying elements? It could be the general experience of disability or of being a minority experiencing discrimination. Some people with disabilities rally around a common history especially as regards particular adaptive equipment (Bogdan & Biklen, D., 1993); while others claim only those with the same disability. Deaf culture has been researched and documented. However, it is still not an accepted concept by the dominant culture (Carmel & Monaghan, 1991; Jacobs, 1974; Johnson, 1991). The disability rights movement is as much a cultural phenomenon as other civil rights movements in this country (Braithwaite, 1990; Hahn, 1988; Johnson, 1987). Individuals with disabilities have many characteristics that bind them to other primary cultures. As Sheared (1994) refers to "polyrhythmic reality," the experience of being members of more than one culture, minority group, or demographic category simultaneously. Each identifying characteristic shapes who we are.

Sampling Technique

The original intent was to select participants from a number of schools within the state with between 10 and 900 registered students with disabilities. The participants were to be selected from the population of adult students with disabilities using both stratification and chain sampling techniques (Patton, 1990). Stratification occurs by pre-selecting certain types of disability as being appropriate for this study. Individuals would be included if the disabling condition does not affect speech patterns. The effect certain medical aspects of disability has on communication and accommodation was outside my area of expertise and the parameters of this study. For this reason individuals with multiple and severe disabilities, developmental disabilities, and speech impediments were to be eliminated from consideration. Deaf individuals, who communicate only through American Sign Language (ASL) were also excluded because I do not know ASL. Even though an interpreter could have been used, I feel that the interviewer should be proficient in the language of the participant. The speech of two participants was impacted by their disability. It became evident during the interview when I had difficulty hearing or understanding words. Since the interview was in progress, adjustments were made to improve the quality of the tape-recorded sound. These two individuals provided valuable insights making their interviews worth the extra effort.

A purposeful sample (Patton, 1990) was selected from one major midwestern and one eastern university. The members of each sample were chosen for their status as informants. "...Information-rich key informants or critical cases" (Patton, 1990, p. 176). Students had to have had recent experience with working on a degree in higher education and to a lesser extent some experience with work. The members of the faculty sample must have had experience advising, teaching, or serving on the academic committees of students with disabilities. The members of the students with invisible disabilities sample had to disclose to someone in order to be known as such.

In the year or so before the interviews began, I started compiling a list of faculty and students with invisible disabilities who had disclosed this information to me. This disclosure usually followed a casual discussion of my dissertation topic. After the student or faculty member disclosed I asked if I could contact them for this study. Some faculty members were referred to me by other faculty familiar with their experience with students with disabilities. Some students were referred to me by other students or faculty that knew them. In cases of students with invisible disabilities if I did not know them, I asked the person referring them to ask them to call me if they were interested. In this way their confidence was not betrayed. Some of the participants I knew prior to beginning this study. Some I had never met before.

Participants

The term participants is used throughout this study. It is more reflective of the active role adults with disabilities and faculty played in this study than the terms informant or respondent. Patton (1990) uses the term informant to refer to the individuals supplying the researcher with names of people who are "information-rich key informants" (p. 176) and those who possess the information. For instance Patton writes, "Those people or events recommended as valuable by a number of different informants" (p. 176). Respondent implies an individual who responds to questions succinctly and possibly without emotion. Participant implies an individual took part in a discussion between colleagues trying to assist one another. The faculty and students who took part in this study were active participants in conversations sharing their experiences with me and in turn some of them asked my advice on matters of accommodation.

An offer to supply all materials to participants into their preferred medium was made, however no participant accepted the offer, whether that be large print regular print text, Braille, audio tape, or electronically mailed at the participant's request.

Characteristics

Disabilities are divided into the categories of visible and invisible. A person with a visible disability is one who is recognized as having a physical or mental impairment when encountered for the first time. The disability is so apparent that no one would refute the person has a disability.

Invisible disabilities are not recognized immediately, if the disability is ever evident to others. Types of invisible disability are visual impairments, auditory impairments, and learning disabilities. Individuals with invisible disabilities are often contradicted when they disclose for accommodation purposes. People question their integrity and their right to accommodations (Carolyn Tyjewski, Testimony before The Ohio State University Board of Trustees, February 4, 1994).

This study includes people from both groups, those with visible and invisible disabilities. A third sample was composed of service providers, administrators, and faculty who have experience working with students with disabilities.

Sample 1: Invisible Disabilities. First, an invisible disability is one that is not readily apparent to another person by looking at or speaking to the individual with a disability. Invisible disabilities represented in this sample are learning disabilities, attention deficient disorder, visual impairment, recovering alcoholic, back injury, severe asthma and arthritis. Second, if I was able to identify the disability of a person they would not have qualified as a person with an invisible disability. I was unable visually to recognize the nature or existence of a disability for any sample participants prior to their disclosure.

This sample consists of seven adults with invisible disabilities ranging in age from 30 to 61 years old. Two African American and two European American women and three European American men participated. Two of the men attended college on a regional campus of a midwestern university, one woman attended an eastern university, and the remaining men and women attended the main campus of a midwestern university. Two

students were beginning coursework for a Ph. D; one student was working on a master's degree; and the rest were undergraduates. The academic fields studied included Black Studies, literature, rehabilitation, psychology, accounting, and education.

Sample 2: Visible Disabilities. First, a visible disability is readily apparent to another person by looking at or speaking to the individual with the disability. Visible disabilities represented in this sample were visual impairments, spinal cord injuries, limb amputation, and spina bifida. This sample consists of eight adults with visible disabilities ranging in age from 24 to 49 years old. All six men and two women participants in this sample are European American. Six participants attended the main campus of a midwestern university while the two male participants attended the regional campus. One student was beginning work on a Ph. D. and one had completed a master's degree. The other six were working on undergraduate degrees. The academic fields studied included education, engineering, social work, communication, and psychology.

Sample 3: Faculty. This study is primarily interested in the experience of the person with a disability. No member of this sample disclosed having a disability to me. This is the only sample containing members without disabilities speaking about their part in receiving or encouraging the accommodation communication. This sample contains nine faculty members and administrators who also teach and have had students with disabilities in their courses, acted as their advisors, or served on their academic committees. Six men and three women worked for a large midwestern university, six on the main campus and three on a regional campus. One self-identified as Native American but culturally Caucasian. The remaining members are European American. They ranged in age from 31 to 64 years old. One member had a master's degree, the other eight had Ph. D.s.. Three held administrative posts as well as having teaching responsibilities. The work titles included: associate, assistant, and full professor, instructor, assistant dean, and director. Two of the participants conduct disability-related research. The fields represented include law,

education, psychology, rehabilitation, and biological sciences. All have had students with disabilities in class. Some served on the candidacy examination and dissertation committees of students with disabilities or acted as the academic advisor.

Number of Participants

Information rich cases are important to developing grounded theory. A preliminary number of participants in each sample stratification was set at 10 individuals. For several reasons, thirty was the maximum number of participants. First, having participated in open meetings at Ohio State University where students with disabilities spoke about accommodation and accessibility issues, ten individuals seemed a reasonable number from what I witnessed, to portray a variety of experiences. Second, time, energy, and monetary resources are limited. For instance, I estimated one interview with an individual with a disability could take five hours and be spread over several sessions. Third, thirty is considered a large number of participants in qualitative studies because of the enormous amounts of data gathered from one interview.

The process of finding participants ended when an intensity sample (Patton, 1990) was in evidence. Intensity samples are cases rich in information on the phenomenon of interest here, the accommodation communication. A study has enough participants when the researcher begins to hear very similar stories, in other words the stories become redundant. Redundancy was achieved when additional information or insights are not apparent with subsequent interviews. Expanding or decreasing the sample size to achieve redundancy (Patton, 1990) allowed data collection to be controlled by emerging theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). When redundancy was achieved the participants in the three samples totaled twenty four members.

Access

Federal regulation prohibits any office serving students with disabilities from giving out the names of their clients. This difficulty would have been overcome by using chain

sampling which Patton (1990) describes as a method to increase the possibility of rich information. I originally intended to: (a) establish contact with the service provider at different universities/colleges serving students with disabilities; (b) schedule an appointment with the office director; (c) describe the nature of my study to the director enlisting his or her assistance; (d) ask these contacts not to explain the nature of my study to potential participants; (e) leave a handout with each contact person outlining pertinent points of the study and what I would like them to do for me; (f) rely on them to inform potential participants; and (g) send a follow up letter to the director reiterating pertinent points of our conversation. Initially, I had also considered requesting an appointment to interview the director or request the names of faculty or staff who fit the criteria of Sample 3.

Instead I developed a list of potential participants who had disclosed to me and fit the criteria mentioned under sample descriptions. A person's name was added to the list when he or she agreed to be interviewed. Chain sampling was used when people on the list were asked if they knew of others who might participate. Participants were asked to have others who fit the study's criteria contact me or get permission for me to contact them. One other way participants were found was by telling students and faculty about the study asking if they knew people who fit the criteria.

There are several reasons I changed the process for finding participants. First, it seemed to me that it would be more efficient to concentrate on one institution because of time constraints and for future research concerns. The same study can be conducted at another institution similar in characteristics or very different to the original university. The data can be compared to see if new insights are gathered and if the experiences of students and faculty are the same. Second, it would be in the self-interest of disability services to approach clients who are happy with the university and disability services. In fact, had I gone through disability services the choice of participants would have been someone else's

not mine. Third, depending on students with disabilities to volunteer for my study through a third party meant there might be participants and there might not. It would depend on how proactive the disability services contact was in assisting this study. Also, the nature of one who volunteers is inherently different from one who does not. There may end up being more "helper" personalities represented in the study. Of the fifteen students who did agree to be interviewed for this study, only two had previously spoken to me on disability issues. Ten student participants I knew only because of this study. Of the nine faculty participants, two I did not know prior to the interview.

Settings

Qualitative studies investigate phenomena in the setting in which it occurs. This can be by interview or observation of people or inanimate objects or the surroundings. Eisner (1991) describes field focused as non manipulative with situations and objects intact in their natural environment. Lincoln and Guba (1985) "suggest that realities are wholes that cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts, nor can they be fragmented for separate study of the parts" (p. 39).

A more complete picture of the context may prove invaluable for description of the life experience of the participants in this study. Inherent in the concept of developing grounded theory is the notion that insights will come from the interlocking mechanisms of tacit, experiential, and practical knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The environment surrounding the participant became part of the experience of the interview especially since participants selected the interview location. All of the members of the faculty sample invited me to their offices for the interview. All the students on the regional campus were interviewed in a private office used for meetings. One student was interviewed on the main campus in an the office of an absent faculty member. The remaining students were interviewed in their homes.

To conduct naturalistic research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) it is important to reduce and recognize the ways in which the researcher manipulates the data collection process. I can reduce the ways I manipulate the situation by allowing the participant in the study to choose the location for the interview. It is important that the interview occur at a place where the person is most comfortable. There are several reasons for this.

First, there is a concern about architectural barriers. Many things can effectively bar a person with a disability from a building or make a person uncomfortable. Second, people speak more freely in settings where they do not feel threatened in any way. Third, when working with people with disabilities there can be medical aspects of the disability such as adhering to medication schedules or diminished stamina levels. If I decided for the adult where they would be most comfortable, I would be manipulating the situation and decreasing their voice in the process, two things that are counter to qualitative work.

Data Collection

Data collection was achieved by conducting structured interviews of the participants in the study. Participants were told they could supplement the information collected through interviews by keeping a journal which none of them did. I was prepared with additional questions to consider for the journal but there seemed no real need to encourage the journals because the interviews were complete. I took field notes and kept a journal. Explanations of these components are contained in this section.

Participants

Data was collected from the participants in a two forms, interviews and personal journals. Each is described below.

Interviews

In order to complete one in depth interview I estimated needing about five real hours of discussion with each participant from samples one and two. Each session was estimated to last between 1 to 2 hours depending on the stamina level and medical condition

of the individual with 2 to 4 visits. It was important that individuals be able to tell their stories in their words. Individuals with disabilities have been protected, nurtured and cared for frequently at the expense of their self image and despite their competencies, being spoken for and about, not to (Shapiro, 1993).

Interviews were conducted on a one to one basis. Each interview was tape recorded with participants' approval and transcribed exactly as it occurred. Two copies of a letter of intent (See Appendix A) were taken to each interview. After both were signed, one was left with each participant and I kept the other copy. The interviews ranged from forty-five minutes to three hours. Even though appointments were scheduled for an hour, all participants not only allowed me to continue past that time but encouraged me to do so when necessary. It took six months to interview all participants and to complete the data collection phase of this study.

Instruments

Two different interview forms were used. This was necessary because of the perspectives of the samples. Samples 1 and 2 are composed of students, while Sample 3 is made up of faculty and administrators. Samples 1 and 2 (See Appendix B) share the perspective of (a) the client or consumer with a disability, (b) a student of higher education, and (c) employee. Sample 3 was interviewed for the perspective of instructor, committee member, and advisor to students with disabilities (See Appendix C) in institutions of higher education.

Standardized open-ended questions were used during the interviews. According to Patton (1990) standardized open-ended questions are used to "minimize interviewer effects by asking the same question of each respondent" (p. 285). Other reasons for using this approach are easier data analysis by pre-organizing the data by question facilitating comparison; and availability of the instrument for review by participants, dissertation committee members and other interested parties. Standardized questionnaires focused the

interview making for more efficient use of time. The interview form contained questions revolving around each of the two environments of interest: higher education and employment. Areas of interest include the participant's comfort level when discussing their disability and discussing their disability for "accommodation purposes."

An attempt was made to avoid framing the questions in such a way that responses were directed by the questions. It is important to use the language of the participants. The concepts of the questions should encourage the participants to respond by describing their own feelings and memories, not with an answer implied by the question as being technically correct and pleasing to the interviewer. The questions began as frequently as possible with the invitation to "describe an event" or "tell me about it."

Interview Form for Samples 1 and 2. Interview questions stemmed from the research question and the subsidiary questions. This instrument contains 38 questions (see Appendix B). The questions are separated by categories of interest to the researcher. A central theme for a group of questions may facilitate efficient data collection. Major categories are: disabling condition, self disclosure, higher education, training, adult education programs, and employment.

Interview Form for Sample 3. Fifteen questions were written for this sample (see Appendix C). The questions are in three categories: general context; education, and employment. These questions arise from the subsidiary questions and from an attempt to explore the perspective of the receiver of the accommodation communication.

Participants' Personal Journals

Participants were asked if they would like to keep a personal journal. The intention was to provide a mechanism for free thought unencumbered by the presence of the researcher. However, no participant was required to provide me with a journal and none did. The journal was simply a safeguard for any participant that might have felt uncomfortable speaking to me or wanting an opportunity to elaborate. It would have

provided an opportunity for reflections on the questions and areas of interest to this study without the presence of an unfamiliar person.

Since this was an optional activity, the information would have been used only to supplement the interviews. The journals were never considered a primary source of data. Since no participants felt the need to keep a journal, and none of the interviews were rushed or uncomfortable for either interviewer or participant, it may be there were no major problems with the interview process.

If a participant had chosen to keep a journal there were guidelines to follow. The guidelines were simply to give some structure to what otherwise might be a daunting task, even to someone who volunteers to keep a journal. The first guideline was a ten week period beginning with the first interview session allotted for keeping a journal. A specific length of time may decrease procrastination. Participants know a real deadline exists by the setting of a date for document collection. Participants would have been encouraged to write in several ways. Topic areas and terms from the ADA were prepared as suggestions and would have been provided in an accessible format (see Appendix D). The medium used for the personal journal would have depended upon accommodations needed by the person.

Researcher

Data was collected from the researcher in two forms, field notes and a personal journal. Both are described below.

Field Notes

Field notes were taken during the interviews to note the participant's physical conditions, demeanors, attitudes, and body language. The environment where the interviews occurred was described. These notes are subject to my descriptive and observational biases. In other words, what was recorded were incidents and settings which stood out to me. What I thought might be important in the beginning, turned out not to be.

The interview became a conversation. My original concern with the comfort of participants and the environment influencing their responses turned out to be unnecessary.

Personal Journal

A journal was kept including my analysis and interpretation of the events and environment surrounding the interview process. The intent was to write in the journal immediately after each session and as thoughts occurred to me about the exchange. Very few entries were made after each session. The journal was to provide an outlet for me if I needed one after the interviews were completed. Instead during the interviews I became part of a conversation not judging what was said at the time. Most of the entries were recorded as data was coded. As I listened to the transcripts for coding purposes, there were times when I had an emotional response to what I heard. These responses were recorded in the journal.

The researcher's journal was an initial data analysis tool utilized to compare and examine the experiences of one participant to the experiences of other participants. This follows Glaser and Strauss's (1967) development of grounded theory that data are collected and examined with reflection occurring simultaneously. Keeping a journal in this manner allowed memos to myself in accord with Bogdan and S. K. Bilken's (1992) suggestions to promote initial analysis.

One of the purposes of keeping a journal was to provide a place to vent emotions or work out newly realized assumptions. Peshkin (1988) found a productive way to vent emotions and assumptions by labeling his subjectivities and differentiating between the types that emerged. He recognized that any given situation will cause some subjectivities to emerge that could interfere with data collection. For Peshkin (1988) enjoyable or unpleasant experiences provoke warm and cool spots in one's emotional make-up. These warm and cool spots indicate surfacing subjectivities. Subjectivity should be monitored in

the way best suited to each researcher. Peshkin used index cards, immediately recording his reactions to situations that spawned emotional responses; I kept a journal.

Levels of Comparison

Glaser and Strauss (1967) discuss the need for different levels of data collected. These levels are most important when analyzing the data using "*comparative analysis*" (p.21; italics in original). Each level acts as a unit to compare to another unit. Relationships become apparent within and between units. These relationships may form the basis of emerging theory that, of course, is grounded in the data. My data sets can be divided into at least six levels for comparative analysis.

Grounded theory can emerge as each level is compared within and between the other levels for similarities and contrasted searching for differences. Glaser and Strauss (1967) stress the importance of finding units to maximize differences and others to minimize the differences. Looking at the data's relationship at the various levels in this way facilitates looking at large segments of text or the entire stories of people. Glaser and Strauss describe it this way:

The constant comparing of many groups draws the sociologist's attention to their many similarities and differences. Considering these leads him to generate abstract categories and their properties, which, since they emerge from the data, will clearly be important to a theory explaining the kind of behavior under observation. Lower level categories emerge rather quickly during the early phases of data collection. Higher level, overriding and integrating, conceptualizations--and the properties that elaborate them--tend to come later during the joint collection, coding, and analysis of the data. (1967, p. 36)

First Level

The first level of coding and analysis was the smallest unit of comparison, namely each participant, and the actual level at which the analysis started. The second reading of each interview transcript produced categories, themes, and interview questions of importance. The categories and themes represented similarities and differences in member experiences. In the end, there were nine members of the faculty sample; seven members of

the students with invisible disabilities; and, eight members of the students with visible disabilities sample.

Second Level

Each of the three samples (visible, invisible, and faculty), represented the next level of comparison. The data description and preliminary analysis of each sample is reported for each sample in separate chapters, four, five, and six. The experiences of the student samples were similar in some instances and different in others. This contributed to the development of the accommodation communication model.

Third Level

Within each sample participants sharing a common disability or people with similar disabilities was a third level of comparison. For example, a similar disability may include individuals who are blind with those that are visually impaired. Or individuals with learning disabilities can be grouped with individuals with attention deficient disorder. Again, similarities and differences were noted between individuals with the same or equivalent disabilities according to medical practice. This proved natural to do when considering the experiences of individuals with learning disabilities. Participants with vision impairments were in both samples their reflections on their different experiences with instructors was useful to the development of chapter seven where the experiences of the three samples contributed to a model of the accommodation communication.

The groups sharing a common disability can contain only one member. In some cases there was only one member in a disability group. The students with invisible disabilities contained several individuals with learning disabilities. Students with visible disabilities contained several students with spinal cord injuries. In both samples there were participants who became disabled at a young age and some who became disabled or learned of their disability as adults. This shared experience contributed to understanding the reasons disclosure was easier for some participants than for others.

Fourth Level

The fourth level was a comparison of different groups of people with similar disabilities with other groups of people with similar disabilities within one of the student samples. This did not occur. Each sample only had one group of individuals with a similar disability. However, within each sample there was a group of students who experienced disability as children and another group that experienced disability as adults. This level of comparison occurred around the occurrence of disability instead of the type of disability.

Fifth Level

The fifth level compared the groups of people with similar disabilities between the samples of adults with invisible and visible disabilities. This took place with participants who were visually impaired with three students being visible disabled and one invisibly disabled.

Sixth Level

Reflection on the experiences of the samples and the third, fourth, and fifth levels provided the impetus for emergent theory. This emergent theory is discussed in chapter seven.

Levels Not To Be Considered and Other Considerations

All levels and groups could be further divided by racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, class and age characteristics. These characteristics are not considered in this study. In the event that any of these characteristics was important to a participant then it would have been considered in light of that individual's story. The social cultural allegiances that exist within the disability community or that do not exist, depending on the perspective of the individual are also not considered in this study. This means that I did not investigate the phenomena of disability culture, or disability as minority status.

Levels three through five required a breakdown by member disability for comparison. In the students with invisible disabilities sample three students had learning

disabilities, one had attention deficient disorder, one had arthritis, one had asthma, and one had a visual impairment. In the students with visible disabilities sample there were three students with visual impairments, one with a limb amputation, three with spinal cord injuries, and one with spina bifida. The faculty sample did not contain any members who disclosed having a disability to me.

Further investigation into the experiences of students with specific disabilities can be pursued in later work. The data and current research indicate that more work is needed examining the experiences of students with specific disabilities such as learning disabilities, attention deficient disorder, and psychiatric disorders. The same interview guide can be used in the future for a deeper look into specific experiences. There are two reasons for this. First, the purpose of this study was to compare the experiences of students with visible disabilities versus those with invisible disabilities and faculty. The purpose never was to examine the experience of students with specific disabilities to other students with a different disability. Second, there are not enough members of the samples with the same disability to learn much about their experience.

Processing of Data

Processing of data included various steps involved in managing the data such as coding, maintaining a codebook, and using computer programs for organizing and sorting data.

Coding

Ambiguity is increased using grounded theory methods. Developing grounded theory eliminates the neat and tidy use of pre-formed hypotheses or searching the data for evidence to support current theory. There are also dangers in forcing the data into categories in an effort to maximize efficiency and keep within time frames as recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1992). The potential for fabricating categories out of necessity or in seeing the data in sterile slips of text comes with forcing data into layer upon layer of

categories. For these reasons, I chose to follow the more intuitive grounded theory methods discussed originally by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

I did what Marshall (1981) describes as the experience of letting the data speak for themselves by searching for themes. There are dangers in doing this since searching for themes to emerge from chunks of data will take more time. Marshall (1982) writes, "the units are fairly obvious - you get chunks of meaning" (p. 397). Corbin and Strauss (1992) advise us to set up our categories as if they were static. Marshall writes "I don't do that" because "the categories build up all the time" (p. 397). Categories evolve, grow, and flourish. Some are left aside as more powerful themes take their places since the category may be revisited or forever forgotten. Glaser and Strauss (1967) concur with Marshall (1982) that some categories will be forgotten while others will flourish. Those that flourish become the beginnings of theory grounded in the data.

Codebook

The codebook contained the keys to all abbreviations and the reason for its development. Fictitious first names were used as aliases for each participant. Questions from the instruments that emerged as important categories were depicted by a key phrase from the question. Emergent themes are categories that became apparent by reviewing the transcripts, field notes, and journals. Each data record carried additional identification for organizational purposes such as transcript line numbers, category and question labels, and the code name of the participant.

Codes are often based on initial conceptual frameworks or literature reviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Neither were intentionally the source of coding for this study. Grounded theory should emerge according to the guidelines of Glaser and Strauss (1967) by intuitively comparing levels of data.

Data Management

I used a Macintosh computer with the programs FileMaker Pro and Microsoft Word 6.0 to manage and organize the data. Microsoft Word is the word processing tool that contained the original transcripts. FileMaker Pro is a data analysis tool allowing one to create as many categories for one chunk of text as necessary. Transcripts and data records are stored on 3.5" floppy diskettes. Loose leaf notebooks for each sample contain hard copy printouts of transcripts, data records in their final order, outline, and codebooks.

The Actual Process

The process of coding was done one sample at a time. I completely finished the writing up of the data for each sample before moving on to another sample. The first step was to establish code names for the participants. Then each tape was listened to while reading the transcript, prepared by a paid transcriber, making corrections as necessary. A few categories emerged during this stage to be jointed down in a codebook. Some observations were recorded in a journal while listening to the tapes. It took from an hour to three hours to listen to a tape. After all the transcripts were reviewed the lines were numbered. After all transcripts were checked in this manner the coding process began. Each transcript was read looking for categories to emerge. As a category emerged it was named and placed in the codebook. Data was coded by marking the location on the transcript then creating a data record in FileMaker Pro to store the text. Each data record contained the code name of the participant, transcript line numbers, and places for question and category labels. Data chunks could be labeled with a question tag and a category tag; and some were. After each transcript was read and coded creating data records, the data records were sorted by question and category tag and printed.

I did not review the questionnaire or subsidiary questions before coding the data. When a category emerged that I thought was from the interview guide, this was verified and recorded in the codebook. Categories corresponding to questions were stored in a field

labeled question. The codebook was divided into (a) responses to the questions on the interview guide and (b) themes emerging from the words of the participant.

The next phase of coding was to scrutinize the list of question and category labels, creating groupings and the beginning of a writing outline. The data records were organized by category and group. Each record in a group was read for fit with the other records in the group. Additional categories emerged at this time while some were discarded or combined. More detailed subcategories emerged from this reading. The new labels were handwritten on each record. This process continued and the outline was revised several times. To manage the data records and coordinate them with the outline, colored paper clips were used to keep the data records together. The colors were recorded on the outline. The outline guided the process of writing up the data. Before each section of the outline was written the data records for the category were read again, sorted, and some were discarded or re-labeled. Not all of the text from a data record was used in the write up. The text that was used was marked off as it was included in text.

Each sample was completely written up without reference to any other sample. The write up of the data was considered a step in the analysis of the data. In fact, there were several weeks that lapsed between the finish of one sample and the beginning of the next enough time for the memory of one sample to be forgotten. Proofreading and tightening of the write up of each sample occurred once all samples were through the data write up. This entire process took about nine months.

Timeline

An attempt has been made to be as realistic as possible by including other demands on the researcher's time that may interfere with this process. The timeline is displayed in Appendix F. It represents the amount of time each part of this process took organized by the academic quarter system utilized by Ohio State.

Data Transformation

Wolcott (1994) breaks data transformation down into three parts, description, analysis, and interpretation. Description is an accounting of the event through researcher observations or reported participants' viewpoints. This must occur before the explanation of the reasons for the event which Wolcott labels, analysis. During analysis essential features are identified in order to systematically describe the interrelationships among them. Interpretation is the meaning that an event has for those studied and those studying it. Interpretation involves insight, using the researcher's sensibility and discriminatory capacity to process meanings.

Description

According to Wolcott (1994) description is the phase of data transformation that empowers the study's reader "to reach independent conclusions as to what is going on or how things come to have particular meanings in particular contexts" (p. 13). The researcher's purpose should be clearly identified. Purposiveness enables one to determine what needs to be described and with how much detail.

Wolcott (1994) discusses a variety of methods to use when writing up the description, analysis, and interpretation of data. The method I used for description is to follow the analytical framework, grounded theory. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) as many levels as possible should be created that provide different ways to look at the data. This study utilized six levels of comparison as discussed under the heading, Levels of Comparison.

Each level was compared within and between the other levels for similarities and contrasted searching for differences. Some categories were selected to maximize differences while others were chosen to minimize the differences. Looking at the interrelationship of data at the various levels facilitated the description of the experience of

participants of the three samples. The act of separating the data into categories and of describing the data in the categories stimulates the analytic phase.

Grounded Theory

Searching vigilantly for categories hoping that theory will emerge was difficult. Glaser and Strauss (1967) characterize the researcher knowing, "what he knows, not only because he has been in the field and because he has carefully discovered and generated hypotheses, but also because "in his bones' he feels the worth of his final analysis" (p. 225). They speak of "insight as a source of theory" (p. 251) grounded in the data. The person with the insight is the researcher, the primary instrument of data collection, description, and analysis. My intent was to follow the process Glaser and Strauss (1967) described for discovering grounded theory and allow myself to become the instrument of description, analysis, and interpretation as illustrated by Wolcott (1994).

Properties. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend developing grounded theory using four properties. The properties recommended are fit, understandability, applicability, and control. The properties of emergent theory were interrelated in the following ways. The first property concerns fit to the area of use. The areas of use of this study are employment and higher education; specifically, the relationships that emerged from the data concerning the hiring process, and the training and development programs in the work world. In the educational arena of academic accommodation, the data was examined for relevance to the student-instructor dynamic as it pertained to coursework and the student-academic counselor dynamic as it pertained to program maintenance.

Other properties required that practitioners understand the theory and be able to apply it to "diverse daily situations" while "exerting partial control over the structure and process of daily situations" (p. 237). One of the daily situations examined was the accommodation communication, paying particular attention to when it occurs, under what conditions, and with what results. Adult education and rehabilitation practitioners will find

this study useful in instructional situations that occur during the transition cycle of college to work. This study has applications for the daily situations rehabilitation counselors find themselves in when furnishing career counseling advice to clients.

Research to Practice. The major purpose of grounded theory is to link research to practice. "A practitioner's knowledge is usually experiential and non theoretical. Grounded theory--if it has truly been generated from the situation and is 'grounded' in the data--will give the practitioner a conceptual tool with which to guide practice" (Merriam & Simpson, 1989, p. 100). Both academic areas that I am interested in, Adult Education and Rehabilitation Counseling have strong links to practitioners. My hope is that theory will emerge that does provide assistance to the practitioner. Assistance or usefulness to practitioners will not occur unless I make an effort to address a practitioner audience in both fields.

Triangulation

Triangulation was used to strengthen the study design. Patton (1990) describes four types of triangulation: methods triangulation, triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation and theory/perspective triangulation. Triangulation adds a cross checking mechanism to the design. Data examined through a variety of sources does not necessarily agree. The purpose of triangulation is to provide other lenses from which to view a research question. Triangulation is a method for checking the accuracy or agreement of methods, sources, analysis, and theory.

This study used triangulation of sources by utilizing three samples: students with visible disabilities, students with invisible disabilities, and faculty. The data were triangulated by comparing the data from each sample group across developing categories. I originally intended to compare the various mechanisms of data collection (Participant interviews, participant journals, my field notes, my reflective journal) between and within

each type as another means of triangulation. Not enough data was gathered to make this comparison worthwhile.

Analysis

Analysis includes recognizing the interrelationships between the data. These relationships represent the intertwined patterns of explanation coming from the data. The comparison and description of levels of data enabled the identification of patterns. These patterns emerged as the researcher reads more about concepts that became apparent upon further examination of the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Wolcott (1994) writes that "analysis rests on agreed-upon knowledge [and] the recognition of mutually recognized properties or standards" (p. 25). Insight and pattern recognition was inspired by going back and reading the work of others on concepts appearing to emerge from the data.

Self as Instrument

The "self as instrument" means data was collected, described, analyzed, and interpreted through an imperfect, biased person not through a neutral, unassuming machine. It also means the researcher knows the topic through active learning and experience. My disability-related experiences included membership in a student advocacy group, membership in professional organizations, work on a task force, participation on several listservs, subscribing to magazines, and reading autobiographies, histories, and stories of people with disabilities as well as disability studies literature.

In the positivistic paradigm every effort is made to control extraneous variables, manipulate a situation, and turn all data into its numeric equivalent in order to statistically analyze the data to determine the results of the study keeping researcher bias at a minimum. Conventional research seeks "conformity to a standard criterion applied uniformly by a clutch of judges whose scores can be correlated to determine the level of consensus is characteristic" (Eisner, 1991; p. 34). Not only is every attempt made to eliminate researcher

influence, the contamination caused is labeled and placed into categories and subcategories, for instance internal and external validity.

The post positivist paradigm recognizes that in any type of research the researcher influences and is influenced by the study. Rather than trying to eliminate this influence qualitative researchers acknowledge this influence as inseparable from the instrument. The researcher personally "engages the situation and makes sense of it" (Eisner, 1991, p. 34).

Frame of reference, discrimination and sensibility are the mechanisms making up the self as instrument. From inception to final interpretation all aspects of a research problem are filtered through the researcher as instrument of analysis. The mechanisms that allow self as instrument are a unique frame of reference, the ability to finely discriminate between and within, and the application of sensibility. How these mechanisms are recognized and used affects the quality of any research endeavor.

Frame of Reference. Components of the frame of reference include world view, paradigm, historical context, socio-economic factors, and all other things that occur in a life to influence the way a person sees and feels about anything. These components determine what the researcher will see.

My world view includes the notion that until we are all treated fairly and equivalently all of our choices are limited by society's superficial restraints. Many aspects of the postpositivist paradigm appeal to me as a researcher, for instance my concern for voice and stating assumptions. At the same time, an analytical quasi positivist framework as found in Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1992) was used in this study. Defining moments in history involved the civil rights movement of African Americans, the Viet Nam anti-war protest and Muhammad Ali's willingness to lose his title instead of betraying his beliefs. In my childhood I befriended a boy with a visual impairment, worked with institutionalized adolescents with mental retardation, and have maintained a friendship with a woman of my own age who is developmentally disabled.

My parents raised me in a middle class white suburb of Cleveland, Ohio sending me to parochial schools. Many other incidents make up the frame of reference of any individual. It is important to cite the main ones, after all I am not the subject of this study.

My frame of reference determines what questions or problems are of interest to me. Someone else can pose a problem to me but if it does not strike an already existing chord in my imagination, I will not pursue an answer. If I pursue a question, my capability for discrimination and sensibility will determine how I go about conducting the other facets of a project.

It is important for a researcher to know and understand the assumptions making up their own context. The importance is in understanding and articulating the schema underlying insights into the relationships between the data collected. Stated goals of a study, act as evidence illustrating the way data is filtered through the researcher.

Discrimination. Given my frame of reference, I must see what exists to be seen by perceiving behaviors that are important to understanding the problem. It is necessary then to be able to differentiate what counts from what doesn't (Eisner, 1991). "The expert knows what to neglect. Knowing what to neglect means having a sense for the significant and possessing a framework that makes the search for the significant efficient" (Eisner, 1991, p. 34). Since I am inexperienced, there is the danger that I will not know what to neglect, or what is truly important and what is not. One safeguard, Wolcott (1994) suggests to assist the inexperienced researcher during the dissertation phase, is a committee of experienced faculty to lend support and guidance on what is important and what should be neglected.

Sensibility. Sensibility is influenced by a researcher's frame of reference, degree of connoisseurship and values. The researcher must cultivate a schema by which to judge the significance of what is observed. Sensibility provides the means to determine which of a complex array of data and relationships should be added to the schema. Concepts or events

that have a particular value or meaning within our frame of reference are noticed. Noticing what we already value increases its importance to a study.

The implication is that what we don't value we don't see (Eisner, 1991). "The 'sense making' is always value constituting...privileging one ordering of the 'facts' over others" according to Richardson (1993; p. 12). If a researcher has joined an elite group of connoisseurs, then an extreme level of sensitivity has been developed to what is important. The danger is that what is less valued will be dismissed and left unobserved and not investigated creating dominant research agendas acting to suppress (intentionally or unintentionally through neglect) what is the less valued.

Attention To Particulars

Particulars provide flavor or uniqueness to an individual or case study. In order to illustrate the particular features of a situation or individual the researcher should develop finely tuned perception to be aware of the distinctiveness of each situation. The unique strengths and idiosyncrasies of each researcher determine what is chosen to be described establishing the flavor of the description.

"Information *becomes* data only if a researcher is able to make it meaningful" (Eisner, 1991; p. 185; italics in original). Bits of information and observation become data only with an infusion of my imagination because, "it is imagination that gives the world namable categories that package what might otherwise be unexperienced or chaotic" (p. 185). The ability to name categories and picture relationships within and between categories is important to the discovery of grounded theory.

Even though theories and labels can help us visualize other theories and labels, this orderliness can stifle the imagination blocking fresh insights. "We tend to seek what we know how to find. What we know how to find is influenced by the tools we have learned to use" (Eisner, 1991; p. 186). The tools I possess affect my capacity for imagination. The more you know about a particular subject the more you can visualize and create connections

between phenomena as long as the subject excites you. It is important not only to read the academic literature but to become familiar with what the humanities have to offer about the subject. Movies, novels, and autobiographies that depict the life experiences of people with disabilities or the stereotypical views maintained by the dominant society, both provide a rich context giving me schema for the "particulars" I will look for in the data.

Interpretation

Interpretation is the "threshold in thinking and writing at which the researcher transcends factual data and cautious analyses and begins to probe into what is to be made of them" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 36). Interpretation grows out of the foundation laid by using data for good descriptions and the connection between the description of data and its subsequent interpretation should be evident to the reader. "Interpretation is more subtle than analysis. ... A pervasive problem with interpretation is the temptation to reach too far beyond the case itself in speculating about its meanings or implications. Interpretation is not bound to the descriptive account as tightly as analysis" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 37). The ability to interpret the relationships found in the data is important to developing grounded theory. Below is a discussion of the techniques used in this study.

Writing Up the Data

Richardson (1993) discusses writing up data as "a way of 'knowing'--a method of discovery and analysis" (p. 2). Creativity and imagination allow one to nurture the chunks of text gathered from many participants into whole stories with meaning for others who may live in other worlds with different perspectives. Being able to visualize themes encourages their emergence from the chunks of text organized into artificially imposed categories. Vision and inspiration are necessary to develop theory and especially necessary for grounded theory to flourish. If one uses traditional methods of dissertation writing, sorting, and outlining points using a "static writing model," the creative process is

suppressed. According to Richardson, the act of writing itself should be a "method of inquiry," of further discovery.

The Presence Of Voice In Text. The presence of voice in text focuses on the attachment of the writer's signature or personality onto the words on the page of academic writing. This is valued in various degrees by qualitative researchers. It is a big step for some to write in the first person singular. While Lather (1991) argues for deconstruction of the positivists' pretense of neutrality in writing, she still asks can the "foregrounding of one's own perspectivity ...be anything but an intrusive voice? How do we explore our own reasons for doing the research without putting ourselves back at the center?" (p. 157). Neutrality is an impossible goal. Recognizing this does not eliminate the researcher's responsibility to recognize her own assumptions and control them from becoming the focus of the research.

The presence of voice and expressiveness according to Eisner (1991) is to further human understanding. This can only be done with "a person, not a machine" evident in the writing. It takes a person with empathy for the participants and situation to be a conduit of the voice of those being studied. The voice of the researcher must be human and personable to allow the voice of those being studied to be heard.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation. My plan for writing up each of these elements of the data transformation begins with the description section. Using one of Wolcott's (1994) techniques for describing data, progressive focusing, I will start with the larger components of my study gradually focusing on smaller parts. First, each sample was described and analyzed as a whole, examining the flavor that all three samples acquire from the individuals composing it. Second, the three samples were compared and contrasted with descriptions of similarities and differences followed by an analysis of the reasons for the similarities and differences. The analysis phase is written up according to Wolcott's fifth suggestion, "Identify patterned regularities in the data" (1994, p. 33). This goes hand

in hand with grounded theory techniques which demonstrate how to systematically find the patterns within/between the data.

Wolcott (1994) warns that novice researchers should err on the side of too much description and analysis and less interpretation. To fit within the framework of grounded theory, however, interpretation should flow from the analysis of the data. If one gets this far using grounded theory techniques then theory has emerged grounded in the data which is my goal. The process and the results will still have value even if no new theory is readily apparent.

Internal Validity Concerns

There are two in internal validity concerns, subjectivity and usefulness, which are discussed below.

Subjectivity. All of a researcher's characteristics compose her subjectivity potentially affecting the results of a research project (Peshkin, 1988). During the course of research, Peshkin (1988) advises that researchers "should systematically identify their subjectivity" (p. 17). Not doing this results in one's personal agenda seeping into the project. It is better to clarify a personal agenda to know when, where, and how it may interfere or enhance the research process than to ignore the fact that we all have an agenda. Clarification is an attempt at controlling subjectivity. This has been done throughout this chapter by an identification of assumptions and the discussion of self as instrument.

"Subjectivity is not a badge of honor [it's] like a garment that cannot be removed; [present in] both the research and non-research aspects of our life" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). At the very least, Peshkin writes we should disclose "where self and subject became joined" (1988, p. 17). Eisner (1991) stresses recognizing subjectivity as important for the positive exploitation of self as instrument. Each one of us brings our subjectivity to a project imprinting our unique signature and insight onto the project.

One should not deny one's own bias and perspective but realize that it is what the researcher brings to the process (Marshall, 1981). Bias cannot be eliminated. Nor can the researcher magically transform herself into a neutral unassuming conduit for the data. As the instrument of analysis, the knowledge I have attained combined with my reality will be the filter that I sift the data through.

No knowledge is objective; all knowledge--whether we are talking about the folk knowledge of ordinary people or the formal knowledge generated by research--is subjective. All knowledge, in other words, reflects the conceptions, and metaphors of the knower. These conceptions and metaphors are not so much determined by the data; rather they help determine what the data mean and ... even what the data are. (Donmoyer, 1995; p. 14-15)

In an effort to control or simply to recognize my bias I wrote in a journal. This was done when I was having an emotional response to reading an answer to a question during the coding process. Most frequently the reactions were negative and angry in response to a participant in the faculty sample. I wrote a response to the participant in the journal and moved on. In addition to the journal I worked closely with a student who acted as peer reviewer. We met as needed every few weeks from data collection on to discuss coding issues, emotional reactions, and many other items relevant to writing the different chapters of this document. I acted as her peer reviewer.

Usefulness. Marshall (1981) speaks of the researcher as the instrument the data will be analyzed through. This instrument is not sterile. It comes with many biases. These biases, like bacteria, can cause infection and disease or be necessary to survival and growth. The same unknowns--risks or benefits--are present with researcher as instrument. The researcher could contaminate the findings by not really listening to what is being said by the participants. Or she could uncover some theme that emerges into a useful theory. Usefulness will be judged by the readers of the work, it can only be assumed by the author.

External Validity Concerns

Generalizability, and perspectivism and transferability are discussed as external validity concerns.

Generalizability. There has been no attempt to embark on a study with findings generalizable to a larger population. Usefulness and transferability instead are the values that this study should be judged by. The usefulness of this work is not in the ability of readers to generalize the findings from the samples to populations of adults with disabilities or to the population of faculty. The ideas presented and the themes that emerge may provide a conceptual framework that has merit when the reader's situation and particular experience are compared to the experiences reported in the findings of this study.

"What we cannot say we often cannot see" (Donmoyer, 1990; p. 187). Or if a thing does not exist for us then we will not ask about it, what we have no personal knowledge of does not exist for us. You have to have a basic understanding of a phenomenon in order to wonder about it. And yet as we learn we apply the information gained from one experience to another comparing similarities and differences, generalizing from what is known unto situations newly experienced (Donmoyer, 1990).

Credibility walks hand in hand with generalizability. Whether research is credible or generalizable or not, is up to the reader's interpretation of a study. The findings may not explicitly apply to the reader's life because she or he works with a different group of people in a different society. Research findings do "allow us to experience vicariously unique situations and unique individuals within our own culture" (Donmoyer, 1990; p. 193) or other cultures.

These vicarious experiences help researchers by providing inexpensive and efficient ways to know something we didn't personally create. If a reader finds a study useful in any way then the findings are pertinent to that reader's work. We do literature reviews so that we can vicariously experience the work that has already been done without having to

replicate it all. Usefulness may be in providing an opportunity to live an experience through the writer, that the reader otherwise would not experience. Or a study provides insight by allowing the reader "to see different things and to see differently things he has seen before" (Donmoyer, 1990; p. 193).

Perspectivism and Transferability.

Rival interpretations often reflect the use of alternative theoretical languages, and languages are not true or false, only more or less adequate. Even adequacy can only be assessed in terms of particular purposes in particular contexts, and ultimately it must be the reader that decides on the relative correctness of rival interpretations. (Donmoyer, 1990; p. 194)

How correct something appears to a reader will depend on how credible, real, and ultimately useful a study is to a reader. Truth varies according to the viewpoint of the person concerned with truth. As Eisner (1991) puts it, "The issue turns on what counts as evidence" (p. 109) and what counts as evidence is determined by the originator of the proposal with the advice of advisors or mentors and this study's audience.

Summary

This chapter furnished the details of data collection, description, analysis, and interpretation. A preliminary exploration of the theoretical framework of this study has been conducted in accordance with the principles of grounded theory. Particular attention has been made to the concept of voice. This includes a balanced, fair representation of both the participants' voice and the researcher's voice.

The next chapter (four) contains a description and preliminary analysis of the faculty sample. The following two chapters (five and six) contain descriptions and preliminary analyzes of the remaining two samples: students with invisible and students with visible disabilities. Chapter Seven consists of a comparison of the similarities and differences found in the three samples. The final chapter examines the relevance of the findings to the field of adult education, rehabilitation services, and other practitioners that work with adults with disabilities.

CHAPTER 4

DATA DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS: FACULTY SAMPLE

This chapter describes and analyzes the data gathered from interviews with nine faculty of a large midwestern university. Some participants also have administrative roles. Members of the samples are referred to as participants in the text. When their role as instructor is important that word is used to indicate teaching responsibilities. Text from the interview transcripts was cited using the line numbers from each transcript to indicate a quote's original position.

Five major categories were discovered during the initial analysis of the data: (a) accommodation communication, (b) negotiating accommodations, (c) making assumptions, and (d) obstacles to employment. Each category contains several sections which are sometimes further broken down into subsections.

Accommodation Communication

The accommodation communication involves the request for access to instructional materials or information provided by an instructor to all students. Either party can initiate the request which may include conversation or simply handing over a form to the instructor. The sections grouped under accommodation communication are validation, timing of the request, communicating expectations, access to information, and improvements in the accommodation communication.

Validation

Validation refers to a verbal or written requirement of the instructor that is used to verify the student's claim of disability and right to accommodation. According to the data, validation of disability status happened in two ways, either (a) the student provides the professor proper written or verbal documentation of accommodation, or (b) the professor requires the written documentation or counselor name and number of the student requesting accommodation. As one person described it, "Usually they come in with a semi-official looking hunk of paper" (Susan 276). One instructor required documentation in all cases, "they [students should] contact the office of student disabilities and they would then tell me that this student has been registered with their office and is entitled to accommodation and specifying what it would be" (Jeb 092-095). Juxtaposed with this requirement was this sentiment, "I think most students in that sense are fair. If they tell you that they are, they are" (Rod 300-301). At times, verbal accommodation requests are honored by professors without an accompanying request for written documentation. There are other instructors who require documentation if they think they are being "conned" or if a student's accommodation needs seem unreasonable to the instructor. For instance, "I've never had a problem with people taking more time than I had available. I guess if it became a problem and the person still needed more time then I probably would request some documentation" (Mark 158-162).

The other form of validation occurs when an accommodation statement appears on the syllabus. When an accommodation statement appears on a syllabus, it makes visible a normally invisible condition, that of having a disability. Four professors provided formal written notice of accommodation on syllabi. Two of these professors conduct disability-related research. Both of them provided full accommodation statements. Two others had narrow statements including "if you need things in larger print, for people with some sight interference" (Abbe 160) and "students who require special accommodations, self identify"

(Mark 142-143). The first phrase might discourage students who have other accommodation needs, such as more time for tests, from requesting an accommodation because they may feel the professor is only allowing this one type of accommodation and might be afraid to ask for anything else.

As one participant asserted accommodation statements prominently located on a syllabus increase discussion of disability issues by making people aware of them. These statements open the door for students who may be hesitant to disclose or request an accommodation for fear of being judged inadequate. As verified by an instructor, "I put it [accommodation statement] on the syllabus and mentioned at the very first introduction part of the class. That's earned a little discussion and some shakes of the head like gee, thanks. It was well received" (Pat 210-213). One participant explains why he has an accommodation statement on the syllabus,

The syllabus is to me like a contract with them about what we're going to cover and so on. I put in the syllabus [an accommodation statement] to make sure that they know I'm receptive to that and that I want to hear their input and just to make sure that everybody knows that. (Jim 106-109)

According to Pat and Jim, an accommodation statement on a syllabus is an instructor's way of validating the disability experience. A student who might be hesitant in another course to disclose and request an accommodation, would feel welcome to do so after reading an accommodation statement. Such statements of accommodation impact the timing of the accommodation request by encouraging students to disclose earlier. The presence of the accommodation statement creates an atmosphere of acceptance. The issue of timing will be discussed in the next section.

Timing of the Request

The timing of the request refers to the time at which the student discloses requesting an accommodation during a quarter. The timing can be important because of the effect it can have on the instructor's attitude. For instance, if the instructor believes the request should

be made at a specific time, the student who does not disclose according to an instructor's timeline will not be viewed favorably. Instructors often expect the communication regarding the accommodation to occur prior to or at the start of the course. As one participant reported,

Most often the approach is to me privately. It's usually a knock on the door at the office or a phone call, can I come and talk to you. And typically what the student will say is that I have a disability and that will be accompanied with a request for a specific accommodation. Usually the student is very knowledgeable about what that student needs for accommodation. (Jeb 141-147)

Early disclosure is important because some accommodations, such as recording books on tape, need time to be completed. For faculty and students, the more time needed to complete the accommodation, the earlier the request would be made, as one participant observed:

There were things that needed to be transcribed. He came to me I think it was - it would be a week or two weeks before the course started and that was sufficient....If it came down to the day the class started then there would have to be the understanding that there should be some turn around time in order to get these things done. (Mark 108-118)

A well documented request for accommodation can become suspect if the timing of the accommodation request seems inappropriate to the instructor. The farther into the quarter, the accommodation request or disclosure occurs the greater the skepticism about the disability, the student's capability and the necessity of the accommodation.

It was the end of the quarter and you just--it wasn't like she came in at the beginning of the quarter and said I have ADD and we had a quarter to sort of work through it. It was really like when the process was pretty much when the quarter was pretty much finished. I think she ended up taking an incomplete and I guess she did do - I can't really recall what happened after that. I think she did turn something in and I think it was fairly minimal. (Rod 116-123)

A student who is diagnosed just prior to the beginning of a course or at some time during the course is viewed with a lot of skepticism and suspicion. This student cannot articulate accommodation needs concisely and with any authority because the student is just learning

the ramifications, making the student appear incompetent and full of excuses for inadequate performance. This is particularly acute when the student has an invisible disability,

When she came in and almost had a look of ecstasy on her face because she had been diagnosed and that sort of explained it all--But this person was sort of like using it as an excuse for - suddenly there was all the answers why things weren't working for her and why you know. Maybe I could understand that up to a point because she was having some problems getting things done and so suddenly she sort of had a label or a reason but its as I've always said to my oldest son that might be an explanation but its not necessarily an excuse. What you do is find ways to compensate. I didn't say any of this to her because it was the end of the quarter. (Rod 112-118)

The timing of the accommodation request can be vital to any future relationship between the professor and student. If the student has to take multiple classes with a professor who is skeptical of the student's disclosure as either being accurate or honest, the ramifications can be enormous for the student's learning.

Some students who are afraid of being judged as incompetent or inadequate put off disclosure until the last possible minute. This was the case with a student and professor who had worked together over the course of eleven years. As the participant described the situation,

But then when you bring personality and the inner play of personality, his personality he would not have wanted that. I've known him almost since, he was probably one of the first students in one of my first classes so I've known him eleven years. And he wouldn't have wanted to tell me. (Bud 409-414)

In fact, the student disclosed only under duress while in the final stage of the dissertation when chapters are being revised,

I'd be spending my weekends on it. And he'd get it back and he would do worse with the next draft and so I can remember a counseling session where I just got angry at him. I said you're expecting a lot from me and you're not delivering. You've got this schedule set up and I'm doing my load and what are you slacking off--this work is getting worse and that's when he informed me of his situation. (Bud 170-175)

The timing of the request affects the relationship between instructor and student. In the case of a recent diagnosis a student may not disclose at a time when the instructor will find the disclosure credible. In fact, the instructor may believe the student is making excuses for

poor past performance. Other times students put off disclosing out of fear, shame or embarrassment doing so only when confronted with poor performance. Timing can also affect each party's perception of the accommodation request and the expectations each has for the other's performance. The next section discusses the communicating of expectations between the student and the instructor.

Communicating Expectations

Communicating expectations is the process of negotiation between student and professor occurring within the accommodation request. Effective communication involves assigning each party responsibility which is understood as such by both. At times it involves some disclosure about the nature of the disability. The student is usually requesting an academic accommodation and will provide the instructor with the necessary information. All faculty interviewed indicated that the student with a disability was the primary source of information about the disability and necessary accommodations,

They need to be able to tell me what they need. They should know what they need and they just need to - if they want to discuss that with me I'll be glad to sit down and we can talk about what would be helpful to them. But all they have to do is just tell me what they want and I'll get it for them. (Jim 79-82)

Some instructors like the one quoted above were willing to "get it for them" while others expressed the idea that accommodations were negotiated between the student who knew how the disability manifested itself and the instructor who knew the course material,

I'd have to take my cue from her. She'd have to have a sense to know what to ask for. I have some--if she didn't I would certainly--she came in and said I have a problem and I know it's been a problem in every class and it was a problem the last time I had you but I don't know what to do. I could certainly make some suggestions. I'm pretty good at saying would it help if we break things into smaller chunks and have you turn in something on a week-by-week basis where everybody else is turning in twice a quarter? But I don't know if that would be a helpful strategy for her or not but I certainly could do that and I could float that--if it was too incremental I could float the opposite possibility. (Rod 263-273)

For others, additional information about the necessary accommodations would be the responsibility of an agency. For instance,

Typically [a student] comes to me very well prepared for the conversation. They have a letter from the office of student disability services. They are prepared to give me a phone number if I need to call and talk to someone. (Jeb 278-281)

The Americans with Disabilities Act makes requesting an accommodation the responsibility of the person with the disability. The responsibility to initiate the conversation belongs to the student. Only one person interviewed really acted on this knowledge. The rest felt it was simply the student's responsibility because the student should know themselves and their needs as in the case of any student. As one professor stated,

So I guess in the end I think the most meaningful stuff is going to happen between the professor and the student and I guess if I was going to say who should take the lead ... it would be the student. (Rod 383-386)

Another reason the student should take the lead is out of fairness to the other students and the overwhelming demands on faculty time,

I'd probably expect her to take the lead in a way only because life is pretty busy and ideally you should be thinking about every student in a course. When you have sixty students in the course of a quarter and you have writing responsibilities and the like probably she'd have to take the lead. (Rod 283-287)

Students seem to choose to disclose because they feel the instructor needs to know, "She said 'you'll probably want to know why I'm telling you'She said, 'one I want you to know just to know. You just need to know'" (Bud 560, 562). This causes instructors to wonder why they are being told. At other times it is obvious to the instructor that there is a disability, in fact the student looks to be at risk,

I was concerned in this situation because it was obvious that she was having trouble breathing and her breathing muscles were also involved....She would come in here and we would talk but my only concern there would have been I'm thinking what if she has some sort of episode and it's serious. What do I do? I would have called 911....But I think knowing her she would have told me if there would be something that I needed to know as far as assistance to her.-- I just felt it was intrusive and it was clear also to me that she didn't want to say what it was. (Abbe 250-257, 265-266)

Even though the participant respected the student's right to privacy, she would have felt much more comfortable if she had more information about the student's medical condition.

In fact, the student's medical condition may have distracted this participant enough to make the student-instructor relationship less than it could have been.

Some students have chosen not to disclose at all or to wait until they are forced to disclose. Disclosure can be forced when the strategies a student has developed, to compensate for the learning difficulties a disability causes, fail her or him. One of the reasons for not disclosing is the stigma attached to disability as one participant describes below. Disclosing can make people want to help the student with a disability beyond what they need. The fear is also there of standards being unconsciously or consciously adjusted to match a perceived difference in ability. As one participant reflected on his experience with such a student,

I think if the student feels free and comfortable and can work out with the professor that we don't have a Pygmalion affect, I think that was what this male student, that's what he was worried about. If you told me early I would have changed and I would have "gone easier" on him. That really would have bugged him that he had gotten through on a different standard and that would have really bugged him and so sure in general yeah, clearly you'd like to know up front but I think there is this caveat for many learners that he made me sensitized to. If he tells me, don't go goofy on me in terms of reducing standards or being Mother Teresa, that type of stuff. And so it's kind of - it's not clean from my perspective. From the student's perspective, especially this student. Sure, I'd like to know earlier but I also know me and I know me at that time and how old I was at the time and how new and shocking that would have been and I think maybe in his wisdom inherently, whether he was aware or not he probably went the way it should have gone because if he had told me up front I'd probably at that time knowing me would have been goofy. I'd have written his dissertation for him or tried to. Me at that time I was feeling your pain thing. And I would have been goofy. (Bud 433-450)

Several issues are exposed in the above statement, the issues such as: "reducing standards", "new and shocking," and "feeling your pain." All three of these sentiments occur in many instances when someone encounters for the first time an individual whose life experience or characteristics place the individual in either an underprivileged or at risk category. People tend to view normal living activities by people categorized this way as brave. The halo effect may come into play when the instructor grades the academic products of this "brave person."

There are also times when the instructor feels disclosure is unnecessary as in the case of a visible disability, "he was already in a wheelchair so he did not have to disclose anything to me at that point" (Tom 056-057). The other case when disclosure discussions are not necessary occurs when the student presents "this slip of paper and said see, I have a learning disability. I need more time" (Susan 079-080).

Some students make inquiries of other students about a prospective instructor's style, structure and requirements of the course. These students come armed with this information to the accommodation discussion, almost demanding changes in the instructor's style,

She said she had heard about my pedagogical style and she said something like, 'you've got to slow down.'...And that she would like as much advance knowledge without inhibiting my creative pedagogy. She didn't really appreciate what she had heard about me. She didn't really appreciate a lot of shifts in the straights I think was the phrase she used. (Bud 563-564, 578-580)

This student seems to be assuming that other students will be better sources of information about an instructor than the instructor. When telling me the story of this student, the participant did not indicate that the student had asked him about his style or course, rather implied that what she already knew was enough. Other students conduct their investigations by going straight to the instructor to discuss style and requirements.

[One student] was interested in terms of what the content of the course would be like and so we talked and then at that point he made me aware of the fact that if we could get things transcribed beforehand if he knew ahead of time, things of that nature. So he came to my office and the question was put to me was what was the content of the course? What was the requirements like and things of that nature. Then I guess he told me that he would require these things ahead of time, a certain period ahead of time so he could get them transcribed. (Mark 124-131)

In the above conversation the student and instructor are equal partners in accommodating the student's method of accessing information.

Once an accommodation has been requested and the instructor and student have negotiated who is responsible for which aspects of the accommodation, it is important for

both adults to follow through on their commitment. At times faculty members fall short of fulfilling their responsibility as in the case of a student who came to take an exam proctored by disability services and the exam was not there,

This may have been the first universal test. Meaning that the entire department gave it and it wasn't the responsibility of the teacher. So probably it would have been a faculty-to-faculty communication that didn't occur. From one faculty member to the faculty member designated as proctor for that evening who probably had the tests. So that the student's immediate faculty member may never have even had the test to bring down here. But didn't communicate to the coordinator of that testing session that a copy did need to come here. So that's where I think the breakdown was. (Pat 322-331)

The participant quoted above went on to say, "I think the student was clear" (Pat 312). The instructor who failed to inform the proctor to send a copy of the exam may just not have thought the accommodation through to the logical conclusion that it was the instructor's responsibility to inform the department of the accommodation any student in his section required. When the instructor is also an administrator charged with serving students with disabilities, the responsibility is greater,

I am charged with making the determination whether or not a student is eligible for accommodation according to the laws that govern postsecondary institutions. So it's vital there. I have to have the documentation and the understanding, recognition that I've heard from others. (Pat 160-163)

Most faculty members do not have this much responsibility or information about accommodating students with disabilities. Yet, these faculty will often make assumptions about the student's accommodation needs in a desire to help the student,

If I see anybody there who has an obvious disability that could impair their ability to take notes in the class I tell them that they can have access to the notes....just as an accommodation for those with disabilities I make copies for them. (Jim 112-113, 116-117)

This desire to help the student extends for some, in the advisor capacity especially, to do whatever they can to help. As one participant describes a student needing a great deal of help,

A lot, obviously a lot because the man is on dialysis every week. So there are times when I have to go to him and he can't come to me. He can't get out of bed

sometimes so he had to be straight forward if we're going to get him through this program. (Tom 082-084)

Being "straight forward" in most cases means being given only enough information to accommodate. Receiving more or less information than the instructor felt was important impacted her or his comfort level with the accommodation communication. Some felt that more knowledge was better, some felt a need to become experts, and others only needed to know what was necessary. For instance, one participant explained,

I think it's important for them to understand what accommodations they need in order to make the class accessible for them. They don't need to describe it [the disability] to me unless they really feel they want to. Usually that comes up in relation to accommodations. (Jim 054-057)

Another instructor felt information was necessary to prevent being conned and to know the right thing to do. He expressed it this way,

I guess the answer is I don't know if I need to know a lot more than I know. Either so I'm not conned ...or so that I know the right thing to do because I suspect ...even formal diagnosticians have their set of difficulties. (Rod 322-325)

Others felt they needed to know, "anything that would be relevant for me to evaluate their performance in the course" (Mark 098-099) and "what was necessary...to know what the accommodation was and how that would fit into my teaching and evaluation process" (Jeb 083-084). In addition to wanting enough information to evaluate the student, the instructors wanted to know how to assist the student acquire the course content or learn.

I would always talk in terms of what do we need to get this information. What do we need to see that you can either get or tell me that you have gotten, the knowledge and skills or whatever else we were working on. (Pat 174-176)

The participants vary greatly in the amount and type of information each felt was important to have in the accommodation communication. The expectations went from wanting to become an expert to knowing enough to accommodate within the legal guidelines.

Participants who felt they needed more information accessed this information through self directed learning projects. Less ambitious faculty, in this regard, believed the information

provided by the student making the request was sufficient. The next section examines the ways participants access information about disability and accommodation.

Access to Information

Few faculty knew of the university's guidelines on academic accommodation. There was little contact between the participants and disability services on the main campus represented in this study, while the three participants on the regional campus interacted regularly with disability services. The primary purpose of this office for faculty was to provide documentation of the disability. This was accomplished when the student handed the instructor a form that was usually concerned with alternate locations for test taking.

Over and over participants admitted that the student was their greatest source of information on accommodations required by a disability.

[Since an instructor could not] become sufficiently expert about this particular case in a short period of time. It sure helps when students say I have this problem and I work best with this and if they can give me that context then I can make suggestions. (Rod 371-373)

In other situations, the information the student shares provides insights into the nature of disability and the assumptions we all make when we have no experience with a minority population. In one case, a student needed accommodations to participate in a science lab:

She helped us actually with that. Because she was sort of the first trial person and then she pointed out something that we hadn't thought about, wouldn't have been aware of that there are different size chairs.... (Abbe 355-357)

In many cases faculty believed the institution had a duty to provide them with information. As one participant remembered,

... when I was first here, my first quarter they did the meet [the university president] under the tent thing and it was one thing - the chair, it was a day of working with the chair in terms of just paper work and stuff. But I don't ever remember anybody saying here's stuff related to disability services here. Oh here's the center for teaching and learning and so one thing now that I reflect back on it, it would be nice to have the new faculty orientation that's a little - got some teeth to it and maybe make it almost a requirement rather than if you get around to it because most of us won't get around to it. So just at the indoctrination level, especially for professors like me who are assistant professors coming in for their first professorships. That would have been wonderful to have something from disability that had some teeth into and was

well structured. Maybe it was there and I was never exposed to it and didn't know of it. (Bud 684-697)

Another participant said,

It would have been nice for someone from the university to say you're going to have this person in your classroom. Here's what this person needs. Here's how we can help you. No one has ever done that. I have never met anybody. The students have always done it. ...Until [the student] told me this is what we can do for me to take the exam I was trying to figure out ways for him to take exams. It would have been nice if the faculty were prepared. (Tom 380-389)

One person cautioned, "but I don't know with a series of inservices whether you get enough information. You might get enough information to be dangerous" (Rod 312-314).

In their quest to access information, faculty did a variety of things, "here was my search to find some literature on that" (Pat 259-260), to full blown library searches "it did make me go to the library that night and get a book on ADD. And do a self-diagnosis more than just to understand her" (Bud 804-805). Another tactic is to request information from an agency external to the university for information such as, "[a] county center for the visually impaired" (Pat 137). Others embarked on a greater quest for information. "So I guess right from day one in this position, even though it wasn't a focus I had to do some reading and did some things on my own and had extensive conferencing. Some course work" (Pat 096-098). Faculty who attended conferences obtained in-depth examples of accommodations, "I've been to NSF meetings where people showed materials they had made for the blind. I've even got a copy of one of them where you could - a raised cell and you feel the different organisms" (Abbe 422-424).

The greatest source of information on disability and accommodation for participants was the student making the request. Some felt that a university level program to increase awareness, inform faculty of legal responsibilities, and a description of the accommodation process including information on types of accommodations would be beneficial.

Participants shared ideas on improving the accommodation communication, too, which will be discussed in the next section.

Improvements in the Accommodation Communication

Ideas for improving the accommodation communication included advice for students and faculty as well as suggestions for the institution. The advice for students included, "not taking any gas from a professor. And saying 'professor this is what I need'" (Bud 610-611). This strikes me as encouraging students to be advocates while the tone of another participant's suggestion seems to encourage a student to play to the power differential between students and professors. His advice went like this:

I think the first step would be to go to the faculty member, telling him/her what your disability was. How that impacts on your ability to carry on one of those important class functions. The types of accommodations you need and just keep reminding them and try to always be good-natured about it because the faculty probably feel rather defensive about it. I think any time you can approach that with any kind of humor I think would probably be very helpful too. (Jim 186-192)

Another suggestion was that faculty provide information to the student on available resources and encouraging the student to register with disability services.

I would certainly tell them about [disability services] and the services that they could provide and to contact them for an assessment and to get some information about what they could use. If they were my student I would sit down and talk to them about how their disability affected them functionally in my classrooms. Major requirements of a student are that he/she be able to pay attention and record the lecture somehow. Be able to read the outside materials. To be able to generate papers somehow and also to be able to answer the questions on tests somehow. (Jim 159-166)

At the current time providing such information to students is beyond what could reasonably be expected from most faculty according to the participants of this study. The discussion of "how their disability affected them functionally in my classrooms" generally occurs between service providers or counselors and students not between the instructors and students. The same participant went on to give a more realistic view of the capabilities of faculty saying,

Any time you can make a suggestion to the professor as to how he/she could facilitate overcoming any deficits that the student may have or problems that the student may have that would probably be very helpful because the chances are those professors are not going to have a clue as to what needs to be done and

then probably - my experience from working with other faculty is that they need to be constantly reminded because they tend to forget. (Jim 176-182)

Students are cautioned by participants that one

Could envision the communication not being very good... if the student came to me with a claim of a disability without specific verification of the disability late in the quarter without any requests that would be grounded on say more time for the exams. Those situations to me would make for a very difficult time. (Jeb 282-285)

Advice for faculty came from two instructors who also have administrative roles.

One of these participants said,

I'm not sure that all instructors are as conversant, not conversant but as aware of some of these problems as I am. I think there still are faculty that as I understand it that don't believe there are learning disabilities and all that sort of stuff and I have over the years I've always tried to attend the types of workshops that have been held on these issues and become knowledgeable when that is provided. I think it's part of my job as an instructor but I know there's plenty that don't. (Abbe 448-453)

The sentiment here is that faculty have a responsibility to learn about disabilities and stay open to the suggestions or writings of subject matter experts and researchers in the field of various disabilities. The other participant would like to help faculty through inservices or role plays. She wished faculty would want to participate in these learning opportunities, "I certainly would avail myself to anyone who would like to do that, but it isn't something they're knocking down the doors to get. So faculty awareness and comfort would certainly improve the whole situation for everyone" (Pat 295-297). The last improvement would be on an institutional level,

I think at the time of registration, ...that would somehow trigger an early notification. Somebody is signed up for your course that is going to need help and then assistance and then somehow there's a mechanism to get you together. I see that to be the student or - maybe it's us contacting them. I don't know. To meet together because I've learned there really is individual accommodations. (Abbe 434-440)

Early notification of a student with a disability enrolled in a course would be particularly helpful because of the difficulty of contacting faculty and students between quarters. Early notification should be done in a formal way by the institution according to some

participants. One participant who received several pre-quarter phone calls from a student was never able to connect with the student. He was surprised to see a woman, a dog, transcriber, and lots of equipment arrive the first day of class. Notification might have caused him to try harder to return the calls or to know to leave specific times for the student to reach him.

The accommodation communication can be improved on all levels, student, professor, and institution. Students should be forthright and succinct in requesting an accommodation. More opportunities to learn about disabilities, their impact on learning, and accessing materials should be provided to faculty. However, faculty need to take advantage of those learning opportunities. Faculty should also become resources for students letting them know what services are available on campus. Institutional support of programs that increase awareness of students with disabilities should be increased. The next section summarizes the data description of the section on the accommodation communication.

Summary

This category examined the accommodation communication. The sections in this category were: (a) validation, (b) timing of request, (c) communicating expectations, (d) access to information, and (e) improvements in the accommodation communication. The need to validate the claim of a disability occurs for most participants when the student requests an accommodation. Official documentation produced by the student or a phone call to disability services should validate the request. For a few others, the statement made by a student was sufficient. Participants were not normally aware of any obligation to have an accommodation statement on syllabi, although some participants did have such statements. The timing of the accommodation request is a key determinant of the credibility of the student. Participants felt this request should be at the beginning of a quarter and were

suspect of students whose request came late in the quarter even if that is when the student was diagnosed.

Participant expectations varied on the elements composing effective communication of the accommodation request. Describing the types of accommodations needed was felt to be the student's responsibility. Participants felt their role was to agree to the accommodation and offer alternatives for their specific courses. When accessing information about disability, some participants wanted as much information as possible while others felt that whatever the student disclosed was enough. Self-directed learning projects of varying scope were pursued by some of the participants to gain insight into a specific disability.

One improvement to the accommodation communication would be increased sharing of information from students about their disability and learning needs. Another improvement would be the institution providing faculty with information on various disabilities and accommodations. The last suggestion was for early notification of the registration of a student with a disability in courses. This would help faculty get materials prepared ahead of time if necessary, for certain types of accommodations. In the next section, data relevant to types of accommodations will be presented.

Negotiating Accommodations

Negotiating accommodation includes sections: (a) on the responsibility to accommodate, (b) attitudes towards accommodation, and (c) accommodations. In addition to the need to accommodate students in various ways, there is a need to identify and accept responsibility for those accommodations. With this acceptance of responsibility is a change in attitude. The attitude that faculty have towards all students and towards students with disabilities affects their willingness to accommodate. As an instructor learns about students with disabilities and how disability impacts learning, comparisons are made between students with disabilities and students without disabilities, and between students with

disabilities and international students. The last section discusses issues surrounding medical accommodations, physical access and pedagogical style.

Responsibility to Accommodate

The question was posed to each respondent, Whose responsibility is it to accommodate students with disabilities? The answers varied, some participants believed it was the responsibility of either a student, the faculty, or the institution. While some felt the responsibility was shared, though not necessarily on an equal basis. The party bearing most responsibility--student, faculty or institution--varied according to the level that the participant believed accommodation to occur. One faculty member expressed it this way:

So it seems to me it comes down to almost to the student and faculty member and I guess it has to almost be a negotiated sort of thing. Maybe negotiation is the wrong metaphor. Maybe a shared responsibility. Sort of a problem that people work collaboratively together. Having said that I guess I have to say what I've already said which is students probably need to take in some sense the leadership because faculty members may not. (Rod 361-367)

Another participant described accommodation as being the responsibility of the student to make the request which should initiate a combined response on the part of the administration and faculty:

They [students] have a responsibility first to disclose. Then to work with the administration and the faculty to develop whatever the accommodation is that works for all. The main responsibility is the institution's and the faculty member then when informed. Once the knowledge is there then the responsibility begins. Once the instructor knows that there is a need. From that you get the responsibility and working with the student and the office of disability services. (Pat 282-289)

An important point about accommodation is found in the above statement, that responsibility to accommodate does not exist until the administration and then the faculty are informed of the student's need for accommodations. For another participant, the idea of responsibility expanded into a broker role, that is informing students of assistance they can get from the institution.

I think now I have been remiss and in that instructor's responsibility to make it accessible there is also a broker role that I see a lot of special ed teachers do in K-12 settings but I've never put myself in that role and not even thought of

myself in that role until this interview. I think that may be in the instructors accommodation. I always thought about changing my behaviors or changing my pedagogical strategies to accommodate. But there is this second shoe to drop this interview has pointed out that I have never thought about. But I also have a responsibility to help broker a variety of service and be aware of the variety and I've never thought of that in my life here. (Bud 645-654)

He went on to say he could see his faculty role as including,

In departmental or program area curriculum planning it should become a normal practice that in the review of curriculum, review of pedagogy always ask questions of colleagues. How user friendly is this for people with disabilities or what do we know about services around here that could help us do this. (Bud 698-701)

As a result of participating in this interview process, the same participant verbalized a duty to discuss disability issues with other faculty,

Frankly in my ten years here I have not ever been privileged to once talk with any other professor about how we relate or how we serve or accommodate students with disabilities. I haven't been privy to it. I haven't been in a big faculty meeting with a circle over here hearing it. I have gone ten years and a lot of meetings and never had - had no dialogue, let alone an extensive dialogue we've had here; over the ten years. Not one. And I'm not that closed of a guy. I haven't had one talk on it and so I would think trying to make it in the culture of the talk here. (Bud 703-708)

Another participant felt faculty had a duty to accommodate at the class level but ultimately it was "the university's responsibility to accommodate the student. Certainly at the class level, it's obviously the faculty member's responsibility to accommodate the student. However, faculty should be supported by the university as far as accessibility needs go" (Jim 144-147). One participant went on noting, "[accommodation is] a university obligation...and the professor is part of that community to provide accommodation, but not the only part in that" (Jeb 260-262). The ways in which the university and its faculty team up to provide accommodations are determined by each entity's attitude toward accommodation.

Attitudes Towards Accommodations

Faculty members' attitudes about students in general and the purpose of institutions of higher education will affect perceptions about accommodation. Accommodating students for one participant is something he would not think about,

[I] just would do it. It was a none issue. We're only here because of the students....I think all of the faculty members at this university should think about the students a little more. I think they're too self-oriented instead of student-oriented. We only have a job because of students. (Tom 312-315, 455-457)

Another participant felt faculty should be

Sensitized to people with disabilities and I think that some training should go on for the faculty in those kinds of areas. I don't think that faculty would oppose doing accommodations for students. I think that by and large they don't know what to do and they probably carry with them, in fact I'm sure they carry with them the same kinds of bias and ignorance about disability that exists in the society at large. And therefore I think some practical training is necessary. (Jim 242-249)

"The same kinds of bias and ignorance about disability" (Jim 248) existing in the larger society can affect the gatekeeping behaviors of faculty. As one participant reflected, "It's strange that I never met anybody in a wheelchair in [this] program....I do remember the one case of somebody being denied admission in what I considered to be blatant discrimination" (Rod 392-395). Another concern is that students will be admitted and passed in courses out of sympathy.

If they want to come and can get themselves here and can try. Occasionally I think there is a student who doesn't have the intellectual ability just as some students without and I don't think students should be passed because of disabilities. If they do not have the intellectual ability to do the material, if they cannot pass the tests they should be failed. But just as with the rest of the student population, of the students with disability that I have seen most of them seem capable of doing the material well or frequently they excel. But if they can't intellectually they shouldn't be here in my opinion. (Susan 322-330)

Participants expressed attitudes varying from accommodating students is a "non issue" (Tom 312) to realizations of "bias and ignorance" (Jim 248) to give them a chance if the student is capable "but if they can't intellectually they shouldn't be here" (Susan 330).

One participant reflected on not remembering any student in a wheel chair in his program and possibly "blatant discrimination" (Rod 395). The only solution offered was "practical training" (Jim 249) might be necessary. From attitudes about accommodations the discussion moves to the types of accommodations participants in this study had experienced.

Accommodations

Three types of accommodations were brought up by participants. They are medical, physical, and pedagogical. Each is discussed below.

Medical

Sometimes accommodations are necessary that do not directly enhance the learning experience of the student. For instance, the instructor may have a responsibility to accommodate a student in response to a medical emergency during class time. Most of us are more than willing to help someone in an emergency. Imagine, however, the frustration of an instructor told to accommodate a student by disability services in a medical emergency with little or no information. For instance, one participant was instructed by disability services, "...if a student passes out in the class I was to get some kind of pills out of her backpack and put under her tongue" (Susan 219-220). The student was responsible for providing the instructor with information such as, the location of the medication, and bring the medication with her, but the student was never prepared to carry out her responsibilities. As the participant went on to describe:

Then she comes in here and she's going through this and I said if this happened in the class it would be stressful to me and it would be rather exciting and can you show me the pills and make sure that I can open them and she said oh I don't have them with me today. And then the next time she was in my office I brought it up again and I said could you show me your pills now? She says I don't have them today either. I was in a hurry this morning. And so I was really annoyed. I was really upset with her ...she withdrew from the class and I hope I had nothing to do with her withdrawing from the class. Although I certainly expressed dismay that here I was supposed to be responsible for doing something and I did not have the wherewithal. (Susan 218-228)

This situation was stressful for the participant. She feared the student would collapse and she would not be able to help her. This situation most likely was a distraction for the instructor when trying to teach.

Physical

Sometimes the affect of physical access on learning is overlooked or goes unseen by many. As one participant reminded me, physical access certainly does affect learning. He queried, "How can you say it didn't impact learning when you have to get from building to building and you can't walk? It certainly impacts learning" (Tom 130-131). He was referring to the frustration a student feels when the wheelchair accessible entrance to a building is not easily found. He went on to discuss difficulties one student teacher he supervises has in a university classroom. He asked,

What about a student teaching when you have to be able to get around the classroom and you're in a wheelchair? Now we have little rows with two feet between each row. How's he supposed to get to the back of the room to help a student? How's he supposed to write on the chalk board? (Tom 131-135)

Beyond the frustration is the physical exertion and energy that can be expended trying to get around on a campus. One participant said,

There are many problems associated with attending college. The foremost of which is the accessibility to the buildings of the campus, especially in the northern climate where we've just gone through heavy snows here. People in chairs are unable to get out of the house in those kind of snows. It's tough enough when the weather is good. Some of the buildings lack bathrooms that are accessible or ones that are just minimally so. (Jim 195-200)

Frequently there is only one bathroom in a building that has an accessible stall in it. The door to get into the bathroom may be difficult to open either to enter or exit. The participants that worked with disability issues and one other participant were aware of the difficulties a student could face physically on campus. They felt empathy for students who need to concentrate in a class and instead are apprehensive about making the trip to the restroom. Some students transferred to other colleges because of difficulties with physical access. As one participant described a student's experience,

There was a major obstacle that occurred and that was getting in the building because the access here to that floor, at that time the only access was through the basement. There's a parking garage under the building and there's a ramp there and the appropriate doors and all that have been put in. But that freight elevator is now 25-30 years old and it was not always functional and she didn't always have a way of even saying hey and so sometimes the men in what is called the shop, the physical facility guys would carry her upstairs, carry her and the chair. I'm sure that was not good. I mean the sheer embarrassment of it. (Abbe 199-208)

The embarrassment of being carried up the stairs with people staring would distract most people, afterwards, from giving their full attention to an instructor.

An important location for many college students is the library. The buildings that house libraries are sometimes old, but often crowded with books and other items. As one participant told me,

- I have not had students tell me this but I would imagine that many of the libraries are inaccessible to people with disabilities. Certainly, the education library in the basement people can get into but you can't get into the stacks because those are all upstairs and the aisles are extremely narrow and their chairs can't get around in there.... Also the shelves are very high so many books couldn't be reached. (Jim 209-216)

He went on to surmise that students might be assisted by librarians who would get the books while they wait. This could make a student try to avoid doing any kind of work in the library affecting one of the learning experiences other students without disabilities enjoy freely.

Pedagogical

The pedagogical components mentioned by participants were curriculum and teaching style. Curriculum included the planning of the course and how each session was organized. Teaching style, for some instructors, was an increased awareness of their style of moving around a room to present material and how that affected various students. In some instances a student with a disability brought a new dimension to the instructor's style that lasted beyond the student's tenure in the course.

Curriculum. Curriculum is the roadmap for a course. Many instructors continuously refine courses to maintain the quality and timeliness of the material taught and teaching methods used. One participant was thinking about the future when she said,

For example if a blind person [is] really coming through the sciences that's so difficult. How would we do it? I don't know. There's just a lot of - we just don't seem to be equipped as we should be perhaps. (Abbe -475-477)

Another participant talked about a student with a visual impairment in her class. This student had a friend that helped him "see" the things in the laboratory that he needed to visualize. The participant told me,

I did ...make some accommodations but it would have been a huge--I would have been uncomfortable for example teaching class. ...It needed more adjustment than faculty could reasonably be expected to make without designing a course. The experimental laboratory course would require extensive redesign to make it truly accessible to someone who is blind. Probably to someone who is deaf. And it's something that ought to be done or somebody ought to do it, I think, but I think it would be a huge task. (Susan 140-148)

This may be an issue of a student's right to an education versus faculty work load. The solution that would make the class accessible to a student without vision may make the course better for many other students by addressing the needs of learners with non visual learning styles. I am reminded of curb cuts, ramps, and electric doors which are used by many people without disabilities saving us time and energy.

Another participant was very willing to accommodate students based on where their personality fit on the Myers-Briggs scale. The issue was course organization and the use of advance organizers which he felt strong Js and students with learning disabilities needed.

He said,

Some students really need a tighter structure. Not necessarily people with diagnosed learning disabilities. It's really a strong J in Myers-Briggs terms and some SJs. Immediately, I know it can drive them crazy, so I really try to the extent that I can humanly do it to modify my teaching strategies. I'll frequently put an outline on the board. This is what we're going to do today so they have a sense that there is in fact a structure because there always is. It just may not be as readily apparent as somebody who is more anal retentive in his pedagogy or his or her pedagogical style. So I'd certainly be willing to do whatever I could in terms of adjusting the increments of steps. (Rod 252-263)

This same participant also described how he became less open-ended with assignments instead of "hav[ing] the caveat of course, if you can say it in less, say it and if you need more take more" (Rod 250-251), he now gives an eight to ten page limit for this paper.

Teaching style. Teaching style varied. A few participants had enough experience with students with disabilities in their courses to actually describe the process they went through to become aware of changing their style to accommodate the student. One participant said for him,

- . The biggest challenge for [students with hearing impairments] is to be facing them when one is talking. I tend to move around in class and so I tend unless I'm conscious of it I will tend to sometimes look down at my notes and not look directly at them. Also if I write on the blackboard I have a tendency to keep talking as I'm writing and so then I need to be sure to turn and face them so that they can see me when I'm talking. The danger I guess - when I'm writing on the blackboard usually I'm talking about what I'm writing. So therefore they can see at least what I'm writing. That's usually the way I deal with that. (Jim 132-140)

Students with visual impairments require similar attentiveness when instructors write on the board. As the same participant pointed out,

One of the most common things I see because I have a couple of students with visual impairments is faculty saying things like "as you can see here" and pointing to something on the board and forgetting that people can't see there. (Jim 182-186)

Another participant tried to pay attention to this by giving the student transparencies to scan into his computer. She said, "I did try, I don't know how successful I was but I tried to speak more when I was doing something on the board probably than I normally would" (Susan 123-126). Another participant allows all students access to a notebook containing overheads and the notes he teaches from during class. This was started as an accommodation to students with vision impairments but he felt that all students would benefit and so he gathers these materials into a notebook prior to the beginning of each quarter for anyone to copy.

Another type of adjustment instructors are requested to make at times is to speak more slowly. This request was made by one student who had been diagnosed as having attention deficient disorder. I was told,

She said "I have heard that sometimes when you get really excited in class you start talking really, really fast" and she said, "I'd appreciate [it] if that happens you try to catch yourself. If I communicate something you'll slow down." I said, "yeah that's no problem...just tell me and I'll try to change." (Bud 566-570)

This participant's attitude and pedagogical style was transformed through an encounter with a student with a vision impairment. The student had been trying to notify him that she would be in the class but their phone calls to each other never connected. If they had he would have suggested to her that she take an independent study, thinking the course required vision to understand one part of the course on reading body language. I felt this would change the standards of the course for her. He felt, "[it] would have changed the pedagogy" (Bud 456) not the standards. The participant explained that he and the student,

Would have co-created [the independent study] and had a co-accountable situation. Whether that might have been take these four texts, get them transcribed, write a twenty two page paper. I'll see you the last week and talk about it. That bare minimalist approach to a weekly tutorial and it didn't matter whether she was blind or not. That's been my history with independent studies. I co-create them with the student regardless of their handicap. (Bud 463-468)

Since he did not speak to her prior to the beginning of the course, he met her for the first time the first day of class. He offered the independent study option which she declined choosing instead to remain in the class. He admits freely that he blundered through, even excusing her from a whole session because he could not envision how she could participate or learn to read body language. She attended that class like she had all others being in his opinion the best prepared student. He wanted to make up for his blunder by including her and asked her if she could "hear a room." The result was:

Even today I still use in that class, I tell people, I always look over this class...There's one moment in the class I say now shut your eyes and listen to me for the next five minutes and what judgments you can make about my tone, about my emotion and about my vision and stuff and I still use that from that. I say in politics data counts and the key to politics begins if you're accessible [to]

as much data as you possibly can and this is just another way, another sense we don't rely on. (Bud 519-526)

This experience transformed his "pedagogical strain" (Bud 527) making him much more aware of different ways to teach and receive information. He is also less likely to assume someone with a disability cannot benefit fully from the material with the proper accommodations.

Sometimes however an instructor does wonder if the student belongs in the course. A participant said, "[I] never totally got over it" (Tom 216). It had to be a trying experience having someone in a graduate level course who could not read. He went on,

In that case you had to be patient. I don't know how to relate to it because I'm there but that person could not read...I don't know how a person with dyslexia reads but she needed a lot of time to read anything. She came up to me at the beginning of class and asked me never to ask her to read anything in class. ...Other than that I didn't see it as a problem other than on exams she'd always be the last one to finish. Because she needed extra time to read. (Tom 217-226)

This student had not registered with disability services, nor did the participant ask her to. He simply accepted her not being able to read and tried to make his own adjustments. At the time he did not know about tape recording textbooks, or having someone read the exam to the student, two common accommodations for a student with certain learning disabilities. And it seems the student did not know of these accommodations either.

Summary

Negotiating accommodations began with a discussion of the responsibility to accommodate a student with a disability. The data indicate that participants felt that the responsibility is shared between the institution, faculty and the student. Their attitudes towards accommodating the student were positive and responsive. One participant even reflected that he had not seen a student in a wheelchair in his program area during his entire time in the program feeling this might suggest discrimination. Another participant aptly observed the same biases are going to be found on a college campus as are found in the larger society. The actual accommodations made for students included medical, physical,

and pedagogical. Medical accommodations are rare. Only one participant was asked, once, to make such an accommodation. Physical accommodations were not made by the participants, instead observations were shared on how inadequate physical access can affect learning. Pedagogical accommodations included adapting curriculum and teaching styles to suit different learning styles. The next category addresses the assumptions made about individuals with disabilities and their capabilities.

Making Assumptions

We all make assumptions. The assumption I made about the group of faculty that I interviewed was that they would view themselves as tolerant of people different from themselves, possibly being more empathetic or understanding of learning differences than society at large. Additionally, I assumed that faculty who were aware that they believed students with disabilities shouldn't be at college would not agree to participate in this study. As a group, the participants did believe themselves to be more tolerant and student-centered than other faculty; they did not question or realize that some of their attitudes were based on assumptions, not on research.

The data did not support either of my assumptions. The participants were not necessarily understanding of learning differences and some did question some students' with disabilities right or capability of attaining a higher education. Even though some held what might be considered politically incorrect views or assumptions, each participant openly reflected on their experience sharing with me exactly how they felt at the time and changes that occurred in their thinking because of these experiences.

Assumptions that participants made included the ideas that disability equates to (a) lower standards, (b) an attempt to excuse poor performance, and, (c) attempts to take advantage of the educational system. Additionally, participants wondered if accommodating a student with a disability might be unfair to a student without a disability. Some faculty assumed that to be fair to students with disabilities, they needed to take it upon themselves

to help these students. Finally, the data indicated a tendency to render amateur diagnoses, including the assumption that poor performance is indicative of a disability.

Do you lower standards?

This question was voiced only by one participant, and yet it seems to be a pervasive concern in a society that views accommodation and affirmative action policies alike. The concept of leveling the playing field to give an equivalent opportunity to those who learn differently because of disability or cultural difference has lost ground. For one participant, a student who does not read or write according to his notion of what reading and writing are, does not possess skills necessary for a higher degree. As he explains it,

To the outside world the Ph.D. means that people can meet a fairly high level and write at a fairly high level and so I still - the jury is still out for me in terms of how extensive the accommodations can be. In a field like engineering if you can't read and write there's some examples of people that are very successful. That may be one thing. It seems to me that sometimes there is moral dilemmas in terms of how much do you adjust and how much do you accommodate. (Rod 181-187)

The question posed here "how much do you adjust and how much do you accommodate? " strikes at the core of the matter. If one believes an accommodation simply provides an alternative format for learning, the answer is simple. If you believe accommodations somehow are like cheat sheets--an attempt to make up for a lack of studying or inability to learn--then all accommodation is suspect. Speaking of a student whose work he thought was very good, a participant was relieved to say, "So, I didn't have to lie to her. I didn't have to build her up. I didn't have to go through the moral struggle of what does it mean. Do you lower standards? " (Rod 179-180). Lying and building a student up under false pretenses seems to be contrary to what an educator should do. A policy of dishonesty about the work a student produces, in an effort to protect the student, is based on the assumption that students with disabilities are not capable of the same level of work as students without disabilities.

It's not necessarily an excuse

Another view concludes that students use a disability or a claim of disability as a convenient excuse for not completing assignments or for substandard work. Once a professor becomes skeptical in this way, this perception of the student will go with the student in all courses taken with the professor. Skepticism is increased when disclosure and requests for accommodation occur late in the quarter, as one professor explained,

But this person was sort of like using it as an excuse for - suddenly there was all the answers why things weren't working for her and why you know. Maybe I could understand that up to a point because she was having some problems getting things done and so suddenly she sort of had a label or a reason but its as I've always said to my oldest son that might be an explanation but it's not necessarily an excuse. What you have to do is find ways to compensate. I didn't say any of this to her because it was the end of the quarter (Rod 110-117).

This professor allowed the student to finish the coursework after the quarter ended. He indicated that he would give this accommodation to any student having difficulty for one reason or another. The student he described was a graduate student who had a history of being a very good student and capable worker, until doctoral level courses. She was diagnosed during the quarter with Attention Deficient Disorder (ADD). This participant questions ADD as valid disability. He questions any need to accommodate a student with this disorder because someone once suggested he may have ADD, as he reflected "I must admit I have some questions about [it] because supposedly I have it too" (Rod 052-053). He had difficulty comprehending that it could pose much of a problem for others if it poses no processing problems for him. Since this participant felt the disorder posed only an inconvenience to the student, he viewed accommodation as an unfair advantage over the other students.

The professor discussed above, told once that he may have ADD, is now analyzing this disability based on cocktail conversation. He has not researched the disorder itself but finds proof that his viewpoint is correct via stories he has heard,

Since Albert Einstein and John Kennedy supposedly have it, one does wonder whether in fact it's a disorder or whether it's just a human variation which could be functional or dysfunctional depending on the environment that one is in. But this person was sort of like using it as an excuse. (Rod 107-110)

Making amateur diagnoses was not confined to faculty. In another case, a student told a participant during their first discussion of accommodation needs, "'I think you're ADD. And that's going to present a problem to us' and that shocked me because she is diagnosing me" (Bud 787-789). This participant was challenged by his shock to go to the library to find some books on the subject.

Viewing disclosure of a disability as an excuse for poor performance is certainly a stigma most students dread, causing some hesitation on the part of students to disclose. Unfortunately, the participant who was so keen on diminishing the reality of ADD was not equally quick to pursue qualified sources of information. Instead he relied on gossip to back up his notion that the student was using ADD as an excuse. The next section moves the discussion from wondering if excuses are being made to trying to be fair to students with and without disabilities.

Being fair to everybody

The word, "everybody", applies to three groups, (a) students with disabilities, (b) students without disabilities and (c) professors. "Fair" implies that none of the three groups receives an unfair advantage over the other two groups. Given the vast misunderstandings about the nature of disability and its impact on human performance, it is easy to understand how faculty would be concerned that accommodating a "normal looking" student by providing more time to take a test or setting aside space for a distraction free environment was somehow not fair to other students. Some instructors go as far as to say all students would do better with more time or no distractions. Underneath is the nagging concern about cheating. One participant spoke of this nagging suspicion questioning the integrity of students in this way,

What really bothers me is the distrust. All these students who had to take an exam or it's blown up or something were all so concerned that I would think that they were cheating. It's like they're apologizing to me for having to do this. It's okay. It wasn't an issue for me but it was a big issue for them so somewhere along the line they're getting that feedback that they're taking advantage of this disability. (Tom 392-398)

Cheating concerns also include the notion that the student with a disability will intentionally or unintentionally divulge the contents of the exam to other students. This becomes a particular concern when the student with a disability is scheduled to take the exam before the class. One participant's colleagues brought this possibility to his attention when a student with a disability was scheduled to take an exam before the regular class sections. The participant said, "there's the potential that someone could benefit by hearing through the grapevine the things on the exam or something like that. So I presume an advantage going on there" (Mark 416-421). He was not particularly concerned but began to note scheduling of such exams, anyway. Frequently, the scheduling and taking of exams in a distraction free environment or with extended time occurs at disability services. If the student with a disability needs this accommodation the instructor's desire is not the only factor in the scheduling process. Other factors must be considered such as room and proctor availability as well as others students' scheduling needs.

For another participant, disability seemed to be a relative and subjective matter. It didn't seem to him important or necessary to inquire of experts about necessary accommodations or to examine documentation. He felt perfectly comfortable saying, "Obviously, I reserve the right to say I can't do that. That isn't fair to other people or whatever" (Rod 379-380). To another participant "fairness to everybody" was "a matter of their rights. It would be more bothersome if somebody had the legal right and it was not recognized than the fact that a person with disabilities is given reasonable accommodation" (Jeb 236-239). This points to difficulties with participants' perceptions of fairness, when the perceptions are based on assumptions rather than knowledge. These perceptions

combined with no attempt to work with a professional in the area of accommodation, can place the institution at risk. After all, as the second participant pointed out there exists a legal right to reasonable accommodation. The legal right does not include taking advantage of the system which is discussed in the next section.

Taking advantage of the system

When an extreme violation of the principle of fairness occurs, it is viewed as "taking advantage of the system." One participant described a student in a wheelchair as "using it a little bit" (Tom 184) when he was student teaching. According to this participant, the student was angry and defiant, trying to get whatever he could from the system, whether he needed it or not. The participant continued, "He really did have a bad attitude. He was running people down, literally running them down" (Tom 182-183). Figuratively, the student was trying to run down the system to get every service he could from the university. The participant thought the attitude and behavior inappropriate even though it seemed to this participant that the school where the student taught was doing everything it could to make the student teacher's tenure miserable.

Two other professors spoke of students using the system. One participant reflected, "the perception that from an instructor's standpoint someone might be trying to get away with something or take advantage of the situation in some means" (Mark 400-404) could present serious difficulties to students with disabilities. When the participant made this observation it was as if suddenly he had become aware of the attitudes of peers and the difficulties these attitudes would present to students. The other participant stated, "I think on rare occasions there are students who are here to use the system in some way or the other and to take advantage of [the system]. Maybe they have learned, maybe that's their adaptation" (Susan 315-317). Potentially, any student taking advantage of the system unfairly, violates Federal laws which define disability, otherwise qualified in a specific way. Students that meet the definitions are entitled to reasonable accommodation. An

adaptation that uses the system in an unfair way certainly does not qualify as an acceptable accommodation and could be illegal. She went on to say, "I will not tolerate a student that I think is taking advantage of me or of education in some way or other" (Susan 318-319).

From the concern that students might be gaining an unfair advantage, we move to a discussion of participants' feelings when helping a student in need of moral support.

Some small good in the world

A common assumption about individuals with disabilities is that "they need our help." Many of us would not presume to speak for another adult or to offer unrequested assistance on behalf of an adult. Well-meaning people offer unrequested assistance to those with disabilities regularly. One participant said,

I have one fellow with a spinal chord injury and I always give him notes even though he can take notes in class. It just makes it easier for him to concentrate in lectures if he doesn't have to bother with that because he writes very slowly.
(Jim 89-92)

This was certainly intended as a nice gesture. Beyond the fact that the participant is making assumptions about the way the student learns, he is also encouraging dependent behavior. Other participants view their role as ranging from making sure someone with "a sight impairment ...has a spot in the front of the room" (Rod 328-329) to "going easier" (Bud 436) on someone with a learning disability. Placing the student with a sight impairment in the front of the room will bring attention to that student that the student may or may not want. "Going easier" on the student with a learning disability might make the instructor feel better about doing a good deed, but of what value is this action to the student's learning experience?

Another participant encountered a student who is blind on the first day of class. She had tried to call him to discuss accommodations without success. He told me, "I might have tried to counsel her to do an independent study. In fact I know I would have encouraged her" (Bud 254-255). He went on to explain that he considered her disability to

be similar to the difficulty American English presents to international students. The class is concerned with body language and educational politics which may not translate well. He was trying to help her.

In a very different situation, another participant had a student with cancer in her class. The chemotherapy had caused the woman to lose her hair. Her missing hair combined with an unusual way of dressing, made the student the recipient of ridicule and nasty remarks from the other students. One day when the student wasn't in class, the participant,

Really let them [the class] have it. It was a point when I felt it appropriate to discuss courage and it had some good affect because at a later date I'd seen her in the mall...and she said you know two of the people who were in that class had stopped by and she'd passed them in the mall and they had come up to her and said how much they enjoyed having her in class or something. I think it was those two nasty girls that had made fun of her. But anyhow I felt I had accomplished some small good in the world. (Susan 201- 212)

Her moral outrage shamed the students into acknowledging the student with cancer by including her in future conversations. These actions may be viewed by some as advocacy on behalf of students with disabilities and by others as paternalistic actions. And yet a third explanation exists for the participant's action, it could have been based on maternalism and the desire to help and protect. The interpretation of simple acts of assistance as advocacy or paternalism is predetermined by one's attitude toward disability and whether or not the adult with the disability welcomes the action.

Stories of Grace and Grit

This section examines attitudes toward disability. Participants' perceptions of the attitudes of other faculty as well as their own attitudes are examined. Students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities will have different reactions to disability. The reactions will depend on their experiences with people with disabilities and the way in which they perceive disability in society. The participants also addressed reactions of students.

Faculty

Most of us have an emotional reaction when we see a person with a disability. Participants described (a) their reactions to the students with disabilities, (b) how the students themselves felt about accommodations, and (c) the reactions of peers to students with disabilities in classes. Faculty remarks encompassed a range of emotions from "sad case" (Pat 322) to "courageous...incredible" (Susan 188, 193). The student described as courageous had brain tumors, while the sad case has a traumatic brain injury. One participant felt his teaching style had been transformed as a result of having students with disabilities in his class. He found these students to be remarkable for

not blaming the world for their condition. And actually finding a blessing in their condition. And subsequently in talking to all three of them I think somehow I've asked the question if you had it to do over again would you like go through life without this. Almost all three said well yeah in a way sure. Especially the blind woman, but then they immediately go into--but it is has opened up self-awareness aspects and interpersonal aspects and grace and grit about their lives. (Bud 618-625)

He asked these students if they could erase the disability would they, surprising him was the response that what he considered adversity instead opened them up to a "self-awareness" which he felt added "grace and grit about their lives" (Bud 625). While one participant focused on the grace students with disabilities portrayed, another participant was very attuned to the gritty aspect of the students' experience. He told me,

You can just look them in the eyes and I can see where they're coming from. They're saying he thinks I want to do this just so I can have it easy or something. You can just read it. That's unfortunate. (Tom 404-406)

Students with invisible disabilities seemed "easier to handle" (Pat 237) than students with visible disabilities. The desire to help and nurture is not stimulated by a learning disability as it is by a woman who has lost all of her hair due to chemotherapy. One participant reflected on her past behavior to say, "I would hope I wouldn't react that way any longer but that has been through a process of education and learning and understanding and repeated experience" (Pat 240-243). The reaction she was referring to is

to be suspect of a student with an invisible disability instead of nurturing. However, sometimes education and experience are not enough. As when the same participant had a student in the back of the room hiccuping throughout the class. When at the end of the class she commented,

My goodness, you sure have a case of the hiccups. She said not really, its a reaction I can't always control and when I'm nervous like in the first day of class it's more pronounced. I'll try not to bother anyone. (Pat 250-253)

This perplexed the instructor and she wondered how she would handle the situation. The student "was a little embarrassed by it which made me more sympathetic" (Pat 254). The student never actually disclosed. It was during a conversation with another faculty member when it occurred to the participant the disability was probably Tourette's Syndrome.

Students with Disabilities

The stories participants told about students' attitudes toward their disabilities and accommodations varied. Some students had good attitudes while others had bad attitudes. Some students suffered personal embarrassment because of the way an accommodation was made or wasn't made. Other stories marvel at the great personal motivation these students had, to do well in a particular class or to earn a degree.

Attitude. We think of attention deficient disorders and learning disabilities as problems children have, so it seems odd to think of adults being diagnosed in graduate school with learning disorders, some learn to cope, others have different reactions. As a participant described it, "she was angry about it. Her childhood had been misunderstood or not as leveraged as she wanted it to be" (Bud 553-555). This participant encountered a student with a visual impairment who had a great attitude, a sense of humor and courage. While this same participant knew another student for ten years, discovering he had a learning disability during the final writing and editing stage of the dissertation. This student felt, "it was his problem and not the world's problem" (Bud 145-147). Another professor described his experience with two students who use wheelchairs,

He would be mad if he went down the elevator and the van was not waiting for him. He was just irate and would get really upset where [the other student was] just so happy with the services he never complains about anything. They were like night and day with attitude. (Tom 283-287)

A student's attitude about their disability and the manner in which they learned of it are important if the attitude affects learning. One way the attitude might affect learning is in the instructor's reaction to the method of disclosing disability and requesting accommodations used by a student. The instructor may be affected by a student's body language. As one professor admitted,

I'd have to say your initial reaction was in how it is presented to you. If the student has--in a sense I'm embarrassed to say--appears to be open like they're going to be an interested student in participating as opposed to someone who slouched in the back corner and yawned or didn't seem to pay attention to me as an individual doing my role. You are more or less likely to respond to them on how they present themselves. (Pat 232-237)

Dignity. As much as a student's negative attitude can impact an instructor's attitude toward the student, examples of perseverance in the face of dehumanizing obstacles can bring out a sympathetic response. Three participants told me about "the sheer embarrassment" (Abbe 208) that three different students felt having to be carried down steps because of a broken elevator. Another way a student is embarrassed is by the disability itself. One doctoral student "saw it as a crutch," (Bud 421) disclosing to his advisor only when he could no longer conceal the disability. Embarrassment caused by the lack of accommodation or by believing that asking for an accommodation is a sign of weakness can cause difficulties with the student/advisor relationship, as in the case of one participant who felt the work he was receiving from the student was deteriorating in quality due to laziness or carelessness. For one student, the embarrassment of being carried up or down steps can be so great that the student transfers to a more accessible university. Other students will become even more motivated to finish the degree and move on.

Motivation. Students with disabilities are not different in what motivates them to finish their coursework or a single course from those without disabilities. Sometimes the

motivation to attend college seems to overcome great odds against the student ever finishing. Other times the onset of a disabling condition is what motivates an otherwise mediocre student to buckle down and work.

Adult students have family and work commitments that are not lessened because of a disability. The motivation to finish and to finish within a personal timeline, are the same. For one student graduating at the spring quarter commencement was very important. This same student did not disclose to his advisor that he had a disability until forced to by substandard work. If he had disclosed earlier, he may have not wasted the three weeks that cost him "his big wish" (Bud 221) to graduate at the spring quarter commencement. The perception is that a student who is blind may not be able to keep up with the reading. The instructor may be surprised when such a student comes prepared, "Inevitably she'd be the first person to respond with a question about the readings. So I got the indication in the classroom that the readings were no [big deal]. She was up on it better than anyone else" (Bud 370-373).

If a student is motivated to work for the best course grade, one technique is to stay in the class until the last minute and then withdraw. One participant was concerned about a student who practiced this technique. The student's number of withdrawals in the end didn't seem to hurt her. She received a full scholarship to a prestigious California university. The participant spoke about the student's incredible motivation and persistence:

I would give her a problem and she would work on it until it was solved. She was capable of enormous initiative. Other than her difficult, often illegible handwriting and the fact that she required more time on exams there wasn't much accommodation. (Susan 064-067)

Other students' motivation to attend school was evident in the great personal obstacles overcome to do so. Three students discussed by three different participants have medical conditions that render them susceptible to infections which could be life threatening. One participant described his student as being able to work in a technical

school or college after graduation, "if he can overcome - he's waiting for a kidney transplant now.... This guy lost a leg and three weeks later he was on an artificial leg. He's very determined. He just doesn't get himself knocked down" (Tom 295-299). Another student has an attendant come to feed him and give him medication while on campus. He "lives in a nursing home [and] uses his head to move the chair" (Pat 368-369). To many people, being a young man, living in a nursing home, and having to be fed by someone else, might be tremendous difficulties to overcome. The student however, "thinks it's wonderful being here, the freedom, the exposure to the people" (Pat 370-371). The first taste of independence from family constraints and exposure to new people and ideas are what many students find wonderful about their college experience. The motivations to go to college are the same for students with and without disabilities. The third student "pushes himself a great deal" (Susan 353) with a great disregard for his physical health, "so if he doesn't die he will be an imminent person" (Susan 351). This same participant describes another student who did die just before I would have interviewed him for this study as someone who was not a good student when in her class prior to losing his vision. After becoming blind, he was, "much more motivated and a much better student than before" (Susan 121).

For students with disabilities motivation is influenced by: (a) the length of time a person has had a disability, (b) if the advocates for the student are people other than the student, and (c) how a student feels about education. If the student has had others advocating for him or her, then there is "a major shift in assumption of responsibility ...[and] the need for accepting the responsibility and motivating yourself rather than mom and dad, the counselor, the teacher, everyone else" (Pat 363-368). For students who have been covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) this can be a major hurdle to overcome. Many of these students were not included when adults discussed their special education needs, making it difficult for these same students to

discuss their accommodation needs in college without parental advocates. Most of the examples shared by participants have been of motivated students willing and able to do well in school. While, "on the other end of the spectrum [are students] who [say] well I'm this way so therefore you must do this for me. The world owes them something" (Pat 149-150).

Students without disabilities

Human nature makes us oblivious sometimes to the plight of others. If we have no experience with a disability, we don't think about the physical obstacles we place in the way. Elevators, doorways and bathrooms can often be inaccessible to a person in a wheelchair. One participant told me emphatically that inaccessible physical spaces affect learning. If you can not get to class, your learning is affected, beyond access to the classroom and the information that is disseminated there. A person's emotional reaction to being denied access may make it difficult to concentrate on his or her work. Think of the frustration experienced by the student in the situation described by a professor,

Frequently, you would see him waiting to get on the elevator and students coming on and getting off the elevator and not really paying any attention to the fact that he was the person who could make the greatest use of the elevator. (Jeb 202-205)

The student was in a motorized wheelchair designed to support his head and neck, very visibly unable to take the stairs yet seemingly invisible to the students around him. Students can be cruel, beyond ignoring other students because they are different; they can ridicule and torment students who are different. A professor talked about a student who had lost her hair due to chemotherapy, "some of the kids laughed at her. I know they laughed at her hats" (Susan 200). Beyond laughing at the woman, the students wouldn't associate with her or speak to her.

Summary

Assumptions generally held, act as a gatekeeping mechanism diminishing the opportunities a person with a disability has for employment and education. The assumption that making an accommodation is comparable to lowering standards is one view voiced by participants. The other view is that accommodations level the playing field making information accessible increasing the amount of learning that occurs. Invisible disabilities such as ADD are more frequently seen as an excuse for inadequate performance rather than a real cognitive disorder. Participants voiced concerns that accommodations could give an unfair advantage to students with disabilities over students without disabilities. One participant was angered thinking that students were made to feel that they must apologize for an accommodation because they did not deserve it. While the fairness also included the right of an instructor not to have examinations compromised by students with disabilities speaking about the test in the event they take it before the rest of the class. Participants feared that students would be "taking advantage of the system" with little experience of anyone actually taking advantage of the system that provides educational access to students with disabilities through accommodations. The final assumption is that an individual with a disability needs help by virtue of having a disability. Participants gave help and made decisions for students with disabilities without asking if the help was wanted or needed. The next section discusses the attitudes toward students with disabilities as the participants spoke for themselves, their colleagues, and students.

Participants had many and varied emotional responses to seeing a person with a disability. The participants, although all instructors or administrators in this sample, described their perception of the emotional reactions of faculty, students with disabilities, and students without disabilities to someone with a disability. Faculty emotions ranged from suspicion, to pity, to admiration of the student's courage, to curiosity about the different experience. Participants commented on the attitude, dignity, and motivation of

students with disabilities. The perceptions this sample had of the emotional reactions of students without disabilities ranged from not seeing, laughing at them, or just ignoring the students with disabilities.

Obstacles to Employment

Each participant in the sample was asked about obstacles they envisioned to employment in the field. Teaching and research in an institution of higher education is the field for all of them. For some, the field included middle management or administration in higher education and, for one individual, law was an additional field. Participants were asked to envision a person with a disability to help them consider difficulties a person might encounter with an academic profession. First, I will examine the academic role and what it means to be an apprentice or work on a Ph. D., as well as serving in the administration of a college. Second, I will look at obstacles to employment for aspiring professors.

What does the Ph. D. Signal?

The response to this question depends on whether the person answering the question assumes that disability means a lack of ability, particularly below average cognitive processing ability, or whether the person believes that someone with a disability is capable and accommodations are just adjustments for some characteristic. One participant through his response to the question made me feel he considered someone with a disability less capable than other people. In discussing difficulties with writing he said, "If you can't write and you want to be a professor, the credibility problem is very difficult" (Rod 399-400). This remark was tempered by his recalling "People in the field of engineering who really can't read or write but who are brilliant engineers" (Rod 226-227). He went on to say, "Part of the problem is what does the Ph.D. signal and what people in the outside world assume a Ph.D. means" (Rod 222-224). He seemed to believe a learning disability

or attention deficient disorder meant that someone could not write. If you cannot write you cannot be an academic. His view is not an isolated one.

One participant focused in on writing as the most important skill used by academics, while another broke the position into two parts, teaching and research. He believes "If somebody has the intellectual capability to do research, the fact that they have a disability. should not hinder that" (Jeb 365-367). Another participant told me that his "work doesn't require for the experimenter to be heavily involved in the process" (Mark 320-321). His research utilizes surveys and journals which participants complete and he analyzes. He is familiar with students with low vision and blindness. He thought a person with this particular disability could conduct similar research.

Another participant thought of a particular student with a learning disability who is pursuing a Ph. D., "It is an extra thing to work around...[Yet], I fully expect her to be an imminent psychologist in the next five to ten years" (Susan 337, 342). This student had difficulty scheduling appointments, an organizational difficulty, needed extra time on tests, a processing difficulty, and had illegible handwriting. The participant felt all of these areas could be accommodated and none of them meant her cognitive abilities were below average. Some graduates will simply pick the institution because of its flexibility. In the case of one student with multiple disabilities, "He got a job teaching in a junior college because you have much more flexibility. He could show up teaching a three hour class in the night and they're not as concerned" (Tom 161-162).

Student teaching can present unforeseen difficulties. It is difficult to anticipate accommodation needs until you have been in a situation. One participant described the experiences of a student, "He didn't know what he would encounter in a classroom because he had never been there as a teacher but as soon as he discovered those kinds of things he found ways to compensate for them" (Tom 199-202). It is interesting to note this distinction between impacting learning and teaching. Keyboarding was a difficult skill for

this student and yet his training was to teach business skills to high school students. Faculty advisors need to be aware of the accommodation needs of the student, too. Instead of student teaching experiences, students in some academic areas have to complete internships which is discussed in the next section.

Internships

Three different participants described the internships and student teaching experiences of their advisees. One participant spoke highly of a student who ran her lab without pay because of requirements of government agencies. This student had to pay for independent study credit; in the same situation a student without a disability would be paid for the work as an internship experience. The participant said the student is the "lab manager and ...the person that knows most about the lab. [He] supervises some of the other students there, works extremely well with other students. I'm going to miss him when he goes" (Susan 163-166). Another participant told of a student who landed a prestigious internship with an auto manufacturer in Michigan. The student and the participant spoke periodically over the phone about the accommodations being provided. The student was simply describing the accommodations as they were made without incident by the cooperative employer. The last of the three participants tells a story that did not end so simply. The participant searched for a school district and a school that would be physically accessible. What he found was quite different. As the participant tells it,

In fact we picked a school that was all one level for one thing because I thought all schools have to have elevators and as we started looking at them they don't. So we picked the school. We thought we had picked a good school where there would be concern. They just weren't and probably a lot of that was maybe the cooperating teacher and not necessarily the school district. And I had a meeting with the cooperating teacher to let this person know that she would be getting a person that would be wheelchair bound. That supposedly wasn't a problem. It became a problem because they didn't get along at all. She thought he used his handicap...to his advantage and had a bad attitude. (Tom 168-178)

In fact, the school would not provide a raised platform so that the student-teacher could use more than two lines of the blackboard. It ended with the participant going to the school to

speaking on behalf of the student which did nothing to improve the situation. Incidents like this may be foreboding of obstacles found in employment settings.

Obstacles to Employment in Higher Education

A person who works as a service provider for students with disabilities told me,

As a higher education administrator, maybe I should preface by saying there are not significant numbers of people with visible disabilities currently that I encounter in the field. That doesn't say that it's closed but I would say the door isn't open very wide for whatever reason. (Pat 398-403)

She went on to differentiate between "service providers for students with disabilities" who seem to have a number of visible disabilities represented, and "administrators in student affairs" who seem to have few people with disabilities among their ranks. One explanation is that few people with disabilities apply to these positions. Another is that a screening occurs in discussion around accommodating a particular applicant who might need assistive technology or possibly an interpreter, "I would imagine it would get a lot of talk behind closed doors. Just saying gee, if we hire Joe we're going to have to buy this and everybody would have to do that" (Pat 459-461). The screening also occurs when there is no discussion on including people with disabilities. As one participant told me, "serving on search committees...there is more of a voiced concern for balance according to race and sex certainly. Very seldom other than the required ADA question for interviews regarding capability to do the job...with or without accommodation" (Pat 425-429).

When an issue is not being discussed it is often invisible to people. Asking about employment in the field made the people I asked stop and think. Yes, they knew of professors who had been around for awhile becoming disabled. But as one professor reflected,

I have not seen too many professors or too many lawyers with disabilities of the kind that I have encountered with my students. Say one way or another that it would be a problem but perhaps that too speaks to the fact that it may very well be difficult. (Jeb 359-362)

It may be difficult to gain admittance because students are being directed away from these professions, and no active recruiting campaign exists for students with disabilities as exists for African Americans and other minority groups. One participant had the opposite experience because of his field. Students in his classes did become professionals in a field serving people with disabilities. This area of study had many more students with disabilities in classes and as majors than other graduate programs.

The last obstacle discussed was the ability to manipulate the basic ingredient in a field. In education or law, the ability to manipulate words is a basic ingredient. For the participant in a scientific field the ability to manipulate scientific materials was the most important part of the job, as a practitioner or academic. In the scientific field the only two options the professor could think of for a student who is blind was to go into sales or scientific writing. The participants in education thought that qualitative research would be too difficult because of the need to analyze words. They thought it would be much easier to be a quantitative researcher. The participant in law thought the written word could be accessed, but if the person's disability impacted their oral communication skills, that might be an obstacle that couldn't be overcome.

Summary

Obstacles to employment consist of attitudinal barriers as discussed under the heading, "What does the Ph. D. Signal? " and also physical barriers. The physical barriers can affect student teaching experience and internships which are important parts of many programs. Participants reflected on obstacles to employment in higher education, the area they all work in. None of the participants had any real experience with a person with a disability as an academic. However, they were able to speculate on various problems individuals with disabilities might have doing the same work they do. One participant, a disability services administrator, encounters few people with visible disabilities in the field. Observing that while there exists a willingness to recruit and hire some minorities, there is

no such thinking about people with disabilities. They may simply not be thought of since there are no affirmative action incentives, real or imagined, for hiring individuals with disabilities.

Summary of Faculty Sample Data Description

This chapter described data that came from conversations with nine faculty and administrators at a large midwestern university. There are five categories in this chapter each containing various sections which in turn are made up of subsections. The accommodation communication was composed of four subsections validating the request, the timing of the request, communicating expectations, access to information, and improvements in the accommodation communication. These subsections compose information important to the instructor's obligation to accommodate the student. Negotiating accommodations, the second category, were between the instructor and the student. The student provided information on the disability and the instructor shared information on course content and instructional methods in an effort to determine appropriate accommodations. Some examples of successful or unsuccessful negotiated accommodations were discussed in the last subsection. The accommodations participants talked about were medical, physical, and pedagogical.

The next two categories, "Making assumptions" and "Stories of Grace and Grit" are concerned not with reality but instead with the attitudes held that shape our assumptions and create our stories. The assumptions that emerged are (a) Do you lower standards?, (b) It's not necessarily an excuse., (c) being fair to everybody, (d) taking advantage of the system, and (e) Some small good in the world. The stories that followed were made up of the perceptions of the participants of the attitudes of faculty, students with disabilities, and students without disabilities toward individuals with disabilities or the disability experience.

The final category examined obstacles to employment. Since most participants had as their primary experience teaching graduate students, particularly Ph.D. students, one

section explored, "What does the Ph. D. signal?" The next section investigated internships and their impact on learning and future employment of a student. The last section featured obstacles to employment in higher education. This is the area of all participants and each envisioned obstacles to the particular types of teaching and research that they engage in. A preliminary analysis of the data from the faculty sample completes this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DATA DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS: STUDENTS WITH INVISIBLE DISABILITIES SAMPLE

This sample consists of seven students with invisible disabilities. Six students were interviewed in person and one student was interviewed over the internet. Three students were white males from 38 to 61 years of age. The four women's ages ranged from 30 to 50 years old. Two of the women were white; two were black. Represented disabilities included learning disabilities, attention deficient disorder, visual impairment, alcoholism, back injury, severe asthma, and arthritis. The oldest and the youngest participants were diagnosed with their disability in elementary or middle school. Two women were diagnosed after having difficulty performing job tasks. One woman learned of her attention deficient disorder while working on a doctoral degree. Three participants returned to school to change careers because of the disability. Four students are working on undergraduate degrees. Two undergraduates have a single major in business and agriculture. The other two undergraduates are earning two separate bachelor's degrees in English and black studies, and, history and education. One student is working on a master's degree in rehabilitation. Two students are pursuing doctoral degrees in education, one in children's literature and the other in curriculum development. These two students earned bachelor's degrees without being diagnosed with a learning disability and attention deficient disorder.

This chapter contains four major categories: (a) Aren't you glad you're not stupid?, (b) accommodation communication, (c) educational experience, and (d) roadblocks and

educational negatives. Each category contains several sections, and subsections. The first category explores the experience adults have when they find out the educational barriers they have had to confront are because of a disability, not stupidity.

Aren't you glad you're not stupid?

This category explores the act of learning about the disability. The sections in this category are (a) happy to have a name for it, (b) manifestation of the disability, and (c) needing help. A common assumption many of us might make is that a person diagnosed with a disability would know all about the disability. Learning about the disability comes with self reflection and self directed learning. Self reflection helps people become aware of the way the disability manifests itself. This awareness assists in the learning of compensation techniques.

Happy to have a name for it

A common experience for those with learning disabilities and attention deficient disorder is the feeling of being "stupid." Some of the adults interviewed learned to view themselves as less intelligent because of early experiences with teachers. As a participant working on two simultaneous degrees remembered,

One of the things that really stick in my mind is that we were trying to make circles and my circles were all over the page because of trying to stay within the lines for dyslexics is almost damn near impossible. At least it was for me and my brother. Anyway, she took my paper up to the front of the class and she says look what [Mel] did. He didn't do worth shit on this paper. ...From that day on I learned to hide my work or I didn't do it. (Mel 411-416; 418)

The adult student approaches the counselor believing there is something wrong medically with him or her or one is just stupid. After the testing is complete the counselor comes out and says, "aren't you glad you're not stupid?" (Ray 191). Another student who left post graduate work for a year while seeking counseling was so relieved when she was finally diagnosed, she "was running around volunteering the information because I was so happy to have a name for it!" (Nan 055-057).

Diagnosis is not a simple matter; often the counselor makes the diagnosis with the assistance of the person or a family member. One participant "found out the name of it by reading an article in Time Magazine" (Nan 033-034), information she immediately brought to her therapist who had recently begun to suspect attention deficient disorder. The therapist had been treating her for depression. Another participant's mother "heard about this Dr. Livingston in New York that was doing work for dyslexics" (Mel 036-037), because of this she had her sons tested. The person I interviewed was out of high school by this time having been treated as if he were of less than average intelligence during the whole of his education.

After diagnosis the student wonders what next, many are "afraid to [return to school] because I didn't think I could do it" (Reba 113-114). Besides needing to overcome fear of failure, there is a false sense of knowing about the disability because of a diagnosis. As one student described the reaction she and her academic advisor had to the diagnosis, "she and I both thought that all I had to do was get on medication and that would be it. Medication would be the cure-all. It never occurred to me that I was going to have to take therapy or that I was going to have to relearn things or learn things" (Nan 225-228). Learning about the disability is not easy. A person's sense of the disability is often confused with an unrealistic sense of what is a normal student's academic ability. For instance, the idea of rewriting a paper 5 or 6 times which is not unusual for professional writers, seems abnormal to the student with a learning disability. The student feels they are inadequate if they can't write the final draft in the initial writing.

The oldest participant was diagnosed during the 1940's when academic accessibility and special education did not exist. His mother had found a Russian anthropologist who tutored people in math to help him. As the participant said,

I couldn't understand math problems. I couldn't put two things together. I could count to twelve using my fingers and I couldn't see how five and seven made twelve. They were separate entities. They'd say close your eyes and look

at the alphabet and I'd close my eyes and I said I don't see any alphabet. (Ray 037-040)

Years later he began to read the encyclopedia, while reading the entry on philosophy, the request mentioned above became clear to him. He describes it,

Marx was talking to Engels saying you could see in your mind's eye different things and it wasn't until that time that I realized you could throw pictures in your mind. Then you could see them. But when these teachers were telling, way back in third grade, shut your eyes and look at the alphabet, I shut my eyes and everything [stopped]. (Ray 044-048)

During an early experience at college, for the same participant,

[A] professor said if you forget your notes get Ray's. He takes excellent notes. He just said I don't know what's wrong. I would consider you my best student but you can't pass my tests and it wasn't until now that I realize it's very possible when you read a multiple choice test - I could read the question wrong. (Ray 155-158).

This participant struggled with his learning disability for years before realizing that he could seek accommodations such as having the test read to him. In a sense he was lucky because he knew from an early age through his mother's efforts that he had a cognitive disorder, at the time known as mirror imagining or dysfunctioning. Others are not so lucky. Take the two participants who discover something wrong after one graduated in the top three percent of her high school class, both received bachelor degrees, and had successful careers before returning to do graduate work. One woman describes her experience between two quarters,

All I knew was that at every point in my life I had been able to get by and get through and do it well and at this point in my life I was not making it and it was terrifying. It was so frightening to sit there the entire vacation - you're not going to do anything but fill out these forms and I would sit there from morning to night and at the end of the day I would not have those forms filled out and I couldn't figure out why. (Nan 471-476)

Another participant discovered a problem while working at a job with a government agency. She describes what she had to do,

Kind of capsulizing all of your investigations, findings and doing these reports and I would find that I would do really well at the investigation. I would do really well articulating verbally what it was that I found and how I could synthesize it and make it very logical but I couldn't take that information and put it in writing no matter how hard I tried. ...In the course of doing that I realized

there was something wrong. I was stupid; I couldn't do that. (Reba 027-032; 099-100)

As a result of these situations all three participants (Ray, Nan, and Reba) sought professional counselors, eventually were tested and diagnosed. The feelings of inadequacy have not left them but they are now seeking accommodations necessary to access information which each does auditorily. Invisible disabilities can still manifest themselves in physical ways, such as preventing someone from leaving home to attend class. This is discussed in the next section.

Manifestation of the disability

For two other participants the disability manifests itself in physical pain or the inability to leave the house. One student has a rare form of arthritis and the other student has a severe form of asthma. The arthritis is so bad sometimes, "I couldn't walk. I couldn't stand up more than about ten minutes at a time" (Jed 365-366) and "if the wind chill is 15 below or more I'm not supposed to leave the house" (Kim 225-226) because she would have an asthma attack. Their disabilities affect their learning when they are unable to attend class, as one describes it, the disability "affects my ability to grasp certain concepts, notetaking, and the ability to ask questions to clarify a theory or premise presented in class" (Kim 225-227) whenever she would miss a class. Aside from disabilities preventing someone from leaving home because of medical complications, disabilities can impact the way information is processed.

Another participant recently diagnosed gradually began to understand the impact the disability had on her ability to process and access information. This participant finds that she "can't ever decide what I want to talk about because there's so much. I absolutely cannot focus. I can't nail it down" (Nan 175-177). She also has difficulty making swift transitions from one topic to another which would make it difficult at times to follow class discussions or an interviewer's questions. This leads to the next section, needing help.

Needing help

The types of help participants felt they needed varied according to the disability. This help was perceived as something different than an academic accommodation. For instance one participant learned,

The thing to do is when I find myself floundering to go to someone and say what exactly do you want. Where can I take this? And pretty much know when I should do it. But it never occurred to me that I thought I needed to be able to do all of that on my own. (Nan 112-115)

It seems ironic that so much of the popular press on study skills advises students to talk to their instructors about projects, to seek their guidance, and assistance with structure. And yet, these participants at the graduate level achieved much without utilizing the technique of getting to know their instructors prior to reaching the level at which their compensation devices no longer worked for them. Participants felt that if they used these techniques, they were somehow cheating. "Normal" students or "good" students did everything on their own without help.

Another area where assistance was needed was information about how to maneuver through a program. One advisor wanted the participant to come into her office with a plan that the advisor just needed to approve. The participant needed guidance on what exactly should be in the plan and where to go to find the information. In other words, the participant lacked a context for the required tasks. What the participant did was find another student who "automatically, instinctively knew what to do" (Nan 271-271) and asked her. For others, help was simply taking advantage of programs in existence for all students like counselors and reading laboratories. Another strategy was appealing to friends and relatives to proofread class papers and projects so often they become familiar with the way the student processes information.

There's a lot of times when my mind goes so fast that I actually skip words and not see them ...just last night I had one whole sentence and half of it was one thing and half of it was another. So she said wait a minute. You've done it again. So she broke it up for me and we finished it out and then went to the next sentence. (Mel 256-261)

Possibly with practice, self-reflection, and analysis he may begin to recognize these things himself.

Self reflection and analysis

In order to recognize the types of help needed the participant has to understand the disability. Determining the nature of help depended on the ability of the participant to analyze the previous conditions under which help was needed and received. As one participant reflected on the mechanical process she went through to write:

In fact I just can't free write. Sit down and just type a thought. I have to write it out by hand. As I'm putting it into the computer I am making corrections. I'm almost editing it and then I start spell checking it and then I have to print it out, read it, and then make corrections that way. So I can't just sit down and start. It has to go from here to here, to there and visual and then back. It's got this cycle, that extra step. I can't just put it in. (Reba 334-338)

Other participants reflected on the way they organize material. For instance, one student had to plan "every single step of everything...in her head because nothing comes naturally to [her]" (Nan 251-252). This may seem natural when considering planning coursework for a doctoral program or working out candidacy exam questions. This participant realized she had to plan even the most mundane tasks like waking up, dressing and having breakfast until it became a habit. Big events had to be considered and mulled over as much as a year in advance. If the participant's advisor considers a discussion about dissertation topics premature before the coursework plan has been finalized, then this participant will be frustrated and disoriented, until the appropriate time arrives according to the advisor. This kind of organizational difficulty can be found in people with many different types of disabilities. The above mentioned participant, Nan, has ADD. These processing difficulties could also occur in someone who has a Traumatic Brain Injury, learning disabilities, or is a recovering alcoholic. One participant, a recovering alcoholic, described the task of analyzing a case study of one company with many branches for a course,

I'd have to go back and look at the set we did the other day and then look at what we're trying to do today and I can't go from here to here. I've got to put

them right side by side and draw a line and think about is this right and then write it down somewhere. (Jed 124-127)

In order for Jed to organize the information about the various branches of the company, he had to lay them out side by side drawing lines to and from key points. For other participants, advanced organizers and visual prompts that relate to material being read are important providing a frame of reference to attach written words to, making words on a page more meaningful. The development of these compensation skills is discussed in the next subsection.

Developing Compensation Skills

One of the most important skills to learn is to ask for help. Many students feel that when you ask the instructor for help it is a sign of weakness and you might be troubling the instructor. And yet "good" students know you need to get to know the instructor, let him or her know you, and that doing this will help your grade in many cases. Asking for help involves learning the questions to ask, the steps to follow, and networking to find the people at the university who can help. As one participant put it,

I am learning, there are skills that one can develop in terms of steps to follow. Questions to ask... There are skills one can develop and there are people all over this university. There are people everywhere who have this and you just go to somebody for help when you need help. (Nan 321-325)

Developing "the steps to follow" includes finding the learning resource center and learning how to use a tape recorder for lectures and studying. Other skills used by participants to gain additional perspectives are to ask other students for copies of their notes or to act as study partners for exams, and to talk to the instructor, "I try to meet with the professor to clarify things" (Kim 316-317). Another participant spent time in disability services figuring out how they could use the machines and computers available to compensate for their inability to read printed words correctly. One participant was trying to, "set up a system where people like me can hear what the test is and then use a word processor [to answer the

questions] ...[then] put the answers into the reading machine and have it read back to you" (Mel 252-254).

A broader understanding of what a student with a disability has to do comes from a student with a vision impairment,

To be a student with a disability means you have to manage your time. If you don't manage your time well you will not succeed. It is a simple matter of fact because of the way the system is set up for the most part schools are not accessible and do not provide the accommodations that you need. That means you spend more time doing your work. (Cat 578-595)

This participant is legally blind yet able to see shadows and well enough to navigate the campus without a cane or dog. She has an invisible disability. There is no way for a person to look at her and suspect the presence of any disability. She can read printed words for thirty minutes at a time magnified above 72 pt. Since this is physically tiring and difficult she reserves this effort for reading papers she is writing. Articles and books are read by listening to audiotapes. Time management is very important considering she must track down textbooks prior to the beginning of a quarter to (hopefully) have them read by the beginning of the quarter. Research is another matter. She cannot go into the library and find materials without assistance. All materials, once found, are tape-recorded so that she can read by listening to them. She has learned to compensate by beginning early. As she says,

I couldn't wait till the second or third week to start doing my research. I knew I had to start day one. The first day of class [start] calling up people, getting people lined up, finding books, ordering books, looking for books. Asking people on the Net do you know of any literature for X, Y, Z? And getting all that lined up in a format that I can [use]. (Cat 588-592)

If an instructor cannot provide the titles of texts to be used in a course, or if readers are delayed, either situation prevents her from having access to the same materials as other students at the time the course starts.

Summary

Learning that one is not stupid, but instead has a disability which affects learning either cognitively or physically, was a great relief for participants who were diagnosed in

college. The disability can manifest itself by not allowing physical access to the class in the case of the participants with arthritis and asthma. These participants need assistance getting lecture notes, handouts, and other information relevant to the missed class. Other participants felt they needed help but the help was not necessarily an accommodation. For instance, a participant might need someone repeatedly to proofread a paper, or walk them through the different program requirements. Participants also needed help learning how to self-reflect and analyze their difficulties in order to identify what kind of help was needed. Participants that successfully reflected on their needs were able to devise compensation skills such as preplanning. The next category investigates the accommodation communication.

Accommodation Communication

The accommodation communication can be broken up into four parts, (a) disclosure, (b) communicating needs, (c) comfort, and (d) advocacy. The last section under this category inquires about professional training or coaching on disclosure.

Disclosure of the need for an accommodation is the first step. How much information the instructor needs to know about the disability depends on the disability and the nature of any ongoing relationship between the instructor and the student. The quantity and quality of information divulged will depend on two other factors, the student's comfort level with discussing the disability with strangers and the ability to advocate on behalf of themselves as a person with a disability. The accommodation communication begins with disclosure by a student of a disability.

Disclosure

Disclosure is the act of giving someone information about yourself that could be used against you or could affect the way the other person thinks about you. Whether or not the person uses the information against the person who discloses, there is the potential that the relationship will change because of it. The fear is, "when you tell people you have a

learning disability for some reason that word is synonymous with stupid" (Reba 106-107). This fear of being thought stupid motivates some to simply hand the professor a "sheet and tell them what it's about and then that's it usually" (Mel 225-226). A few professors Mel views as friends might be told "a little more but not much more" (Mel 227). One participant only brings up textbooks if he is having trouble securing one to be taped or the taping is not done by the first day of class. The participant with the visual impairment notifies the instructor immediately upon registering for the class so that she can secure the books to be taped.

One participant interviewed identified himself as having arthritis and a breathing disorder but not as having learning disabilities. His disclosure is two fold. First, he assumes they know "something is up" seeing him drag behind him a cart for his books and using his inhaler. Second, he "hand[s] them a piece of paper Dr. X has filled out with several different things on it and an accommodation sheet" (Jed 350-351). Contrast the approach of the participants with a visual impairment and arthritis, with two participants who speak to the instructor or arrange a meeting time on the first day of class. Both freely describe their disability and how it manifests itself, "I have this learning disability and it manifests itself in my writing and when I read" (Reba 291) and the other,

I tell them I am "in control" of my own asthma and that I have a nebulizer to use if I have a major problem. I also tell them that I should be able to notify someone if I need to be taken to the emergency room. (Kim 425-427)

Both of these participants disclose so much information so they can ask permission to do things that students without disabilities take for granted. Their requests are to tape lectures and to miss class when ill or the doctor has determined the weather is too dangerous.

Three participants knew what they would say, when to say it and why they provide the information they provide. The other four participants felt like this participant, after trying to make a joke of it, he told me, "I don't know what I really say to them. I just say I have real troubles" (Ray 396-397). If a student has difficulty with disclosure, it is likely the

student will also have difficulty communicating needs. The process of communicating needs is discussed in the following section.

Communicating needs

Some students feel that official documentation "breaks the ice for them. That's the cover your ass kind of thing that they [instructors] can relate to, paper" (Ray 418-419). Participants felt it was their responsibility to break the ice. Once the ice is broken it is up to the instructor to ask questions if he/she has any. Some instructors will ask questions so as "to know how they can go ahead and make class so I can be more involved" (Cat 071-072). At this point Cat can respond by saying she can't see the board, everything written on the board will have to be read out loud.

Regardless of their age, students view instructors as knowledgeable authority figures who should know what they need to know about a student. When the faculty member doesn't have any idea of the student's needs and part of the student's disability is an inability to clearly articulate needs and organize thoughts, a very frustrating situation can occur. One participant told me,

[I] would always leave her office crying because I couldn't get through to her what I wanted. I would go in and say I need to talk to you about ...generals, what I'm going to do and she'd say no, what you need to do is finish your this, this and this and I'd say no, I really need to start ahead. I have to start thinking about things. I have to mull them over for as long as possible before ...I didn't tell her all this but I have to consciously plan everything in my head. Every single step of every thing has to be planned in my head because nothing comes naturally to me. Nothing. (Nan 245-252)

It's easy to visualize the exasperation the advisor felt with the student and the frustration the student felt with the advisor. Until the participant realizes she needs to describe her conscious need to plan to the advisor, the advisor will not understand why she persists in her desire to talk about things in the future when she hasn't completed courses and tasks from the past or in the present. This student is also afraid to disclose any information. She feels "it may be held against me" (Nan 078) and that "telling everything just isn't

appropriate in every situation" (079-080). When the disability affects a person's ability to judge appropriateness, there are implications for the effectiveness of the accommodation communication. One implication is that the instructor will not receive information that may be crucial for the instructor's success in effectively teaching the student. Another element of the communication, the level of comfort each party has with the disclosure, is most likely lacking or diminished. The issue of comfort in the accommodation communication is discussed in the next section.

Comfort

One of the questions asked in the interview was how comfortable the participants are talking to others about their disability. If one is uncomfortable discussing a disability with others, this discomfort may get in the way of adequately communicating accommodation needs. Some participants responded that professors have a right to know enough to fulfill the requirements of the institution. Other participants thought they needed more; one student responded this way,

Sometimes I feel like they're just being nosy and rude then I won't discuss it and it's not a point of I'm not comfortable talking about it. It's a point of I don't think that you really want to know. It's more of a power trip on their part. (Cat 067-069)

Those participants who did not feel comfortable discussing their disability, felt it gave the other person an undue advantage or power over them. The participants felt that this society views "disability" as being incomplete or abnormal. One participant spoke to me only because he felt my work might do some larger good and that he could assist other people by participating in this study. Normally, he would tell no one,

[When he] went to school you didn't mention that you had anything so I imagine that stigma is still with me. You always kind of want to do it privately saying here's the stuff. But if you can help other people then's when you tell one on one. (Mel 299-200)

Another sentiment was expressed by one participant, a recovering alcoholic, who is in constant pain from arthritis,

You won't hear me complain about any of it. ... If I can help someone through talking about it that's what I want to do. If I complain about it, it's going to get worse. I see people that complain about it and things just don't go well for them. If I talk about it, people ask me questions and I explain what I'm doing and how I'm living. If I can help someone through that I'm open for discussion. (Jed 195-199)

He doesn't complain because things "don't go well for" people who complain. He may be superstitious, fearing bad luck, or he may fear ill will and distaste from people who want to hear stories of courage not stories of complaint. Sometimes discussing a disability with someone who is uncomfortable hearing about it makes it seem like a complaint. In effect the stigma attached to disability still limits discussion making the whole issue of disability invisible.

Comfort levels are often boosted when self esteem is boosted. One participant found her strength to discuss her disability with others from a professor. This professor helped her to see her disability was not a shameful thing. The participant could no longer function at a job because she could not write her reports in the manner in which the agency demanded. Of course, writing papers is an important part of graduate work. The participant shared about a professor,

It wasn't until I wrote a paper in which we were talking about good teaching, what was good teaching, what was learning. ... I reflected on my own life, about how I survived the education system with my own disability. ... She said you're an excellent writer, not only are you an excellent writer, what you have to say is worth hearing. ... So it took somebody that I really respected to tell me I was okay. That really made it okay and I have found that had given me a certain comfort level. (Reba 312-322)

Individuals who feel comfortable talking about their disability to others for accommodation purposes are more likely to transcend thinking only of their own needs to thinking of ways to help others taking us into advocacy, the next theme. Advocacy the last part of the accommodation communication is discussed in the next section.

Advocacy

Three participants in this sample were members of organizations for students with disabilities on their campuses. I am familiar with both organizations having been a member of one and interacting with members of the other. My personal experience is that both organizations advocate for greater access to existing resources and services at this institution. One participant has formally complained about accessibility to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Office of Civil Rights and is actively assisting others to do so. At the other end of the spectrum from advocating on behalf of others is another participant who believes that dyslexics need "to learn to help themselves" (Mel 472) by forming support groups, sharing tips and being self sufficient. Half of those interviewed didn't participate in any kind of advocacy effort, preferring to keep general knowledge of their disability to a minimum.

Advocacy involves trying to persuade or educate those holding some form of power to change their beliefs or to do something or both. One participant told me it was important for her to be an advocate for students with disabilities because,

I'm in the college of education and I see so many people who are completely intolerant of any difference. Student learners, kids should be one way. There's one way to learn and everybody should march lock step down this narrow road. (Nan 062-065)

She further remarked, "I consider myself a spokesperson, by talking about it all the time ad nauseum" (Nan 050; 052). This was her effort to make faculty more aware and bring the discussion out into the open. Another participant described how she spoke out in classes to add the disability experience to the class discussion, "conversations have been experiential and usually in one of my classes to make a point about needs that aren't addressed by most people because they don't 'see' your disability" (Kim 234-236). People not seeing someone's disability is certainly the experience of every student in this sample. Some not only have disabilities that are invisible, but are faced with instructors and other

professionals who do not believe that certain disabilities exist in adults such as attention deficient disorder. One respondent's advocacy included broadcasting information about her disability because she said, "I just thought it important that everyone know that adults have it also. So they'd know. So they'd look out for it" (Nan 072-073). Participants' advocacy efforts took different forms, most of these were concerned with advertising the existence and needs of students with invisible disabilities. An interview question inquired if participants had received any training or coaching on disclosing or requesting accommodations. The responses to this question form the basis of the discussion in the next section.

Professional training or coaching on disclosure

Each participant was asked if anyone had ever given them any training or coaching on how to disclose or request accommodations. They all answered no. A few received some assistance with understanding the nature of their disability. One participant who has severe asthma was always included in conversations with her mother and pediatrician about her health. The two participants, who went to therapists to find out what was wrong with them, were both instructed on what "to ask for, to know when I needed help and to ask for it. To recognize that things don't have to be perfect" (Nan 106-107). Disability services told participants about forms to give to instructors, extra time on tests, distraction free exam rooms, and left it at that. Three of these participants are served by federal agencies such as the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, where one student was told "don't disclose, don't tell people of your disabilities" (Mel 317) for fear he wouldn't find a job.

Summary

The accommodation communication contained four parts. Disclosure is the first step to receiving accommodations. There are many issues surrounding disclosure such as how much, when and if one should disclose. Once the participant has made the decision to disclose he or she must then communicate to the instructor the types of assistance needed to

be able to access the course material. Communicating needs is influenced by how comfortable the participant was with her or his own knowledge of the disability and appropriate accommodations. Frustration and a desire to improve the situation for other students led some of the participants into different types of advocacy work. Advocacy work involved informing the administration and instructors about the needs of individuals with disabilities. Becoming resources for other students, instructors, and the administration may have been important to this sample because, when asked about coaching they may have received from others, each responded he or she had never received any training. The next category is a discussion of the educational experience.

Educational Experience

The conversations with participants with invisible disabilities resulted in this category, the educational experience. The educational experience discussed here is framed by the experience of the participants in this sample. This category is divided into three sections (a) the meaning of education and access to education, (b) types of accommodations, and (c) roadblocks and educational negatives. A formal education was hard to attain for the participants in this sample, making the meaning of education more poignant and access to an education more vital to them.

Meaning and Access

Five of the seven participants in this sample returned to school because of their disability. For some the disability manifested itself for the first time in a way that made it difficult to compensate for in their vocations. This is true for Jed whose arthritis was so severe he could no longer continue as a potter. Reba had difficulty writing reports in the manner management thought appropriate. She tried a number of learning projects such as enrolling in a course on grammar in an effort to fix the problem. Cat could no longer read the data records she was inputting into the computer. Mel's back injury and the fear construction companies have of hiring a person with a back injury prevented him from

continuing as a crew supervisor. For almost a year, Kim's asthma prevented her from returning to work; she needs a job she can do at least occasionally from home. For these five participants, earning a college degree afforded them the opportunity to think about a job each felt capable of doing given the parameters of their disability.

The two participants who did not return to school to change careers because of their disability have different stories. Ray, the oldest member of the sample, was diagnosed with "mirror imaging" in the 1950's. When Ray began pursuing a degree in the late sixties, accommodations were not an accepted practice and neither was disclosing a learning disability. After making several attempts to earn a bachelor degree, this last time he knew to request accommodations and that seeking accommodations did not make him less intelligent or less capable. He graduated three quarters after the interview. The other participant, Nan, did not know she had a disability until she began her doctoral program. She was simply continuing her career path by pursuing another degree.

Education meant a variety of things to these students. For most it meant an increase in self esteem, for some a way to help others with similar problems, and for others the value was simply in learning. Earning a degree seemed to be particularly important to this group of adults. It may be that in reaching the employment roadblocks that most seemed to experience due in some way to their disability, each began to question her or his self worth and ability. This self doubt made finishing a formal postsecondary degree program extremely important to these participants. More than that, as one participant spoke of it he now had, "\$25,000 worth of knowledge" (Ray 490) and he expected his advice would be better received because of it.

A doctoral student participant, knew she learned differently than other students. As a teacher, she saw children with strengths and weaknesses similar to hers. Reba returned to school to change careers and to help others who learn in the ways she learns. She feels people who respond more to kinesthetic teaching methods are neglected in the schools. If a

student has difficulty with oral and written language in traditional forms she wants to be able to say to them, "just give it [what one has learned] back to me, any way you can... You don't have to verbalize it. I don't want you to write it down for me. Show me" (Reba 258-260).

It was important to all the participants that the diploma represent a degree earned through hard work. This was important because they were acutely aware of the stigma attached to accommodating students with disabilities, that the professors go easier on them or that accommodations actually give them a head start rather than an equivalent beginning point. A couple of the participants felt their high school diplomas were tainted. As Jed told me, "they handed me a high school diploma, I did not earn a high school diploma" (Jed 097). Another doctoral student participant who graduated in the top ten percent of her high school class questions the value of that education now. She entered college immediately after high school and struggled not knowing she had a learning disability until she was in her late thirties.

Another participant dropped a class when the instructor passed out the answers to the test. The reason, "well I didn't learn anything" (Jed 421). These participants did not want to just pass and get by, as Mel said "the institution is here to teach people on ways of thinking. Not as one physics teacher told me I'm here to get you through" (Mel 179). In this sample, a love of learning was demonstrated that cannot be accounted for because of age, life experience, and overcoming obstacles that non-traditional adult students face. Once the disability was diagnosed and academic accommodations understood, the participant could focus on learning. As one participant put it, "I'm a lot more focused and I want it [education] more and I know more about it [educational system] and I know the difficulty of getting it in [my brain] and [still] I want more of it" (Ray 277-279). In fact, all of the undergraduates spoke of their next degrees. Some thought in terms of another undergraduate degree while others knew the master degree they would pursue. One of the

two undergraduate participants earning two degrees knew she would pursue a doctoral degree. These degrees could not be successfully completed without the appropriate accommodations. The types of accommodations needed by this sample are discussed in the next section.

Types of accommodations

Types of accommodations can be divided into three areas of responsibility, the institution, the faculty and the student. Elements of institutional responsibility are architectural access and access to materials housed in libraries or disability services. The participants in this sample study on three campuses. One student attends school in New York. Four attend a main campus and the other two a regional campus of a major midwestern university. One of the two students attending the regional campus had been a student at the main campus.

Institutional

Problems with accessibility began with the orientation process, not the university's orientation but the orientation put on by disability services. A student with a learning disability that impacts his ability to read was given a 15 to 20 page packet of information to read before classes began. As the participant said,

As far as the information coming out of main campus...was very little. You got a packet of fifteen to twenty pages...which I had a hard time reading. That would probably take me a couple of days of non-stop reading but I just said sorry, but I don't have time to read all this by the next week for classes....I had to learn to do a lot of things. Mostly I do a lot of things by myself. (Mel 365-372)

For this student, the printed information packet was inaccessible. He reads by listening to spoken words on tape not by looking at printed words on paper.

Stickers for parking in spaces reserved for those with handicaps are important to students with mobility impairments. There are more steps involved in getting the handicapped parking stickers than regular stickers. And there is no guarantee proximity

parking will be available. After going through the frustration of getting a parking sticker a participant said that,

The handicapped parking near the library is metered parking. Why should I have to pay to park near the library when I already have a parking permit? I have to walk two blocks, in the cold, to the library to do research. (Kim 231-233)

Some may wonder what parking has to do with learning. If you can remember a time when you sustained an injury that made it painful to walk, think about your mental state after walking with the pain some of the distances necessary to get to class on larger campuses. Pain is exhausting and draining, leaving less energy for attention and participation in the class. If the pain continues during class, it is distracting.

Disability services provides a variety of services. The services participants reported needing were books taped, distraction free environments, scribes, and information. As one participant put it, "I suppose as anything you have to continue to tell everybody what you have because you have no idea when somebody is going to know what's under the rock. Everybody has a different idea of what's going out there" (Ray 201-205). Counselors benefit students most when they share information on what resources are available to help the student's situation.

A problem for more than one participant was the timely taping of books for class, "unfortunately, they were slow getting the books on tape" (Mel 085). He went on to say for one class, "the first three chapters were supposed to be read the first two weeks. I got them in the fifth week" (Mel 087-088). The college he attended is on a ten week quarter system. The participant ended up with a D in the course. I asked why he didn't drop the class, "But see I needed the class. When you're on a strict budget and you're on a strict time table you have to take it regardless" (Mel 465-466). Another student remarked the office "attempted to pretend that they put books on tape. They don't actually accomplish this feat" (Cat 287-288). She is talking about technical or sound difficulties with the tape.

Some tapes are inaudible but they are still handed to the students as if they are perfectly fine. This is comparable to buying a textbook with huge black ink spots or pages missing. Academic departments do not try to assist the student, having been told accommodations are the responsibility of the office.

Another difficulty a participant had with disability services was over test proctoring. His brother was getting married and he made arrangements with the instructor to take a test after the wedding. The instructor said he would reschedule the test with disability services. The counselor with disability services would not take the word of the instructor that the test was to be rescheduled. The result was as if he didn't show up for the test, failing it. As the participant tells the story,

I had told the instructor that I was going to my brother's wedding and he said "sure, no problem. I'll give you absence and we'll just make [up the] test when you come back. I'll make the arrangements." I said "fine, that's great." Come for the test Mr. X and somebody else said "we don't take the word of a teacher. We take the word of a student and you did not talk to us about doing this." I said, "the teacher said that he was going to make the notification." He said, "Well, we don't take the word of a teacher. You have to do it." I flunked the test. I was furious and from then on I never took a test with that bunch again...Mr. X is probably one of the reasons why in the class we had three people who used disability services. I know of two of that dropped and have gone onto different universities. (Mel 089-099)

As a result of this and other incidents the participant stopped taking classes on the main campus, changing his major to one of the options available on the regional campus. It strikes me, and the participant, as odd that because the student has a disability, and was using disability services for accommodations, the instructor could not set his own rules about make-up tests. It also strikes me as inconsistent when the instructor was required to send the test to the office in a sealed envelope that he could not reschedule the test.

Faculty

Students spoke of most instructors as being willing to accommodate. The accommodation most needed was simple understanding of the difficulty caused by the disability. One participant has severe asthma which affects the participant's ability to get to

class and the library. Class attendance was often not mandatory. Class assignments, however, did have prescheduled submission deadlines. Since the participant cannot control the weather or her asthma she needs instructors to be understanding of the difficulty both may cause when trying to finish an assignment on time.

The participant with attention deficient disorder needed a different kind of understanding,

[The student] need[s] the instructor to understand that I have a problem because I often think differently. I don't think linearly for one thing and quite often...if someone says something and everyone is thinking one thing I'll have a different way of looking at that fact or thinking about that fact which can sometimes be seen as wrong..., different or weird. (Nan 151-158)

If an instructor can incorporate this participant's way of viewing information into the discussion the entire class might benefit from a new perspective. Otherwise, the participant can feel alienated. If the participant does not adequately communicate the difficulty she has processing information to the instructor she runs the risk of the instructor thinking she is not doing the reading prior to class or that she is not intelligent enough to be in the class or program.

When Nan tried to communicate her need for help focusing to her advisor, she prepared a list of things with her counselor to give to her advisor,

I made up this list of things that I needed someone to help me focus. Someone not to let me get off. I needed conferences to make sure that I was on target. She looked at this list that I had written up and she said to me well this sounds like you're trying to put the onus of everything on me. Am I going to have to call you and remind you that you have something due? When I was writing this up it never occurred to me that it could be looked at like that. So I said no absolutely not. All of this--it's up to me to do these things. I'm just asking that you give me the time when I ask. (Nan 232-236)

This participant was trying to prepare the advisor. The disability causes the participant to lack the ability to focus. She compensates for this by talking things through many times, thinking it over in her head for extended periods of time and well in advance of the actual event. In the end another student filled this need for Nan acting as a sounding board and

resource person, giving her names, places and ideas on where to get more specific assistance.

Students with print disabilities, those with visual impairments, learning disorders and some forms of paralysis, can only access books auditorily. These students need instructors to provide information on texts prior to the first day of class. A student without a disability can purchase a book accessing the information immediately. It can take weeks to get a book recorded on tape. And sometimes the result is poor, as one participant stated,

By law they have to give me the same quality text as every other student gets. You cannot tell me that someone who is mumbling through the text, who has never read it before ...[and] coming up to a hard word...mumbling through it and then spelling the word or trying to say it one hundred times on the tape and never bother to erase and of the mistics. (Cat 359-374)

Handouts also need to be prepared in advance to give to the participants with vision impairments so that they can convert the handouts into an accessible format by the session they are for. These same participants will not be able to read overheads, the board or follow along in the book during class. A common accommodation requested by these students was that the instructor read overheads and any writing on the board during class.

Students

Certain things are the student's responsibility to pursue. For instance, the participants who had difficulty getting their books put on tape took care of the problem in different ways. One student transferred to the regional campus nearer his home. Disability services there develops a working rapport with students. By this I mean, the student's books are put on tape by a machine by volunteer students with disabilities. And the participant with the problem on the main campus assists the regional office by recording his own books and the books of other students as a volunteer. Another participant solved the problem of getting her books on tape by hiring a friend to read them for her. The office is responsible for paying the reader.

Another student spoke of advocating for himself when he needed extra time for exams, "if you can't get it done through your professor, your TA then you just go to see the director" (Ray 398). Others learn how to negotiate within the normal course of things, like length of time for doctoral candidacy exams. Sometimes the student with a disability doesn't realize that the time allotted for these exams is negotiated by all committees and students. He or she thinks she is getting an accommodation which is a change from typical procedures.

Other accommodations participants sought on their own are word processors and proofreaders. For many of us word processing programs have improved our ability to write. For someone with a learning disability that impacts their written communication, it is of greater benefit. One participant's handwriting is so illegible even to him that it made accurate rewrites difficult for him to do. Word processing also gives another participant the ability to type something, maneuver the words on the screen, print hard copy for review, and other things fulfilling the need for movement and the feeling of interacting physically with the project.

Roadblocks and Educational Negatives

There are many barriers to an education. Some hamper prospective students during the application process, others occur while pursuing a degree. Typical barriers for adult students are financial and familial responsibilities. For adults with disabilities, attitudes of teachers, administrators, and fellow students provide roadblocks to achieving educational goals. This section looks at barriers encountered during primary and secondary education, with the institution, its faculty, and students, and within the student with a disability.

One participant told me, "Most of my educational negatives took place in grade school and high school. ...Mostly they were teachers thinking asthma was all in my head and that I was trying to get out of class" (Kim 432-434). Kim's experience in college is different because her program area is rehabilitation counseling, a faculty who have

experience and knowledge of disability. Another participant who described being ridiculed by a teacher in the second or third grade because he could not draw circles properly was given a typical aptitude test by a high school guidance counselor. He said,

The day before the test I jammed my fingers and as far as the reading portion I didn't do very well so the guidance counselor said you're not going to make anything but a mop and broom man. Get out of my office. I have people I can help. (Mel 056-058)

With such a reaction from the guidance counselor it's a wonder Mel ever did decide to pursue a college degree. The problem with jamming his fingers as he called it, was that his writing hand was bandaged. He was treated in an emergency room for this injury. Since he was not diagnosed as severely dyslexic until he was well out of high school through his mother's efforts, all he knew was that he didn't read very well. He feels strongly that information about learning disabilities should be taught to anyone wanting to teach at any level, "because the people that are supposed to know [at the primary and secondary levels] what dyslexia looks like have absolutely no clue what's going on" (Mel 485-486). Mel is not alone with this sentiment. Other participants with learning disabilities feel the same way. Another participant who wants to impact teaching through her research put it this way,

More importantly I want to work with training teachers how to teach. I'm more concerned about the children that they impact,...about the sensitivity to different learning styles,...the bag of tricks they walk into a room with...I'm interested in more people having a positive attitude about themselves. If you're not about that, I don't want to work here anyway but if you truly believe all children can learn....They [the academy] don't believe it at all. It's evident by what they do. They teach teachers one way and then the teachers go out and emulate how they're being taught. (Reba 527-541)

Faculty

Instructors have a lot of power over students. Unfortunately, faculty often don't realize the impact of their words or actions on students because they don't realize their power. Participants felt that faculty needed an education on disability. They felt it unjust when a person held up as possessing knowledge questions whether or not the student's

disability is real. Some professors question the existence of learning disabilities or attention deficient disorder. One participant expressed this desire, "I'd love to see one professor see the words the way I do. And see what he does. Just once" (Mel 289-290).

Another participant had difficulty communicating with her advisor so much so that she wanted to switch advisors. This is very difficult in programs where there are only two faculty members. After being out of school for a year trying to discover what was wrong with her, she came back,

Feeling very incompetent...every time I met with her I'd be in tears for days afterward. I just felt like oh gosh, I'm such a dunce. I can't even get across to her what I need and at that time I really wasn't all that sure of what it was I needed. (Nan 287-292)

This can be a very frustrating situation, not being able to communicate effectively what your academic needs are. Aside from a lack of compassion or the knowledge that learning disabilities are real disorders of the brain, there are pedagogical issues. One participant asked a professor if he was "required to take any kind of pedagogy to be a professor" (Reba 457). The answer was no. There is no training to be an advisor either. A participant who has been struggling for three decades to earn a degree despite his learning disability, felt that teaching has improved tremendously since the seventies as well as the attitudes of professors toward students at the university where he started. This participant remembered another educational experience that was good for him in the seventies,

I just thought the caliber of teaching there was the best I'd ever seen until now. Geology was taught outside. They took you into [the hills and] caves. They took you and said this is what it really looks like. Feel it. (Ray 245-246; 253)

Another participant found an instructor "was really good because he understood what was going on because there was times I'd even switch numbers and he would see it after I had told him" (Mel 270-272).

Institution

The institution is represented by disability services. The participants interviewed came from two campuses of the same university. Many students had problems with the office on the “main” campus. The problems ranged from being told “You’re just one of 300 students that I have to take care of. We just don’t have time for you” (Mel 381-382) to not providing textbooks on tape in a timely fashion and “the fact that things are not in accessible format such as the master schedule...and admissions information, financial aid information” (Cat 660-662).

Several of the participants who had attended the “main” campus transferred to the regional campus because of the problems with disability services. These students felt that one of the reasons the smaller campus office was better was that “they react with some concern [while] up on main campus they don’t give a rat’s behind” (Mel 267-268). This concern for students was demonstrated by listening to the student advocacy group’s suggestions and complaints. The administrators of this office did more than listen, they addressed the issues by making changes and allowing the students to take more responsibility for their own accommodation needs. Many of the students worked in the office as proctors or on work study, while others volunteered spending time tutoring and using the reading machine to record and tape books. The administrators in collaboration with the students prepared proposals for grants that purchased two reading machines for the office.

Students

For participants there are two issues, credibility and capability. When disclosing to an instructor, advisor or librarian to request an accommodation, it is important that they believe the disclosure. In other words, believe a student has the disability claimed requiring the accommodation requested. For many participants their credibility was established when they presented a piece of paper from the office serving students with disabilities verifying

the disability and accommodation. As one participant put it, "Paper. And that breaks the ice for you. You're going up and saying - and that proves that you are coming from [disability services]" (Ray 419-420). However the piece of paper is not always accepted in the case of a participant who is legally blind yet can "see" well enough to get around without a dog or a cane. She said,

It was right after class and I had gone up to him and it was like first day and I went ahead and showed him the forms that [disability services] has you file and explaining to him that I was blind and that I needed him to go ahead and do this and that and the other thing and that I would have to take my tests over at [disability services] and he gave me attitude. He said that I wasn't blind. He got in my face which probably was... Yeah literally. He was like within two inches of my face. (Cat 129-135)

Other participants' experiences may not be quite so dramatic but they can be equally frustrating. One participant said every time she discloses people say "it can't be,"

And I go no, I'm serious. "You are?" What I find with people including my husband and my mother and everybody else, my son even, because you can't see the boo boo it doesn't exist. And it's very hard for them to believe me when I say I don't understand and people assume because you have a learning disability you can't get a Ph. D. (Reba 407-412)

It is incomprehensible for many people that higher education can be attained by people with disabilities. Disability is still viewed by many as lacking ability. On the other hand, claiming a disability can also be viewed as trying to get an unfair advantage. One participant consciously thinks about the idea of advantage. She said,

I make sure that I don't "take advantage" of their accommodations. It is tempting sometimes to just stay home because I'm tired or any number of other excuses. I know that it is that type of behavior though that causes some people to believe that all persons with disabilities are "trying to take advantage of the system." (Kim 304-308)

The fear of an instructor or fellow student thinking that an unfair advantage was to be gained by requesting an accommodation keeps many students from requesting the accommodations upfront. Individuals with and without disabilities have been conditioned to think of accommodations as a crutch causing some participants to try to make it without an accommodation. The stigma attached to disability is being combated in many ways by

the participants interviewed. One participant who speaks about the experience of having an invisible disability in class said,

When I share these experiences, I am trying to give my classmates an awareness of the stigma surrounding people with hidden disabilities. We are treated in a different manner than people with visible disabilities. Most of the time people with invisible disabilities are told that they are faking or lying or trying to get out of doing something. It is hard on a person's self-esteem to be called a liar on a daily basis. (Kim 345-349)

Credibility leads to the parallel issue of "capability." If a student's disclosure or accommodation request is questioned, the next step is to question their capability to do the coursework. One participant returned to college after getting by in high school twenty years earlier. His first quarter back his courses included business law and abnormal psychology. He got an A in one, a C in the other (without the curve an F), and he decided to continue in the field of the course he did well in. He has noticed that his reading comprehension steadily has increased making him feel able to take a psychology course in the future.

Another participant said "I think I'm capable [of doing the work for a Ph. D.]. Just given the chance. The grades may not show it but yet I feel that I can do the work" (Mel 454-455). His grades don't show it because he has been carrying a twenty hour a quarter load to fulfill the requirements of two degrees before his funding runs out. On top of that, he is a father active in his children's lives and assists his wife with her business. When requested accommodations did not materialize in a timely fashion affecting his ability to get a good grade, he was not free to drop the course because of funding and family responsibilities.

Students with learning disabilities are often surprised when they do well in a course. Their previous conditioning has prepared them to think of themselves as incapable and actively fear being found out. As one participant said,

My greatest fear on a daily basis is, an incredible source of tension and stress, that I'm going to find out my peter principle, rise to the level of your incompetence...I have this fear of being found out. Not found out about my disability. Found out that I'm not too smart. (Reba 412-415, 418-419)

This same participant had successfully run her own company, as did another participant. A third participant rose to the level of management in his career. All three came to college to gain the skills necessary to pursue a career better suited to their type of disability. Each day these participants struggle with feelings of inadequacy questioning their capability to do college level work. If their own self doubt was not enough many participants have had the existence of their disability questioned as well as their credibility.

Other people's reactions

As we all know, people can be cruel. Many simply believe in their ignorance that certain disabilities do not exist. Students encounter patronizing attitudes when describing their disabilities. One participant with a learning disability said, "I've found that not very many people care. They can't understand what I'm saying" (Mel 278). Another participant with attention deficient disorder told me, "Most people say, 'oh everybody has those characteristics' and 'this isn't really anything. I'm sure you don't really have anything'." (Nan 83-84). Or an asthmatic whose high school gym teacher "made her run the 600 yard dash even after being told that I was unable to run it....One of them wouldn't let me stop when I had problems" (Kim 334-336).

Faculty and students still stereotype. A participant with a vision impairment tells about a frequent reaction that she gets,

Because I don't look blind that confuses people and so they always want to know just...when you're talking about accommodations and the fact that you can't always see this and you can't always see that they start wondering just how much you can see because you don't look like you're blind. And so they're trying to like conceptualize it I guess and they have a problem because of the fact that the stereotype in society is you can't see anything...and that obviously isn't the case if you're not walking with a cane or a dog. (Cat 076-082)

Another reaction she gets is to be called a liar. As she remembered,

- If they come out and call me a liar which has happened, I get angry. I get mad. Why in God's green earth would you say that you're blind if you're not blind. That doesn't make any sense. No one in their right mind would lie about it. Simply the stigmatism that goes with it and the prejudice that goes along with it, you just wouldn't do it. (Cat 119-123)

Worse than being called a liar, is being told that your life or your life experience has no value. This was the case for the participant with severe asthma whose roommate was asked, "Why doesn't she just call Dr. Kevorkian?" (327-328). Women with various disabilities have also been offered "free" hysterectomies as was one participant in this study.

Summary

The quality of the educational experience for each participant has influenced the meaning of education, delivery of accommodations, and the barriers the student encountered. For most of the participants education meant access to a career they felt capable of doing within the parameters of their disability. Types of accommodations needed varied with the student. Delivery of the accommodation could affect the participant's state of mind as well as educational access. It was very frustrating to request a book be tape recorded and receive it late or poorly. Faculty played an important role in the educational experience by believing or disbelieving the student's need for an accommodation. Roadblocks and educational negatives can interfere with the educational experience by making a student feel incompetent or unwanted. Barriers to postsecondary education were encountered by some participants during their K-12 years when counselors or teachers ridiculed the student. Barriers seem unconquerable when an instructor or the institution exhibits a lack of caring or understanding about the disability. This results in students transferring to other institutions if they are getting emotional support elsewhere and feel they are capable of the work despite the attitudes confronted. From educational experiences the next category moves to a discussion of the employment experiences of the participants.

Employment Experiences

The students in this sample had a variety of experiences with disability and work. Mel, Cat, Reba, Nan, and Kim lost jobs due to their disabilities. Jed lost his business because of his disability which prevented him from continuing as a potter. Mel's situation was fairly straightforward. He was quietly terminated when the company's insurer found out that he had a back injury. Cat, Reba, and Nan learned about their disability because of difficulties with work. Cat's vision had become so poor she could not read the data she was to input. She chose to quit after nearly hitting a person on a bike while driving a car. Kim and Reba tried to work out some accommodations with their employers that were denied. Kim was eventually terminated and Reba found a new job. Nan was fired, she believed unjustly from a job she needed. She didn't understand why she was having difficulties which caused her to become deeply depressed losing a year of school. She sought out a counselor who diagnosed her with attention deficient disorder.

Most of these participants would not disclose during a job interview. They feel it would hurt their chances of being hired and "I don't think it would be necessary for them to know" (Nan 383). Cat would have to disclose because she needs an accommodation to read. Kim and other participants would disclose only after it became necessary. They felt they risked more by disclosing up front then after a situation arose even with the fact that there is no expectation of accommodation without disclosure.

There is little information in this category because most of these participants had returned to school to change careers, looking for one that could be done within the parameters of the disability. These participants should be interviewed in the future to learn what did happen to them after looking for employment.

Summary of Students with Invisible Disabilities Sample Data Description

Participants in this sample felt the stigma of having a disability. In each category feelings of being stigmatized emerged. As in the first category which described the relief of

discovering that one is not stupid. The participants with various cognitive disorders questioned their intelligence and capabilities. This chapter is full of their stories of instructors, advisors, friends, and family questioning their intelligence and capabilities. It was difficult for some participants to ask for help because they just didn't know what to ask for. Some participants began to learn how to ask for help and disclose for accommodations through the process of self-reflection and analysis that some participants went through to learn to describe their disability and to develop compensation skills.

The second category considered the accommodation communication as containing four parts for this sample: disclosure, communicating needs, comfort, and advocacy. Disclosure is the first step when requesting accommodations. It involves sharing some information about the disability and necessary accommodations. Participants had difficulty understanding how much information was necessary. A similar problem existed with communicating needs, most participants were not clear on what they did need for an accommodation which caused difficulty for the advisors and instructors receiving this information. Both difficulties with disclosure and communicating needs led participants not to be very comfortable discussing the disability. As a result of these difficulties these participants turned to advocacy efforts forming organizations, support groups, or finding ways to help other students avoid the problems they experienced. Participants' responses that they received little or no training on discussing the disability by professionals rounds off this category. The third category contained insights into the educational experience for these participants. Education was a way to change the course of their lives. Even though they encountered people that still questioned their capability and their credibility, participants were still working hard to earn their degrees with appropriate accommodations. Roadblocks encountered were instructor's attitudes and disability services not making the requested accommodation or putting up bureaucratic red tape. The final category discussed employment experiences. These participants had little experience with the disability and

work. All but two said they would not disclose to an employer until after they were hired and some difficulty related to the disability emerged. The next chapter explores the experiences of the third sample, students with visible disabilities.

CHAPTER 6

DATA DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS: STUDENTS WITH VISIBLE DISABILITIES SAMPLE

Students with visible disabilities make up the third sample in this study. There are eight students in the visible disability sample, two women and six men. Four of the men became disabled between the ages of 16 to 33 years old due to accidents. One man and one woman lost their sight gradually due to congenital illnesses while the other man was born blind and a woman was born with spina bifida. Five were students at the time of the interview: four at the undergraduate level and one beginning work on her Ph.D.. The other three have recently graduated, one with a master's degree and the other two with undergraduate degrees. All three of these students are thinking about working on additional degrees and one current student is also considering graduate work. Their academic program areas include communication, engineering, social work, psychology and education.

The major categories that emerged from the data are: (a) disclosure, (b) academic accommodations, (c) dealing with your disability on campus, and (d) employment. Each category contains four to six themes. The chapter starts with disclosure.

Disclosure

Disclosure is the act of sharing personal information about oneself with another person. In the category of disclosure, five themes emerged: (a) "what is full disclosure?" (b) loosen up the tension, (c) my disability is part of me, (d) other people's responses to

disability, and ending with (e) coaching or training on disclosure. The discussion starts with an examination of full disclosure.

What is Full Disclosure?

One participant stated that full disclosure is saying "Anything that I'm going to need to get my education and have my educational needs met, full disclosure means everything that is required" (Roc 307-310). Another participant thought it meant handing a professor a form. Two other participants felt the question, "How can we work together so that I can participate in your class?" (Sandy 298-301) sufficed for full disclosure. These two participants have visual impairments, one is blind from birth while the other participant has a degenerative condition. They felt it was unnecessary to discuss the disability with the professor believing it was obvious to a sighted person that neither one could see.

Disclosure during an employment interview was a different matter. A few participants disclosed on their resume, one intentionally while others listed activities like "member of United States Disabled Swim Team" (Bess 298-299) or speaking engagements on behalf of disability issues. Jed who speaks for "Think First" felt it was important to disclose at the beginning of the interview. He told me,

Many of them (interviewers) said afterwards I wasn't sure what to ask I wanted to but I was afraid to ask. ...The way I see it is I don't want to have to go there and surprise them. I don't want the uncomfortable situation. The way I see it, if they don't want to hire me because I have a disability...then I don't want to work there. (Jed 366-372)

Another participant said, "I usually tell them some time at the beginning of the interview that I'm open with my blindness because I know they have a lot of curiosity" (Pat 503-504). He said the interviewers proceed to "put me into a situation and ask me how I would handle it since I do have a disability" (Pat 500-501). Both Pat and Jed were engineering students who were interviewing with companies at the time of this research interview. Jed had one job offer and Pat felt that one was imminent for him. Pat summed up the sentiment felt by these two participants, that "dealing with the professors throughout most of my

college career has helped me out for interviews. I'm pretty much at ease in an interview" (Pat 576-577). Being at ease with company representatives is important for the individual with a disability, poise after all is important. But what about the interviewer's ease? Some participants were concerned about relieving the interviewer's and instructor's tension.

Loosen Up the Tension

There are several reasons to disclose from a global to a personal level. The strategies and reasons to loosen tension covered under this category are (a) increasing awareness, (b) demonstrating adaptability, (c) explaining some difficulty, and (d) needing cooperation. One participant disclosed to the other teachers in her school where she worked, "that I have a disability because I thought their students might be asking and they needed to know what to tell their students" (Bess 313-319). She went on to say she had "done some disability awareness sessions for other teachers," (Bess 319) because she felt it was her responsibility to inform the students in the school.

Another participant described why he disclosed during his job search, "in a couple of cases when I thought there was a high level of interest and they wanted to know more information about me before the interview. I did mention that I was blind and how I dealt with my blindness and any obstacles that I had" (Drake 220-224). He felt that telling a prospective employer about overcoming obstacles demonstrated his adaptability. At the time of this interview, the only consideration for employment he received from a prospective employer was when he did not disclose.

Other participants felt it was their duty "to make people feel more comfortable around me" (Pat 020). He believed he should "try to be open with my disability" (Pat 021) because he knew "people have got questions in their mind about me" (Pat 022). Another participant explained it this way,

I've learned this through my disability, through a lot of research I've done, through a lot of training I've had in the area, people naturally feel uncomfortable around people with disabilities and primarily that is because of uncertainty and

- so that uncertainty if its not taken care of gets in the way of the relationship. (Sandy 075-078)

Participants described ways to ease the tension, "I can tell when somebody is at unease with my disability and maybe I'll crack a joke or something and if that doesn't loosen up the tension maybe will start up a conversation about it" (Pat 025-027).

Another reason to disclose is as a way to explain some difficulty beyond the control of the individual. One participant was embarrassed to share with me, "I have to explain to them about my problem with falling asleep because I don't want to insult the professor" (Mel 244-246). Another story illustrated the difficulty created by simple things, "if it's a first thing in the morning class and they haven't shoveled the walk...I'm not going to be able to get to class that morning." Societal norms create difficulties too. One participant felt that people need to know "why I need to get a ride from them or have some other means of transportation other than driving a car because people assume you drive most of the time" (Sandy 065-067).

The last reason to disclose was "in a situation where I might need cooperation from someone" (Sandy 052). And as another participant put it about a situation where an instructor's cooperation was important, "it didn't bother me because I wanted it to get [it] fixed. So I just went--sure it kind of sucks having to do it (disclose) but under the circumstances it was about worth it" (Jed 200-202). In order to get cooperation these two participants felt they had to reveal personal information about themselves that a student without a disability would not have been required to do. Even though they are comfortable with the disability, because it is part of who they are, disclosing is not necessarily comfortable to do.

My Disability is Part of Me.

How comfortable participants are describing their disability to others depended on the situation. This section contains these subsections: (a) not when I'm busy, (b) keep it basic, (c) depends on the relationship, (e) my disability is part of me, and (f) if they ask.

Many of us do not like to be bothered with personal questions when we are busy.

As one participant stated,

As long as it's not a situation where I'm busy doing something, I don't mind it. [When] I'm out grocery shopping or something like that, I'm busy. ... You wouldn't appreciate it if I came up to you and asked you why you cut your hair the way you did. (Jerry 022-025)

Another participant told me,

It depends on the kind of mood I'm in. There's time when I trudge across campus and I really had a rough time. If I get approached then I'm maybe a little grumpier but usually I'm pretty cool about it. (Jed 035-038)

Describing the disability in basic terms is the tact participants took during the initial stage of a relationship. One participant told me,

I start out actually kind of vague, just saying that I'm paralyzed and then if they really want to know something they'll ask more. So I keep it as basic as possible and then if they want to go further, with it fine and if not then I feel like I've answered their questions. (Jerry 042-045)

Another participant said it also depends on the relationship or "on the situation, but I answer questions" (Bess 019). She also took a proactive approach doing "a lot of speeches about disability awareness" and teaching the children in her school "that they can ask me any questions they have. I always read a book 'My Teacher is in a Wheelchair' for them and talk about my disability at the beginning of the year" (Bess 020-023). Another participant told me,

If I'm at a party or with friends I'm pretty open about everything. I'll tell them as much as they want to know at a party. Maybe even more than they want to know and I'll joke about it too. (Jerry 048-049)

At work however, "I gauge my answers depending on what kind of relationship I have with the person at work" (Jerry 054-055).

Relationships aside, some participants feel an obligation to discuss the disability because,

My disability is part of me. It's part of what makes me a person and I figure if I can't talk about it then I'm ashamed of it and I'm not happy as a person. So I'm very comfortable with talking about it with other people. (Drake 034-036)

Some participants just preferred to disclose because,

It's too easy to assume and assume the wrong thing and they're stupid. Like in malls and stores kids will [ask] what happened? They [the parents] kind of scoot them away, afraid to approach me. The best way to deal with ignorance is through education. The more people you teach the better off. (Jed 019-026)

As part of the desire to educate and lessen the anxiety of people without disabilities the participants were willing to tell part of their story, "If somebody asks... I'll be glad to tell them about it. It won't make me upset or anything" (Jed 057-060). The next section explores other people's responses to someone with a disability.

Other People's Responses to Disability

People react many ways to seeing a person with a disability. The subsections discussed below are: (a) generation differences, (b) you were so unlucky, and (c) professionals in higher education.

Generation differences

One participant felt that "five years ago [I saw people avoiding me] but in the last few years no. I don't know if it's the area that I've moved into or the change in perception" (Jerry 032-033). He moved from a working class suburb to a rejuvenated central city neighborhood composed of graduate students or people beginning their careers. Another participant had a similar observation, "I would say the younger generation is more accepting. I would say the older generation I get a lot of stereotypes" (Pat 034-035). A striking example of generation differences was in the reaction of young children and their parents to a person with a disability. One participant told me,

The biggest reaction I have a problem with is with little children. Children are naturally inquisitive so they want to know and that doesn't bother me ...but the

parents who grab their children like I have some major disease that bothers me (Mel 061-064).

Participants believed that parents grabbed their children away out of some misguided sense of politeness or fear the misfortune of the person with a disability may come to haunt them.

You were so unlucky

People's responses to disability varied from "empathy [to] some apathy, some proclaim sympathy but I don't think they understand the definition of words" (Roc 048-051). Thinking that people don't understand the difference between empathy, apathy and sympathy might have been because of some common reactions like "most people just stop and stare and that's about it" (Mel 057). Or when "people treat you like you're younger, like you're a small child even though you're older. Like pat you on the head or talk real loudly. Speak in simple sentences sometimes," (Bess 065-068) or talk about the person with a disability as if they didn't exist. Often "if there is to be a negative reaction pretty much it's not done to my face" (Sandy 094) instead,

I get a lot of 'I really admire you'. Once in a great while it's done in a patronizing way. Most of the time it's very sincere even though I think they shouldn't admire me because there is nothing to admire. People think that whenever there's something wrong with you if you are doing the same things as other people it's just really outstanding. (Sandy 101-104)

The sentiment that it takes courage to live a normal life is not well thought out. After all what is the alternative? Yet people have walked up to the participants in this study and said "It's so unfortunate. You were so unlucky. You're doing a great job with what you have left" (Roc 053-054). This participant went on to make the observation that, "Those are all statements that weren't well thought [out] before they were spoken" (Roc 055). One participant responded to such sentiments with, "It could have been worse" (Jed 046). The injury he sustained was a broken neck paralyzing all four limbs and impairing his speech. He said, "I have my shoulders and my hips back and my mental facilities back" (Jed 050).

The brain damage the doctors predicted after his motorcycle accident didn't evidently affect his finishing his degree in engineering. For this participant, that would have been worse.

Stereotyping is a fact of life. Usually one thinks of it as happening between strangers and that knowledge of a person will eliminate it. As one participant described his experience, "I was in a serious relationship when I was first going blind. A lot of stereotyping went on there and I basically broke off the relationship. ...[They] assumed I would be in their quotes 'a panhandler or dishwasher' for the rest of my life" (Pat 046-047, 056). He was in college at the time working on an associate's degree.

Stereotyping of people with disabilities included the notion that they needed help, help that would not be offered to an adult without a disability. One participant who teaches said of his students, "They're real ignorant about different people or people with differing abilities or just different people in general and they put the blind part first and a lot of them try to over extend their help to me..." (Drake 055-057). The help extended to taking liberties, for instance, "people will come up and want to grab my arm and say here, I'll walk with you and then I'll say no," (Drake 065-066) or "trying to put my chair in the car for me. I'll just tell them that it's fine. I can do that" (Bess 378-379). The same individuals might become indignant if someone took their arm to show them where to go without even asking if the person was lost. From the reactions of strangers, the discussion turns to semi strangers, instructors and others in higher education with whom a student may have an ongoing relationship with for several weeks.

Professionals in higher education

Professionals in higher education responded in three ways to the participants. They were (a) straightforward, (b) at ease, or (c) suspicious. One participant described the counselor, "from the beginning she was straightforward and honest and said I don't know how we're going to do this. We've never had a visually impaired person make it through the program" (Pat 345-346). This honesty kept communication open between the person

who might need accommodations and the person charged with assisting him with those accommodations. Another participant said, "I do well and I'm like the first one with a visible disability going through the department. I do well and they want to see me do good. So they've been very accommodating" (Jed 137-139). The counselor's desire to see the student succeed was instrumental to the whole process. Professors struck one participant as being "at ease with it. I don't know if it's maybe all the years that they've been teaching on campus. They've maybe met blind people walking down the street. Maybe helped one or two into a building. Talked to them about it" (Pat 414-418). This impression of professionals on a college campus differed from the reactions of the population at large described in the preceding section. The next section looks at coaching or training on disclosure which can be done by professionals in rehabilitation, higher education, or families.

Coaching or Training on Disclosure

Training or coaching on disclosure or life skills is done by three institutions: rehabilitation programs, families, and higher education professionals. The experiences with rehabilitation services ranged from one participant saying, "they were real helpful in terms of talking with me, figuring out what I wanted to do," (Drake 106) to another participant saying sarcastically, "we call it quad utopia ...everything is idealized, everything is perfect" (Jed 062, 065). For him and another participant that meant they did not learn how to exist independently in the world as it is. In the other participant's experience, "they focused on everything that could possibly go wrong...to the extent of ...borderline discouragement" (Jerry 072-074). The same participant went on to say that the rehabilitation program was not trying to create independent adults but instead "was always making sure that you had someone else that could help you out with this and help you out with that" (Jerry 081-082). Participants did not recall any discussion of how, when, or what to disclose in educational or employment settings. This was exasperated for one participant whose background

included acts of delinquency and little positive experience with school. He described the difficulties he had when he first entered college,

I had no idea what to do when I got sick. I didn't know anything about contacting financial aid because of my grants. I had no idea how to contact the people who gave me the grants or anything and let them know I'm not there. If there's a chance for a refund or whatever. I knew nothing about it. So what I do is I get sick and end up in the hospital. Then I came back to school and try it again and then get sick again. I tried for a tutor but they were never there. I mean it was like I was stuck out in the middle of nowhere and I could have done these things. All you've got to do is go up and I could go to these professors as long as I know to do that but I had no experience with college. My experience in school was in the lower grades so I was promised a great deal and left just hanging there. And supposed to figure these things out on my own. I went over and bought some books my first quarter. I bought some--it was my second quarter. I bought some textbooks and everything for the classes. I was driving down the hallway and this woman came out and she said she's been looking for me for two quarters. I was supposed to come in and meet her and give her the receipts for the books and she would pay me for them and everything. I didn't know that. I didn't know that I was supposed to get--what a program was. I thought I had to pay for my schooling. So when I was sitting at the nursing home and all of a sudden I got a certified letter in the mail. I went over and it was \$750 for a program check. I didn't know I was getting that. I didn't know what it was for. I was scared to death to cash it. (Mel 356-377)

It seems hard to believe someone could be this naive about college. This participant however had been a ward of the state from an early age, as he was when apprehended by police in an incident that resulted in his disability. At the time he was sixteen, he had been frequently truant from school and had little experience with high school. A retired principal tutored him for his GED. After the accident, this young man spent a year or so flat on his back in a nursing home with no one even advocating on his behalf for a wheelchair so he could get out of bed. Knowing these facts about his life, it seems reasonable that he would have no context for college and would need a lot of advice. Rehabilitation counselors did not counsel him on how to proceed with administrative aspects or succeed in the academic aspects of college instead,

They would talk among themselves and treat me like an outsider.... They tell you you've got brains but then they turn around and talk around you like an idiot. Like you couldn't possibly know what to do and they throw you in the middle of it and say here, sink or swim. (Mel 381-385)

For most participants family members did not assist them with learning about their disability because the participants were no longer children at the onset of the disability. For all but two participants, the disability occurred after adolescence. Family assisted the two participants who felt the full impact of their disabilities at birth. One participant described the conversations with her parents as "it just kind of came up. They told me what spina bifida was because I obviously didn't know what it was when I was little. They ...explained it to me so I could explain it to other people" (Bess 091-094).

Some participants received help from counselors in disability services. As one participant said,

The first day disability services ...told me this is what you need to go up and talk to your professors about. You need to go up and tell them who you are. You're in the class. What you'll need and how you need it. Be straight forward and be direct with them. Don't go overboard with it. (Drake 183-187)

While another participant felt she would need assistance from counselors in her academic program to help her in employment interview situations. She said, "I'm going to need coaching from the people in my department as to what is the best way to approach the situation" (Sandy 629-631). She was hopeful by then she would know what to ask them so that the academic counselors can help her. She also thought the key to securing their assistance "is do the best job I can here in terms of establishing myself in the courses" (Sandy 634). She assumes counselors in her department will know what to tell her about disclosing disability related information in order to secure accommodations in a work setting.

Summary

This first category defined disclosure beginning with the notion of full disclosure. Full disclosure was seen as anything necessary to satisfy an instructor that the accommodation request is valid. While in an employment interview full disclosure was important to give the interviewer permission to ask questions about the disability. The

comfort level of the interviewer, instructors, peers, and strangers was important to participants. Tension was relieved in disclosure situations as (a) awareness was increased, (b) adaptability was demonstrated, (c) difficulties were explained, and (d) cooperation was gained. The situations participants found themselves in determined how they felt about describing the disability. Participants felt the disability was part of them so they had an obligation to answer questions of other people. There were limits however depending on the relationship and what the person was doing at the time. When participants did answer questions they believed the best tactic was to keep it simple. The fourth section examined other people's responses to individuals with disabilities. The responses differed by generation and ranged from maintaining a professional demeanor to being emotional. The last section examines the types of professional training or coaching participants received on disclosure which included rehabilitation, counseling, and family support. The next category provides an overview of academic accommodations.

Academic Accommodations

Academic accommodations are the measures taken to provide access to course materials, class information, and the physical spaces where learning occurs. Four sections exist under the category academic accommodations. They are disability affects learning, requesting accommodations, responsibility to accommodate, and types of accommodations. Each will be described in turn.

Disability Affects Learning

Disabilities affect people in different ways. There are the practical aspects of accessing information for most people with disabilities. There are some instances when access is limited and no accommodation or cure is available as in the case of "phantom pain which occasionally will distract my cognitive abilities. I will have to look away or seem like I'm not attentive for a few moments" (Roc 340-342). Any medication that might control the

pain would "be so strong that you wouldn't be cognitive of where you were" (Roc 348).

Another way the disability may affect the learning process is when the individual,

Still wasn't ready for the public [having] spent three years living in a nursing home. I wasn't ready for the outside. So when I got thrown out into large groups of people I couldn't handle the course load that they were giving me. And I just couldn't handle a lot of the politics that went on. It just made me a nervous wreck because I wasn't ready for it. (Mel 089-094)

It is hard to concentrate when one is in physical or emotional pain, such as being scared and confused. Another emotion that can have a positive effect on learning was feeling the need to prove yourself. It was very important to one participant to say, "I've worked really hard to get my degree, really hard. I've done the same thing everybody else has done and I haven't road a thing" (Jed 426-428). For this participant it worked out, but some students refuse accommodations they need in an effort to prove themselves. This participant felt that using the computer to take exams would make him different than the other students. He said, "I want to do the same thing that everybody else does" (Jed 145) so he uses scribes because he cannot use his hands to write. When one participant gradually lost her sight, the ability to take notes diminished with her vision. She recalled,

In high school I began to tape record lectures, I was no longer actually able to see notes on the board but I was still able to use notebooks and flair pens. I would take my notes with them, they were just plain easier to see than just a plain pen.... Eventually, I'm not sure quite at what point I was really no longer able to write and see what I was doing. (Sandy 021-028)

While her vision was going, she missed an unknown amount of material struggling to maintain a skill in which she was formerly proficient. Once the realization hits that material is being missed, accommodations should be requested. The next section depicts the process of requesting accommodations.

Requesting Accommodations

Before an accommodation must be made for an individual that person must document the disability. In higher education this is done by registering with disability services. Some participants "registered right away when" (Bess 153) they receive the

information packet because they "needed a disability parking sticker,...advance registration, a housing list" (Jerry 298-299, 293) [and] "handy van service" (Bess 147).

Other students registered with the office for counseling and assistance with program planning. As one participant told me,

After I was accepted I came back in the spring met with the person who was going to be my temporary advisor, and the director of graduate studies together with the person from the disability services office, my counselor there. There we decided more specifically how to start the program, more specifically about accommodations. (Sandy 180-187)

Another participant needed tests transcribed and intervention with a national testing service that was refusing to provide a certification exam in an accessible format. The account of the incident went like this,

[I] had him [counselor] go to bat when I was trying to take the [national test] and they were being very discriminatory.... I needed [the counselor] to get those people to get me the test in a format where I could take it. Either to have a scribe or have it in Braille and I preferred Braille and they gave me all kind of problems and ended up we had to get a lawyer to threaten to sue them. (Drake 143, 149-152)

Disability services interceded on behalf of students when the difficulty was with a professor, too. As one participant related, "if I ever had a problem or something on campus with a professor or something I could always go in there and talk to one of the counselors and they'd be able to help them straighten it out. Be as a mediator if I needed it" (Drake 160-163). An insight into why a student might need disability services to intercede with a professor was provided by another participant who told this story,

The professor that I have now I began probably around the middle of last quarter asking her for materials. She said basically that she had to put it all together and she hadn't done that yet and you know that kind of stuff. The same thing asked her if she could give it to me a little bit at a time, she agreed to do that, I kept on her a couple of times. She never did it. She gave me a couple of articles and one of the books at the very last minute, like two days before class. (Sandy 351-358)

Two days before the class may seem like ample time to some. These materials must be read aloud into a tape recorder which takes as much time as it takes to completely read a book or

packet. Most often the readers are volunteers who spend a little time reading when they can. This participant did not have access to course materials at the same time as the majority of students in the course. This was one reason students with disabilities have formed advocacy groups whose "primary function is to work with students with disabilities and to provide management input [on] what needs to be changed" (Roc 575-577). Change is never easy and sometimes determining who is responsible for the change is even harder. The next section focuses on the responsibility to accommodate.

Responsibility to Accommodate

The participants viewed the responsibility to accommodate their accessibility needs as something that,

- Primarily begins with administration and filters down through the other departments. The administration has to have an accepting environment and be willing to work with the person with the disability. If they're not willing then it filters right through the department heads and down through to the professors. (Roc 318-323)

The administration was represented by disability services. Two of the participants in this study were not adequately accommodated by this office. One participant told me, "I haven't had the best experience [with disability services]....they haven't been able to accommodate my needs. So I had to go elsewhere" (Jed 073, 076). This participant was studying engineering, needed a scribe, and the scribe provided had only basic math experience. His frustration was evident as he said, "she didn't know how to draw Greek letters or graphs so ...I wasted a lot of time that quarter on tests because I had to explain to the scribe how to draw like graph grids" (Jed 179-181). His solution was to go to the academic counselor in his department, explain the problem, and request her assistance.

Another participant had a problem with disability services:

They didn't get qualified readers when I specified that I would need one. Different situations like that. I don't find the equipment in the office too accessible to tell you the truth. It's usually not open long enough. Last time when I went in there I needed to use a computer on campus and I couldn't get it to talk basically. I knew there was a voice synthesizer on it. I had turned it on and I didn't know the commands to get it to talk and there was nobody around

to tell me that I could see. And when I asked people up front nobody knew. And the people that did know were out for lunch. I didn't have time to wait around for a half hour or an hour. (Pat 267-277)

Solving problems by going through the academic department was not unusual. One participant's department pays a reader for her even though "they're not happy about it" (Sandy 393). This same participant recruited a friend to read for her as a volunteer. The last three participants, Jed, Pat, and Sandy, took the initiative, finding other ways to access course material. Another participant who saw himself as actively responsible for his own accommodations said,

I put my person first....Myself as a person comes first and having a disability is part of that person but I don't let that overshadow my goals or what I need to do. I deal with it as it comes. Sometimes it takes a little pre-planning. (Drake 415-419)

Preplanning was necessary but it accomplished nothing if the instructor did not provide the reading list for a course in time. Or if the readers or scribes scheduled to assist with access to a test don't know how to read or understand technical terms. These were some of the accommodations participants needed. The next section examines four types of accommodations.

Types of Accommodations

Four types of accommodations are discussed in this section, including: physical access, visual access, course load, and math. It seems logical to start with physical access such as entering a building, but as participants described there is more to it than just getting through the door.

Olympic Weight Lifting

Physical access begins with a simple process for many people--entering a building. Before one can enter a building however, you have to find the door. As one participant quipped, "signage is quite a wonderful thing" (Roc 555). He went on with his problem,

When you go to [a building] and you circle the building three times with 40 degree temperatures. Finally, you see over the hood of a parked car a little blue

sign and you discover oh, that's where you get in. There's no markings on the exterior of that building indicating where you get in. (Roc 541-544)

I asked him if he had gone to disability services and he responded, "should I have to, to know how to get in a building?" (Roc 547) Another participant felt "real fortunate in the fact that door widths and ramps and elevators are about the only things I need. If I have those three things I'm fine" (Jerry 349-350). Unfortunately, at the first university he attended "no more than five buildings on campus were wheelchair accessible" (Jerry 101). Accessibility was not easily found and his experience parallels that of other participants in this study. He illustrated,

In terms of curb cuts to get into the building, ramps inside and then an elevator to the floor that you needed to get to. A lot of them had maybe an elevator but not a ramp. A lot of them had ramps but not an elevator. Ramps but no curb cut which is completely insane. And the most insane one was... a building with a ramp and an elevator but the ramp ended and then there were like three steps to get to the elevator. A year after I left, somebody ended up suing them for two million dollars. (Jerry 129-136)

The solution was to "change classes. Had a lot of angered Profs" (Jerry 175). Getting into rooms was important, too. Desks bolted to the floor present a particular problem when trying to maneuver a room in a wheelchair. Access to restrooms can be critical to individuals with spinal cord injuries and yet finding accessible restrooms can be difficult and time-consuming. As in this example,

There were quite a few times when I'd be in one building and there wouldn't be an accessible restroom and it would be like a two hour class and you've got five minutes break and trying to get over to another building, use the restroom and go on the elevator, come back down, go out the ramp. There's probably like one accessible doorway in the building. (Jerry 338-344)

Sometimes its a matter of being "an Olympic weight lifter to open the door" (Roc 561) or a door that allows enough room to open to get into the restroom but not to get out again.

Handivans were a necessary part of getting around for many students with visible disabilities. Some of these students used wheelchairs, some had working dogs, and some used both. One participant's dog was "kind of spastic and kind of rambunctious. The bus

driver says I don't like dogs. So he blocked them off the bus" (Jed 409-411). This was a university van driver whose job included picking up students who use wheelchairs and working dogs. This participant echoed sentiments of other participants when he said, "I hate them [handy van drivers]. They can be late but you can't be late. You've got to be there five minutes early. They can come whenever they want to but you can't" (Jed 412-413).

Desks are sometimes too low for a wheelchair to fit under while lab benches can be too high. In a course with a laboratory section hands-on experience was important. One participant gained the experience by working with a partner each "would do different things. The lab partner could do the things that were high and I could do the things that were lower" (Bess 217-218). Adults are independent, wanting to do things for themselves. A disability creates some dependence on others for the individual, but one participant needed the type of help that would frustrate and anger many. He could not read without the assistance of someone else in a very basic way. The nurses in the nursing home where he lived must "come by when they can and turn the pages" (Mel 223) for all things that he reads. He could sit for minutes or hours waiting for someone to notice he had finished reading a page. Recently, he learned about books on tape which he was very excited about. He would still need help from others or a mouth stick to work a tape-recorder but he is optimistic about this new way to read.

Often field experience and internships were required by a program area. Students relied on the professor coordinating the experience to ensure the location was accessible. By the time the student was this far, the professor had worked with the student enough to be aware of the necessary accommodations. For many students with disabilities, paid field experience was impossible because "it would hurt my benefits" (Jed 254). Medicaid and Medicare were crucial to students whose disability has medical implications. The most common deterrent to paid experience during college was that some form of Federal or State

support would be jeopardized. If support was lost, the student would have to drop out of school. Many students with disabilities can only afford a college education because of government subsidies. Not being paid to do an internship in a field where being paid was customary and expected, decreased the worth of the individual to potential employers.

Visual Access

By far the most recognized item a student needed to be able to visually access was a textbook. There were some administrative difficulties with accessing books. As one participant told me, "I would just wait till that quarter because usually the way my grant money worked at the book store I had to wait till that quarter any way that I was taking the class" (Drake 205-206). There were other items used in class that also needed to be accessible such as syllabi and handouts, "if things change through the quarter, assignments change or dates change...it basically comes down to the awareness and sensitivity and the ability of the professor to accommodate the student" (Roc 511-514).

Visual access was often dependent on adaptive equipment to convert material. Few are aware of the technical difficulties with accessing information. For instance, computer programs that read text using a voice synthesizer were developed using the DOS platform. There have been many problems getting them to work with, the Windows platform. One participant majoring in computer and instructional science said,

I guess the biggest difficulty I had in the CIS department with the professors would be in getting the work done on time. A lot of times this was during the period when Windows was coming up and a lot of voice synthesizers are running on DOS. So if you look at my transcript you'll see quite a few incompletes around that time period before I switched out. And even though the professors were lenient about giving me incompletes--I don't know, I just had a hard time communicating with them. It seemed like almost they were giving the impression I was making up excuses. (Pat 302-309)

This was such a problem because the participant had to get "into the school's computer.

[And] trying to get the right configuration on my computer to work" (Pat 236-237). Other

difficulties with voice synthesizers and computer programming included keystrokes and syntax that must be exact, as well as,

There are so many abbreviations. And with the voice synthesizers you can spell a word wrong or make your label on something in your program and spell it wrong but with a voice synthesizer it might sound like its spelled right. (Pat 335-338)

This participant switched from computer science to engineering, a major his rehabilitation counselor had originally convinced him was impossible for someone without vision to be successful in. He and his professors created ingenious methods for him to see graphs and diagrams without his eyes. They did this "using basically modeling clay. Drawing air diagrams. Somebody will take my finger and just real quick sketch draw my finger on the table. Using pens and pencils to lay out coordinates different things like that" (Pat 174-176).

Once the material was learned, in order to receive a grade the student's knowledge must be tested. Tests were read to one participant by either,

The professor or the TA sometimes. If they're too busy I've had students from the class read me the test with the permission of the professor after they take the test. They don't tape record the exam. I've found a lot in engineering department they feel that the students will follow the honor policy. ...The student that I'm taking the exam with will write down my answers for me. Sometimes if I'm working with the professor they won't write my answer down. They'll just deduct or give me full credit for the problem as I'm answering because I've gotten back midterms and I'll find only the deductions on some. (Pat 232-242)

The above description of test taking was common, for study participants with visual impairments or without control of hand and arm movements. There were other ways to take exams, for instance, the test on computer disk read by a computer with a speech recognition program. The two participants in engineering advised me that this would not work for them because of the inability to use Greek or mathematical symbols with the speech program. Aside from tests for determining grades, instructors used research projects.

Conducting research for a paper can be a daunting prospect for a student new to a program. Planning in advance is necessary when you have to depend heavily on someone else's eyes to read for you. If there are technical problems with a computer, voice synthesizer, or internet access, a student will need help with the initial database search. One participant described this process to me,

Since I wasn't able to do [the database search] I sat down with her, talked about what I was interested in, what I wanted her to look for, she went and did an initial computer search, found titles came back, went over them with me. I told her which ones to get. She got those put them on tape. I listened to the articles when it got down to it actually there was not enough time to listen to all the articles so when it came down to it the ones that I hadn't listened to we had to go back through with another reader and have him read the parts of it to me. And then I wrote the paper from that, its very complicated process. (Sandy 598-604)

Original research was another dilemma, the mechanics of which could be worked out in a variety of ways. This participant felt that "depending on the nature of the projects I may need someone to observe....I don't want to limit myself to only doing research that I can do completely independently. I think that would be a disservice to me" (Sandy 642-646). This participant was earning a Ph. D. in a field in which much of the published research is based on experimental work and observing the reactions of subjects in manipulated situations. Her perception of the field was that if she does not do the standard type of research, her work would not be well respected. When visual access was not possible other adjustments such as extended time had to be made for students.

Time Adjustments

Increased time for exams, or extended time for project completion were common accommodations. These accommodations were made because of cognitive disabilities requiring more processing time or because of physical disabilities that increased the length of time it took to move a hand or use one's mouth to maneuver a joystick in order to write. Course loads were adjusted, too. One participant took a reduced course load "because lab is very time-consuming. Do everything on the computer. Do all the typing, do all the

graphing. Do all the math on the computer" (Jed 223-225). This participant could not hold anything in his hands and his speech was often difficult to understand rendering voice recognition programs ineffective. So he could only operate a keyboard with an instrument controlled by his mouth. Often financial aid or an institution requires a certain number of credit hours to secure benefits. One student who "was having a tough time because of there was a heavy course load [and] to keep up with financial aid" (Pat 356-357) spoke to his academic counselor who suggested an independent study with a professor.

Another reason to reduce a course load temporarily for the student without vision is when "new to the area...in the process of getting acquainted with the area, getting reader services established and other services related to the disability" (Sandy 196-198). In addition, she "had just received a completely new computer system which [she] needed to learn [including] a new speech system, learning a new word processing program, learning to do e-mail, learning to get onto the internet" (Sandy 198-201). It was not difficult to imagine all of these new things to learn being a load on a new student with vision let alone one without it.

Problems with math

Many of the students participating in this study had problems with math. These participants did not hate math or want to substitute other courses for math, instead they wanted access to classrooms, tests, and instruction. One participant told me,

I had problems with math. Actually that was the second math class that had to be moved and he didn't want to move. He wanted me to switch sections. I couldn't switch sections. There was a time conflict. So I had [disability services] handle it. (Jerry 317-320)

Tests presented difficulties for students too. Another participant said the

Math department always questions taking your tests over there [disability services]. They had to put pressure on [the math department] to get my materials for my tests. I think the big thing is the math department serves so many different students that if you have any extra need you just kind of fall between the cracks. And disability services was there to make sure that didn't happen. (Drake 175-180)

Accessing information in a math class is difficult for individuals with visual impairments. Math instruction involves a great deal of problem demonstration on boards often without accompanying verbal explanations. One participant described vividly his problem with this and the instructor's lack of understanding of the real problem. He told me,

Going through the math department I was in the head office quite a bit talking to a person in the math department and I had a professor for one math class and I usually sit in the back of the room allowing everybody else, maybe they're wearing glasses and they need to sit in the front of the room. And being conscious of that I'll sit in the back of the room as long as the professor talks loud enough and I can hear him. I asked this professor to please describe a little more of what he's writing on the board. I said I know you don't have enough time to describe everything but I said if you're going to write down theory on the board would you please say it as you write it. And it was pretty evident that I was blind. I had Marvel with me and I had told him a couple of times that I was completely blind during our conversation to make arrangements for midterms and that. He asked me, "You sit in the back of the room don't you?" I said, "yes" and I was getting a little frustrated with him because he wasn't willing to work with me. He wasn't willing to make accommodations or anything. He basically told me, "Why don't you sit up front?" and I looked at him, "What's that going to do?" (Pat 422-437)

There are a few ways to interpret this situation. One is that the meaning of being totally blind was somehow beyond the comprehension of the instructor. Another is the instructor believed that good students sit in the front of the class, and the request was valid only for a "good student." Another possibility is that the instructor would be reminded to read the board if the participant was within his line of vision acting as a prompt. The actual motivation for requesting a student with no vision to "sit up front" was not explained. The student and the instructor probably left the exchange wondering about each other's problem, certainly the student was perplexed by the words of this instructor.

Summary

There were four themes in the category, academic accommodations. They were (a) the disability affects learning, (b) requesting accommodations, (c) responsibility to accommodate, and (d) types of accommodations. The first step in requesting accommodations was registering with disability services. After that specific requests for

accommodations were made by the student. Disability services was asked to intervene in cases where instructors and accreditation agencies gave the student a difficult time.

The responsibility to accommodate was viewed as multi-layered beginning with the administration of the university to the colleges, schools, and departments. Disability services and instructors represented the university and had shared responsibility with students. The types of accommodations included (a) physical access, (b) visual access, (c) time adjustments, and (d) difficulties with math. Physical access included getting in to buildings, restrooms, and classrooms. Visual access accounted for the ability to take a test, conduct research, write a paper, use computers, and read blackboards in class. Time adjustments were made to account for longer time needed to type with a stick worked by mouth, have tests read, or complete research assignments when visual access is unavailable. Difficulties with math were mostly administrative in nature caused by the attitudes of math instructors towards accommodations. This leads to the next category, coping with the attitudes of students, faculty, and service providers.

Dealing with Your Disability on Campus

Students with disabilities coped with the preconceived notions of others about disability in a variety of ways. Some students attempted to increase awareness by public speaking, some advocated on behalf of other students by giving advice or forming grassroots organizations, while others believed the way to change attitudes was through formal training programs. This category contains two sections, (a) advocacy and advice and (b) education is the key. Both will be expanded on below.

Advocacy and Advice

On any campus the primary source of information about students with disabilities is disability services. Students assisted disability services, as one participant said, by "doing some programs for them. I did a lot of disability awareness programs with them. I helped with their freshman orientation ...[telling] freshman about services at [disability services]"

(Bess 159-163). Participants also helped other students understand how to deal "with your disability on campus [and] how to talk to the classroom about it" (Bess 164-165).

One participant founded a student advocacy group on campus whose "structure was based on the premise that we will intercede" (Roc 589) on behalf of students speaking to the faculty and the administration as necessary. The members of the group have trained themselves "to have some basic understanding of most of the disabilities" which they need "to resolve the problem at a personal level" (Roc 358-360).

Participants had advice to share with other students on the process of requesting accommodations. The advice focused on four areas: self identifying, timing, describing abilities, and setting goals. One participant described what she told first year students during orientation, she said,

We told them that they needed to approach a professor. The professor wasn't going to approach them. They needed to be the first one to go up... to explain what their disability was and exactly what accommodations they needed. If they needed extra time they needed to tell [the professor] they needed extra time and for what reason. Give [the professor] the information about [disability services] ...give them papers early, the first day, not to wait until right before a test to tell them this information. (Bess 224-231)

Another participant advised students to

Self-identify to any and all instructors you're going to have interaction with prior to the first day of classes to work out accommodations for your needs and assessment of your capability as to what will have to be done to provide you with your education. (Roc 278-283)

Bess felt accommodation requests could occur the first day of class while Roc clarified his position by saying, "at least a week in advance so you have time to work on accommodations" (Roc 285). The student's accommodation request "should be forthright with everything that pertains to the course or the needs that you're going to have" (Roc 301-302). Roc went on to say the student should approach the professor "like you would anyone else. Identify yourself. Make sure that what you are and what you are not is

known" (Roc 292-293). This prompted me to ask him to clarify this bit of advice. He clarified it, saying,

I am not a straight A student. I'm going to work hard; do the best that I possibly can do. I may not have all the capabilities of others but I will be in attendance and I will do the best I possibly can. (Roc 295-297)

Doing the best one can corresponds with the last bit of advice from a participant, "set your goals. Get it firmly in the front of your mind what you want to do and always drive towards that goal" (Drake 422-423).

Education is the key

It might not be surprising that college students and recent graduates thought the way to change attitudes is through formal education. One participant believed whatever was done at his institution, it was "not formalized enough to suit" (Roc 473) him. Formal programs are important because "anytime there is nothing formalized there is room for interpretation and this room for interpretation becomes ambiguous and things sometimes get a little out of hand" (Roc 454-456). Another participant said, "Education is the key. If you educate people, if you talk with people then they're going to understand more" (Bess 373-374). There are several things people needed to know. For instance, "if people are trying to do everything for me I just try to educate them about what I can do, in a nice way" (Bess 375-376). Professors "should be made aware that different disabilities require different accommodations. They should also be made aware that they're not to present special favors to any student. Or make special accommodations that are not within the guidelines" (Roc 331-334). Formal education programs are important also for "the incoming new student [who should be] made aware of [disability services which] ...should make them aware of their rights and responsibilities" (Roc 481-484).

Special favors were sometimes indistinguishable from a professor trying to make up for not accommodating the student in the first place. One participant described her attempt to get reading lists ahead of time so that her readers could tape-record them for her.

The professor promised time and time again but never kept the promise to supply a reading list. Once the course had begun the instructor said "you can skip these chapters cause you don't really have to read those. If you're running out of time you can skip chapters 3 and 5 cause they're not that important" (Sandy 401-403). Another participant reminisced, "I've never been treated unfairly or anything. At times professors seem to be overly accommodating with extra time... There are times it's not fair but I took advantage of them sometimes. I tried not to" (Jed 211-217). Participants felt that formal education programs sponsored by the university would eliminate or diminish instances where accommodations were not met and compensations were made that decreased the value of the educational experience.

Summary

There are a variety of ways to deal with attitudes towards disability. Participants discussed advocacy efforts they participated in such as public speaking and starting organizations to intercede on behalf of students. Additionally, they shared advice with other students on the process of requesting accommodations which focused on four areas: self identifying for disclosure, timing of the request, describing abilities, and setting goals. A formal training program sponsored by the administration was seen as important to achieving consistent and timely accommodations for students with disabilities as well as to change attitudes. The next category explores, the experiences of participants in the employment context.

Employment

Four participants in this sample had work experience after becoming disabled. Two other participants were interviewing with prospective employers at the time of the interview for this study. The participants in this sample had real employment and interview experience. Their responses were based on experience not speculation. Employment is

divided into these sections (a) returning to school, (b) career goals, (c) interviewing, (d) discrimination, and (e) accommodation. Each section is discussed below.

Returning to school: "It just ended up this way."

For one participant the decision to return to school to train for a new career did not follow the accident that caused the disability. Instead he retired after losing a leg from one company to become a mechanic which he left when he "got bored.... [Telling] my wife I'd go back to college once the kids left home" (Roc 126-128). For another participant the decision to return to school was made because of barriers created by the disability. As she told me,

If things had worked out differently I never would have been here to be honest with you. Part of the reason I'm here is because other avenues that I had pursued did not work out well for me. Part of the reason I'm here...its not at all that I've always wanted to be a professor [and] that's my life long dream, its not at all....It just ended up this way. (Sandy 473-478)

Working on an education was something another participant did not care about and as "a ward of the state [they] just sort of pushed you around from place to place and so I wasn't in school at that time" (Mel 018-021). After the accident, at 16 years old, he was placed in nursing homes without a wheelchair and left to lie in bed to do nothing. Someone took an interest in him and helped him get into college which he loves. He told me,

Basically I love everything. I just want to learn that's all. I've finally reached the point where I was ready for this so I just wanted to learn so I looked into psychology, different areas of it and counseling. I guess it's something I really felt I wanted to do. I'm not going to save the world or anything but I feel like I'd like to be able to at least help somebody. I'm learning how you get inside and guide somebody in the right direction, whether they'll take the advice or not. (Mel 173-179)

For some participants a college education was not an option until after the disability. Two of the participants, Roc and Mel, would have had blue collar jobs doing something physical, using their hands. The odds are that Mel would have ended up in jail. Pursuing degrees for them just ended up this way. Career goals can be influenced by the disability:

because of others' reactions to it, misperceptions about what can be done, or because new doors are opened for the individual.

Career Goal

Career choices are often affected by what someone learns as they grow up. It is more likely that people will choose careers based on what careers their parents enjoyed or discussed at home. Disability status seems to affect this choice. One participant became active in advocacy efforts on behalf of other students. This experience has affected his choice of careers for now he is thinking of pursuing a law degree. Other people can affect perceptions of work in different ways. As a child one, Sandy listened to people with misconceptions about affirmative action assure her she would be sought after by employers. She said,

I'm embarrassed to say that ...when I was growing up through school everyone treated me, communicated with me in the fashion that they said you are so this, you are so smart. You're going to do so well. You're going to have this great career. Blah blah blah. And I heard this constantly. People would tell me when I was in college employers are going to be lined up for you because number one you're a woman, number two you're blind, the only other thing you need to be is black. And I found this was not the case. Employers were not interested. I went on several interviews. Came down every time to the last three and never got the job. (Sandy 480-490)

This participant had a bachelor's degree by all of the interviews and a master's degree for some of the interviews she mentioned. It seems that when she could not find employment she returned to school, first to get her master's degree, and when that didn't help to earn a doctorate. Now she is confused about career goals. She is "in the process right now of trying to talk with people to see what other kinds of options there may be for me" (Sandy 516-517). She continued "teaching is probably the main option at this point" (Sandy 518). But she went on to say,

I'm not sure that professor is the exact thing that I want to be doing. I kind of know the parameters already.... I'm struggling with is this the right program for me? Is the place I need to be? What other kind of options do I have besides being a professor? I still may want to pursue those. (Sandy 683-687)

As she continued it was evident that she did have an idea of the area in which she wanted to work but she felt that non profit organizations would not have the money to assist her with accommodations. As she told me,

- I guess if I had to boil it down my first love has always been voluntarism. Being a coordinator of some kind of volunteer programs that was my first love. My second is working with people in terms of support like social work counseling. A lot of the volunteer work I've done in the past has dealt with those kinds of issues....I love non profits but you're coming into no money for accommodations. (Sandy 744-757)

Sandy went on to anticipate more problems, "a real big concern [is] the things that I'm good at the jobs outside of teaching require a lot of travel and to think of some kind of travel accommodation that is a major thing" (Sandy 715-717). Individuals with disabilities are not alone in making decisions based on anticipated problems. The counselors that assist them do it too, allowing barriers to block opportunities without exploring the possibilities first. This was the experience of one participant within a few quarters of graduating with an electrical engineering degree at the time of this interview, who told me,

- I went through rehabilitation and they offered me a scholarship to go to any state school as long as it's not private and that it's a four year college. I wanted to go for electronics and electrical engineering but they told me it was impossible for somebody who is completely blind so I started out in computer and information science. (Pat 132-136)

For other participants, the disability was not an issue in career choice. Early experience played a role for one participant who said,

I know I want to be a counselor but I'm not sure of what area yet. School sounds nice but to me the guidance counselor always looked like he didn't do anything. I would get in trouble in school and he'd be there to put me down but that's about it. (Mel 300-303)

He wants to work with troubled children because "that's basically why I'm separated from my family ...[spending] most of my teen years with some other family. I was a ward of the state" (Mel 307-308). Another participant chose her career in special education because she "found it interesting working with children ...with autism. I kind of got involved in it through a friend [in high school] and I just enjoyed it" (Bess 116-118).

If the disability was not part of the participant's experience growing up, it seemed not to play an active role in his or her decisions. One participant's description of the variety of majors he switched in and out of during college sounds like what many students have done. He began,

You know I started taking classes in political science and I was political - I'm very interested in politics. But practicality told me what are you going to do with a degree in political science? Probably way too many skeletons to become a politician. So that was that and I could see a big crossover between political science and social work. There's a lot of political aspects to social work. It was a very practical transition. So I ended up being - I was in space design and I filled a portfolio to send in and if you do that you have to take a year off and I thought I'm not taking a year off. I've got a limited time on scholarship and so I went to architecture. Architecture turned out to be in the studio until 3 or 4 in the morning. Just having migraine headaches and I said I've got to get out of this and save my life and I went into photography. Photography was great and they axed the program. I loved it and they killed the program. So I was taking my political science classes at the time and I was also taking fine arts classes. I knew I wasn't going to be able to get a job in fine arts, at least not one that I would have enjoyed. (Jerry 211-226)

This participant's experience of changing majors six times before finally settling on social work in which he earned a master's degree is a common student experience.

Career goals are influenced by many factors. Some of those factors are life experiences such as a disability or volunteering. Well meaning advice from family or friends can also affect the choices students make. Additionally, a counselor with a funding agency can direct students in ways that are predetermined by stereotypical views of what a person with a particular disability can or cannot do. Individuals with disabilities shared the experience, with students from other protected classes, of counselors controlling the choice of schools and majors. The level of confidence the participant has in his or her choices of career goals, academic majors, and work experiences will impact the quality of the employment interview. The employment interview and process is covered in the next section.

Interviewing

Three main areas related to interviewing were discussed by participants: (a) disclosure, (b) job duties, and (c) previous work experience. Disclosure of a disability occurred in a variety of ways and times during the interview process. There were three responses received by participants after the disclosure: (a) offer, (b) no offer of employment, and (c) simply responding to questions. Some job duties would be affected by the disability and therefore require an accommodation while others were not related to the disability.

Breaking the Ice

The participants in this sample were all visibly disabled. In a face to face interview situation the fact of the disability would be obvious, however, what is needed for accommodations would not be. One tactic used by a participant was simply to tell them, since "it's obvious that I have a disability...would [be to] tell them that I've been in a chair since birth and I've worked a lot with children in a wheelchair. That hasn't been a problem" (Bess 282-284). She went on to describe the questions some interviewers asked her such as, "how I would explain my disability to my students and what I would do and if I thought I could handle things. Do you think your students are going to be able to accept your disability?" (Bess 268-270). It was "only one school system" (Bess 278) that asked those questions. The other school systems "didn't really ask me all that much about my disability" (Bess 280). In fact the one that did hire her,

- Didn't really ask me all that much about my disability. I think I did volunteer that I've worked a lot with children and I've been able to handle them and recounted some experiences but they didn't ask a lot about my disability. (Bess 309-311)

Another participant, whose field is engineering, felt it best to make the interviewer feel as if he or she could ask any questions they felt necessary. He said,

I usually say do you have any questions about how I work. Feel free to ask me because I don't know what to necessarily tell them because they don't know....I try to break the ice and say it's okay to ask these type things. That's

how I do it now. But usually try to bring it up some time in the direction of the interview. (Jed 282-288)

This participant had four separate site visits with each company paying for the participant's and attendant's transportation and hotel accommodations. At the time of the interview he had received two job offers. The other participant in engineering had a favorable experience also. He said, "One company has approached me with a second interview with them and the other three have called to let me know that they're still looking for an opening" (Pat 490-491). These participants had very different disabilities. More importantly, the participant who had received the job offers was graduating in ten weeks, the other participant was graduating in three more quarters. Both had been asked to stay in their respective programs to do graduate work.

Certainly there are other experiences. One participant felt he was high on the list of candidates for a particular teaching position until he disclosed. He said,

I disclosed before I would have got the interview and I really think that had something to do with that one. Me not getting the interview. No, after I told them I didn't get the interview. And he says really the way our community is we don't think we can facilitate your accommodations because we don't have a great public transit here. It's going to be real hard for you to get music and stuff and basically in my mind I thought it was that they figured it would be easier to get somebody, a sighted music teacher in there and I said if that is the case then forget them. I don't want to work for somebody that's close minded anyway. Because I always think that I'm going to be honest with people because I want people to accept me based on my abilities and what I can do. (Drake 228-241)

This same participant "went down and applied for a full time job which none were open" (Drake 268) so he asked to be considered for substitute teaching positions. He was interviewed by phone in this way,

It was a standardized interview where they asked me questions about how I would deal with certain issues. Most of it had to deal with classroom management things and I didn't do any disclosure with them. The lady I interviewed with had no idea I couldn't see. Actually, I had the interview from my job ...at the Columbus Zoo....There were screaming animals in the background and there was no disclosure at all and she hired me right there on the spot. (Drake 276-282)

Drake had been blind since birth. His experience with disclosing had not been good. It may have been that imagining a person without vision teaching music was more than most interviewers were capable of doing. From what I understood, he hadn't had many interviews.

There could be other factors involved such as his overall performance as a student. Since I asked no direct question about the type of student someone was, I can only speculate about his academic performance. Some participants offered clues as to capabilities, he did not. While other participants were interviewed, disclosed, and hired without as much difficulty as Drake and Sandy who are both blind. I have thought about the two of them, and as a former employer, I would not have been inclined to hire either of them. One lacked conviction in her abilities and found excuses for not pursuing a variety of career options. The other person who wanted to be a teacher didn't dress professionally nor did he have good communication skills which was contrary to his opinion of his capabilities.

Job Duties

Jobs are described in a variety of ways to prospective applicants in print advertisements and during the interview process. Sometimes language is used to make the job seem more important or more interesting than it may really be. One participant said of the advertisement he answered,

[The advertisement] was very misleading. I thought the ad pertained to being--it really led you to believe that you would be administrating services. It said something like administrating social services in a social service environment which is true but I'd be overseeing donations. Actually they ended up offering me the job but I turned it down. (Jerry 382-386)

Even though he uses a wheelchair, his disability did not make it impossible for him to fulfill "some responsibilities in moving donations" (Jerry 380). He did not accept the position because with a master's degree in social work he wanted a job with a greater challenge. Two other positions the same participant applied for

Were jobs where it was family preservation which is doing in-home visits. Neither one of the ads mentioned that there were in-home visits involved. I would be willing to get out of my chair [to crawl into an inaccessible home] because I do it all the time so it's not that big a deal to me. (Jerry 389-393)

His crawling into a home would be more of an embarrassment to the employer and client than to him.

Another participant with a vision impairment did not know quite how to make accommodating him less daunting to potential employers. An essential job function for electrical engineering is to read schematics. He felt,

That's sort of a stumbling point during my interviews since a lot of times when you get into large schematics...they're enormous and that's hard to spend as much time as I do with a reader on a[n] item like that. (Pat 525-530)

According to the participant reading schematics was an essential function of the job. This would seem to make finding alternatives the participant's responsibility to figure out. If the participant could offer the potential employer suggestions on how to accommodate, reading schematics would be diffused as an issue. From a discussion of job duties, we move on to a discussion of previous work experience.

Previous work experience

Previous work experience of any kind can be instrumental to securing an entry level position out of college. Some participants had work experience prior to becoming disabled but that experience was not directly relevant to the new career path. Others found it difficult to gain experience because they were born with the disability or acquired it shortly after high school graduation.

One participant told me "I've always been interested in working with tools. Woodworking, metal working, things like that. So I've taken my past experiences and know what different tools will do and I've adapted ways that I can still work with them" (Pat 459-462). This same student was the participant in the previous section having

difficulty overcoming the perception that it is difficult for him to read schematics. The experience with woodworking might transfer to reading schematics. He told me that,

Usually over breaks I'll end up back home in the woodshop and some of my friends will maybe want a shelf for over the top of their bed or something like that. I'll ask them for a general idea what they want it to look like and everybody has been pleased with everything. (Pat 478-482)

Another participant described her "work experience as sporadic. The closest thing that I had to what you would consider regular gainful employment was a year as a Vista volunteer" (Sandy 419-420). Neither of these two had experience directly related to what they are trying to do now, engineering and communications.

A participant who recently completed his teaching certification was trying to gain experience though substitute teaching. This seems a sensible course of action for any person wanting full time employment as a teacher. However, it gave the school system an opportunity to discriminate against him because of his disability. This participant was hired as a substitute teacher over the phone without disclosing. An incident occurred that contributed to "getting [him] very burned out" (Drake 367). After substituting in the school and classes at issue in the quote below the previous year the administration canceled his assignment after he had accepted it. He depicted the incident this way,

I was turned down for an assignment. After I accepted it they canceled me because one of their classes, their choir class had 100 students in it. They thought that the classes were too big for me to handle and so I went down and pitched a bitch. I went down there and raised a little cane about it. I said this is discrimination. I'm a qualified music teacher. I went down to the school to find out who they replaced me with. They wouldn't tell me. They wouldn't put it into writing that they said it was because I couldn't handle big classes was the reason they gave me. I went downtown to talk to sub services and the guy down there tried to turn it around and make it look like I had problems handling classrooms. I said look, we're going to have to do something about this. I'm going to have to get a lawyer and we're going to have to start talking about discrimination and they said we need to come up with some things to better facilitate your needs and I said my needs - when I go out and teach a class I said all I need is for students to realize I'm a qualified teacher and I can teach. (Drake 287-299)

Every substitute teacher experiences difficulties with the students in the class such as behavior, assignments, or lesson plans not being clear. Since he had worked in this school the previous year without any negative performance evaluation, he had every reason to believe the administration did not have problems with his classroom management techniques or teaching ability. He told me that since this incident he had been offered many special education assignments. He had no training or certification in special education.

Another difficulty students with disabilities experienced was not being able to get paid work experience through internships and field placements. Participants' federal and state subsidies would be jeopardized due to regulations about funding and work. These benefits were necessary to continue Medicaid eligibility or tuition payments. One program and participant overcame this. "because she [assistant dean] wanted to see me be placed [and] I wanted to get some experience" (Jed 273) they sent up a special job for him. After "I talked to one of my professors and they said don't take an internship where you don't get paid because if you do they [an employer] won't treat you the same" (Jed 274-276) as a new engineering student with paid experience. They arranged summer time work for Jed designing a computer program and they paid him by setting up a scholarship to pay for books. In this instance, a concerned advisor devised a way for this participant to gain paid experience without jeopardizing benefits.

Just a pair of eyes

Accommodations are as varied as are individuals. They require an imagination expansive enough to take in the disability and the job creating a potential solution. Participants in this sample used half time work arrangements, brought in their own computer to work, or needed a pair of eyes. Some participants arranged all of their own accommodations because they felt totally responsible, and did not know of available assistance, or were so grateful for the opportunity to work they did not expect the employer

to do anything. The participant who was the Vista volunteer remembered discussing her disability with her new employers. She recalled,

I can't remember exactly what was said but I think I said something to the effect of you don't need to treat me any differently than you would treat any of the other employees something along those lines. The answer from her was like, 'Well surely we're not going to treat you any better than [the other employees]...The answer kind of shocked me. (Sandy 449-453)

This conversation ended with the participant working half a day at home and the other half of the day in the office so that her new personal computer could stay at her home. She went on with the story,

That did not work well because they felt that I might be just taking advantage and just goofing off at home so we brought the computer to work. The nature of the job was such that I had to do a lot of footwork and so the friend that I have now that does reading had just retired at that time. He did my driving for me. And then he would also come to the place. I don't know how I'm going to overcome this in the future...But he would come and he would help me with visual work there. That was never really talked about by me or by them...I must have asked cause I'm sure I wouldn't have just had him come in there. But I had the impression that they didn't really like it too much. (Sandy 461-470)

Sandy was the participant working on a doctorate. I asked her about the types of accommodations she would need as a teaching assistant. Her answer was, "Just a pair of eyes" (Sandy 533). She went on to define what the pair of eyes were needed to do, things like:

...Take attendance. They would keep the grade book. When I would have an exam they would be there and keep their eye on the class to make sure no one was cheating. ...They would read me the papers and I would tell them how to grade them. (Sandy 543-551)

She will be teaching a speech class next year. She is "thinking about the gestures" (Sandy 571) and how to grade them since she cannot see them. Another participant who is also blind took care of accommodating himself in a teaching situation by getting,

Recordings of the tunes that they were playing. Brought them home, worked on them for a couple of days and I wrote my own scores. I grabbed a student out of the class that was a real proficient music reader and I picked out all the hard rhythms that I heard in the song that I thought the students couldn't get or needed help with...She would help me pinpoint exactly where it was and so I could communicate that to the band. So they could see it. (Drake 256-262)

Other accommodations required physical access as one participant put it, "It's obvious that if they need to come into a room in a wheelchair it's a little bit different than walking into it. You're going to need a different type of surrounding" (Mel 327-329). Or as another participant said "the only thing I've had them do is put a ramp in front of the bathroom and raise my desk" (Jerry 451-452). Others "need a voice activated computer" (Mel 342) and "a track ball mouse with a table high enough for me to get underneath it" (Jed 293). These are relatively simple things to do. One participant in order to read schematics believes his accommodation was a "computer programming problem. But I feel that an electrical engineer could probably design some hardware and working with a programmer could get something to work" (Pat 536-538). There are federal and state dollars to assist with the purchase of equipment to accommodate an employee with a disability. One participant repeated to me what one such agency had told him. He said,

If [the person without a disability] gets a new computer when he gets the job then they're not going to pay for a computer for me. But they will pay for the voice synthesizer and the scanner. Anything required that I would need. (Pat 551-553)

Even though many accommodations are commonplace, like ramps, there are still those who seem to just want to make things difficult. One participant in a wheelchair taught a third grade special education program. The principle fought building a ramp so that she could get into the school because she did not want to spend the money. After a year in the accessible room, the principle wanted Bess to change rooms from one end of the building to the other. It seemed as if the principle "didn't really think it through before she said it" (Bess 351). Bess described what the principle wanted to do:

[She] moved me all the way to the other end of the school . She didn't want to build [a new] ramp. In case of fire she wanted me to have my kids go out the door that had the stairs and then go around the school to the door that I could get out and then go around the school and meet my kids. But the other teachers were like, no. (Bess 340-344)

Not only did this not seem reasonable from an accommodation standpoint, but it created a potentially dangerous situation for the children.

Summary

The section on employment covered the decision to attend college, choice of careers, and interviewing. The decision to attend college for some participants was taken for granted. In fact three participants were in the early stages of college when they became disabled. For others the disability had been a part of their lives from birth, for some participants affecting their career choices but for others not having an impact on the decision. The interview process included something beyond disclosure, an obligation to make the interviewer comfortable with asking any questions. Some of the questions focused on job duties by asking how the participant would do something particular to the job and would the disability interfere with job performance. Work experience was difficult to get prior to serious interviewing for participants who became disabled prior to turning twenty. Some were able to gain some experience through volunteering. The participant with the most work experience in this sample was in his thirties when his leg was amputated. Accommodations that participants needed were varied. Most participants were willing to do a variety of things to get the job, such as provide their own equipment or crawl into a home without a ramp. Potential employers appreciate applicants who can be flexible, innovative, and have a strong desire to work.

Summary of Students with Disabilities Data Description

The categories discussed in this chapter were (a) disclosure, (b) academic accommodations, (c) dealing with your disability on campus, and (d) employment. The disclosure section examined (a) what is full disclosure, (b) loosen up the tension, (c) my disability is part of me, (d) other people's responses and (e) training or coaching on

disclosure. Disclosure is the act of sharing personal information about oneself with another person. Throughout each theme in this section was an underlying concern about someone's else reaction to a participant's disability.

Academic accommodations were broken down into these themes: (a) disability affects learning, (b) requesting accommodations, (c) responsibility to accommodate, and (d) types of accommodations. The disability affected learning by preventing traditional access to information, classrooms, and other areas where teaching and learning occur.

Dealing with your disability on campus contains two sections, advocacy and advice, and education is the key. Participants coped with the preconceived notions of others by attempting to increase awareness through public speaking, advocating or advising other students. They also felt the administration should sponsor formal training programs in an effort to increase faculty awareness.

The last category explored employment experiences. The participants in this sample had real employment and interview experience some before but most after becoming disabled. The themes discussed under employment are (a) returning to school, (b) career goals, (c) interviewing, (d) discrimination, and (e) accommodation.

The next chapter compares and contrasts the experiences of the three samples across the categories that emerged from the data provided by each sample.

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS AND EMERGING THEORY: ACROSS SAMPLES

The purpose of this study was to explore this question: How does an adult with a disability learn to communicate to an instructor or employer what is needed for "accommodation?" The study included several subsidiary questions some of which have answers emerging from the data. These questions include: (a) are there stages that an individual goes through to learn self disclosure techniques?, (b) how does a person's enculturation to the disability experience affect the description of accommodations? (c) how does the individual self identify?, (d) what coping skills have been learned or are needed to enable the communication of accommodation?, (e) are the emotions expressed and/or felt a deterrent to adequate and appropriate communication of accommodation needs?, (f) are barriers to communication internal, external, blatant, or subtle?, (g) what types of information are needed to facilitate accommodation by instructors and employers?, (h) does the instructor or employer have a stake in facilitating the self disclosure process?, and (i) how does the instructor or employer facilitate the self disclosure process? These questions were meant only to guide the initial structure of the study and not become a driving force behind category development or resultant theory.

Some questions that were not answered become questions for future research. These questions include: (a) under which model does a person learn to identify their needs: medical, welfare, socio-political, minority, or advocate? and (b) how does a person's birth culture affect the disclosure process?

The description and analysis of each sample were presented in Chapters 4 (faculty), 5 (students with invisible disabilities), and 6 (students with visible disabilities). Categories and chapter headings emerged from the data separately with the order of the discussion being determined by the importance that each category was given by the sample.

Only in preparation for comparing the samples were the categories and headings of each sample compared. The inductive method was used to identify patterns found in the data description and preliminary analysis of each sample (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Wolcott, 1994). As is consistent with grounded theory, the writings of others on comparable topics were read as this chapter was written. This assisted with judging the fit of the analysis of the data with existing literature while helping to check the emerging theory.

This chapter compares the experiences of the participants and data description across the three samples to continue the analysis and begin interpretation of the data (Wolcott, 1994). To assist the reader, participants are labeled by the qualifiers “faculty,” “student with a visible disability,” or “student with an invisible disability.” When the words faculty, instructor, or student are used without the word participant they are being used to describe the role people had in the stories of the participants. Each participant's experience here describes the interaction between students and instructors.

This research project began with an introduction and questions emanating from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The basic premise of this project began with Section 504—individuals have the right to choose to consider themselves disabled. If an individual considers her or himself disabled and in need of accommodations, it is up to the individual to disclose and to request an accommodation. This begins the obligation of the postsecondary institution to accommodate the individual with the disability (Jarrow, 1993). The findings come from the data and are in no way meant as an interpretation of the law. The first category discussed here will be the accommodation communication as a process or model that emerged from the conversations

with all three samples. Elements that make up the accommodation communication became evident in conversation with one sample more than another sample, yet belong as part of the discussion of the whole process. After a discussion of the model, the next category reviews improvements suggested by each sample. The final category examines the experience of each sample on the question of employment such as future prospects, interviewing, and work experience.

Accommodation Communication

A model of the accommodation communication emerges from the data with elements identified from conversations with participants in each sample. The accommodation communication is the act of requesting access to the materials, documents, and information provided by an instructor to facilitate or enhance learning the course content. The elements of the accommodation communication are: (a) disclosure, (b) validation, (c) requesting accommodations, (d) the responsibility to accommodate, (e) timing of request, and (f) negotiating accommodations. Each section includes a definition of the element, a description of its relationship to the process, followed by an exploration of each sample's experiences with the process.

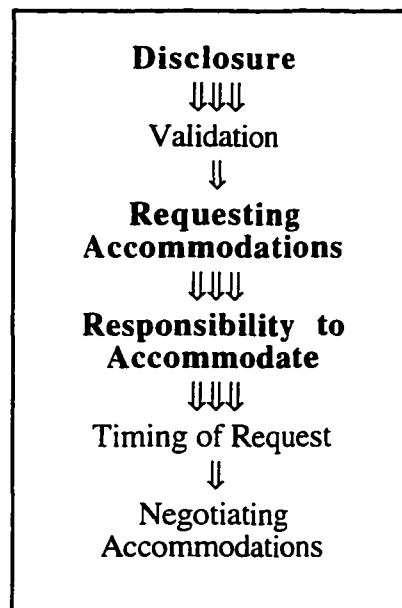


Figure 7.1: Accommodation Communication Model

The accommodation communication model is shown in Figure 7.1. Three elements (bold print) must be present in all accommodation communications, (a) disclosure, (b) the request, and (c) the responsibility to accommodate. The ADA specifies that a person with a disability must disclose, requesting an accommodation before there is any responsibility to accommodate. Each of these concepts emerged as elements in the model during the data description and preliminary analysis stage. The other three elements of validation, timing, and negotiation influence the process and are part of the model that emerged from the data. The process starts with a disclosure regarding the disability or an access need. Disclosure is accompanied by validation of the information which can occur as a formal request for documentation or by tacit acceptance of the disclosure. After a request for accommodation occurs it creates the responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations on the part of the instructor, institution, or employer. The responsibility to accommodate exists once the request has been made and the instructor is satisfied that the student's claim is legitimate.

The importance and credibility of the disclosure is based upon the timing of the request and the way negotiations proceed. As the student and instructor negotiate, the student communicates his or her needs, and the instructor imparts her or his expectations of academic performance, this negotiation process when successful defines mutually acceptable goals.

Disclosure

Disclosure is the act of providing personal information to another person (Derlega & Grzelak, 1979). The importance of the disclosure is derived from the amount of comfort the receiver obtains from the communication (Chelune, 1979). The data that emerged from conversations with participants with visible and invisible disabilities do not entirely support Chelune. For participants with visible disabilities most often disclosure was done with the goal of making the recipient of the information, a person without a disability, feel more comfortable. In the case of participants with invisible disabilities, disclosing did not generally make the receiver or the participant feel more comfortable. In fact, disclosure frequently produced the opposite reaction in the receiver, discomfort and skepticism, while the person with the invisible disability experienced anxiety when disclosing.

Disclosure is the most important step in the process. If the individual with a disability does not disclose disability status and accommodation need(s), then there is no obligation to accommodate on the part of the instructor, institution, or employer (P. L. 101-336). In other words, without a disclosure and request there is no accommodation communication. The amount of personal information necessary for disclosure varied among the student participants. Participants with visible disabilities sometimes needed only access to the building or classroom for a wheelchair, such as wide doorways or passageways without stairs. If the classroom was not accessible then a request was made, if the classroom was accessible nothing was said. A more complete disclosure including

medical information was provided by participants with invisible disabilities such as asthma, which impacted their physical health.

The issues that emerged in this study surrounding disclosure are divided into subsections for discussion below. The first subsection deals with making people feel more comfortable. The next subsection concerns the negative impacts of attitudes and stereotyping. The third subsection examines the issue of power in the disclosure relationship. Finally, a discussion of the process of understanding and articulating the disability concludes this section.

Making People Feel More Comfortable

The participants with visible disabilities felt that since others could recognize them as individuals with disabilities there was no need to tell them. They were aware that first meetings with someone visibly disabled are often disquieting for a person without a disability. These participants spoke of opening with a joke or statement that made the other person more comfortable. This joke or statement had two consequences: (a) it relieved the tension the person without a disability felt at not knowing what to say or do; and (b) it gave the person permission to satisfy curiosity by asking questions. Since the participants with visible disabilities are pre-exposed, their disclosure gives permission to the person without the disability to ask questions and provides some basic rules for engagement between the person with the disability and the person without the disability. As one participant with a visible disability described the reason to disclose, he said, "If I'm interviewing [I] try to make the interview go a little bit smoother basically to make people feel more comfortable around me. Try to be open with my disability. I know people have questions in their mind about me" (Pat 019-022).

The experience of participants with invisible disabilities was quite different. Their disclosure did not increase the comfort level of others. Disclosing instead exposed them to the full impact of negative stereotypes. As one participant with an invisible disability said,

"when you tell people you have a learning disability for some reason that word is synonymous with stupid" (Reba 106). This feeling that instructors would think less of a student disclosing a learning disability was supported by comments faculty participants made.

Some participants from the faculty sample freely expressed doubt that attention deficient disorder existed. One faculty participant felt the impostor syndrome was a better explanation for a woman who "claimed" a learning disability when the instructor felt that her class papers were quite well written. According to the participant, the impostor syndrome basically postulates that women feel they aren't smart or capable enough to do higher level thinking and eventually they will be found out as impostors. If learning disabilities are the excuses of poor students, a good student who discloses a learning disability must be mistaken and some other explanation must be in order, according to some of the faculty participants.

Negative Impacts

Many participants with invisible disabilities described feeling negative emotions like not being believed and being stereotyped as lazy or not smart enough. Participants in the faculty sample described feeling skeptical about students who disclosed having an invisible disability. Some felt the student was trying to get away with something. Others questioned the existence of certain conditions or if they existed the appropriateness of the condition being classified as a disability. The negative attitudes the participants with invisible disabilities experienced were verified when faculty described having these negative attitudes. For the most part, I don't believe the faculty participants felt these attitudes were potentially damaging to students for several reasons: (a) a strong belief in their own ability to mask their emotions, (b) not realizing these were negative views based on stereotypes or prejudice, and (c) feeling so secure in the researcher role as to possess a legitimate right to question the existence of certain disabilities. This last assumption of possessing a right to

question another "expert's" diagnosis had little to do with the fact that the faculty participant's research area and training had nothing to do with adults with disabilities.

The impact of these negative attitudes combined with the student's negative self image was to create a hostile environment for the student. In reality instructors were not good at masking their emotions. These emotions were felt by the students, increasing their apprehension. Intimidating situations can cause the student with an invisible disability not to disclose. Sometimes the student will try to make it without any help in an attempt to be "just like everyone else." Some student participants believed that accommodations provide an advantage to the student with a disability that others don't have.

Certain invisible disabilities such as attention deficient disorder and learning disabilities foster low self esteem, tentativeness, and a fear of exposing oneself to ridicule (Reiff & Gerber, 1994). The participants with learning disabilities and attention deficient disorder in this study were diagnosed as adults. For years prior they wondered why they couldn't learn in a classroom or from books as well as their peers. Some were accused by teachers of being lazy or stupid in a misguided attempt to motivate them. The standard definition of a learning disability includes average or above average intelligence (Reiff, Gerber, & Ginsberg, 1993). Imagine being smart enough to know you don't get "it" but not capable of articulating what "it" is. The student participants expressed feelings of self doubt and believing they had to prove themselves.

A second chance for some participants to change the course of their lives came with returning to college or attending for the first time. I can remember my own fear of asking questions in class or even speaking to a professor the first few quarters after I returned to school as an adult. My experience of dread was not compounded by the self knowledge of learning differently than other people, that many people do not believe learning disabilities exist, and anxiety about having to disclose to a stranger.

Power Trips

Participants from the two student samples felt they were disclosing to a more powerful other in most of the situations. These more powerful others were instructors and interviewers. One determines a student's grade while the other determines the interviewee's chances of employment with a particular firm. One student participant expressed her feelings this way,

Sometimes I feel like they're just being nosy and rude then I won't discuss it and it's not a point of I'm not comfortable talking about it. It's a point of I don't think that they really want to know. It's more of a power trip on their part. (Cat 067-069)

Cat has disclosed several times, requesting assistance at the library or for accommodations from an instructor. Instead of being helped, she was called a liar. She has a visual impairment that makes it impossible for her to read a book or computer without much magnification, yet she can still go wherever she needs to on campus without the assistance of a cane or dog. The person disclosing is less powerful than the person receiving the information because the person receiving the information can choose whether or not they are going to believe the truth of the information and the honesty of the person. It is much more difficult to believe in things we cannot see, such as invisible disabilities.

The stigma attached to being different also gives power to the person whose characteristics fit the majority's view of what is normal (Goffman, 1963). The majority of instructors encountered by these students fit this view of normal: white, male, middle-class, heterosexual, and without disability. Beyond that is the problem of proving something exists which cannot be seen. The experience of having a learning disability is not a basis for many movies or great literature, for instance. The experience of having a visible disability is the subject of movies and literature, such as *A Patch of Blue* (Kata, 1961), *My Left Foot* (Brown, 1955), *Born on the Fourth of July* (Kovic, 1976), *Moving Violations* (Hockenberry, 1995), and many more. Visible disabilities invoke images of

high drama, courageous battles, triumphs of the spirit, and people with damaged bodies that we can see. Two faculty participants admitted they found it easier to be hard on students with invisible disabilities. They said because they couldn't see the disability, their emotional state was not affected. Emotions that did surface were negative: the student might be trying to get over on them, or was making excuses for incompetence. Students with visible disabilities evoked feelings of sympathy, pity, and the desire to help from faculty participants.

This is not to say that individuals with visible disabilities are more powerful than individuals with invisible disabilities. There are situations where each group has advantages or not. Individuals with invisible disabilities are disbelieved at times when they disclose and request an accommodation. These individuals can also choose to hide their disability until they have to disclose. Individuals with visible disabilities are rarely disbelieved and can rarely hide their disability from others. The more powerful other is the person receiving the disclosure. The instructor or employer has the power to accept, reject, or question the accommodation and/or the disability. The receiver's belief system concerning the worth and integrity of a person with a disability influences the reaction.

Reactions to Disclosure

Faculty sample participants described efforts to help students with visible disabilities in a variety of ways, such as providing copies of notes without being asked or offering independent studies in lieu of participation in the original course. The faculty participant who provided copies of notes to students started this for students with disabilities. He quickly made the notes available to any student who wanted them. There was no good reason not to if the notes could help someone's grasp of the material.

These instructors believed they were simply making an offer of assistance. This desire to be helpful places the individual with a disability in situation of need and the instructor without a disability is there to help and knows what type of help is best

(Goffman, 1963; Kleck, 1968; Makas, 1988). A standard for misguided assistance is if the assistance interferes with the quality of the educational experience or the independence and self reliance of the adult with the disability then it is inappropriate. One measure of interference is to reflect on whether or not the same offer would be made to a student without a disability. As in the case of the instructor and the class notes, his assistance was misguided as long as the assistance was only directed at the student with a disability. When the instructor was prompted to make the notes available to all students, even though the inspiration was the student with the disability, he did not single that student out, instead he improved access to the course materials for all students.

Offering the option of an independent study for a student with a disability in the belief that the student would be better off is a misguided offer of help. This same instructor would have been appalled if he had heard of this offer being made to African American students whose civil rights movement fought against the principle of separate but equal. Legal principles established during this civil rights movement became part of the foundation for laws protecting another minority, those with disabilities (Brinckerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire, 1993). Classroom environments supply rich and varied opportunities for learning from the instructor and fellow students. The faculty participant was simply trying to be considerate, thinking that an international student or a student with a disability would not “get much” out of being in the classroom. His motivation was to be helpful and considerate by offering the student an option that the student might not be aware of.

The student in this case had a vision impairment. The course included a session on reading body language so the faculty participant assumed the student could not learn about body language because she could not see it. The student was offended by this implication and the suggestion that she could skip the session on body language. This faculty participant learned several things from his actions: (a) students with disabilities can add value to the class experience; (b) because one sense or ability is diminished by the disability

doesn't mean a student will not gain from the experience; and (c) a student with a disability can be a leader in the class by being highly prepared and by virtue of personality. This faculty participant was open to what he learned; the experience transformed him by causing him to reflect on his assumptions and to broaden his teaching style. These were good outcomes. Yet if he had not been open to change after the student's disclosure, he may have insisted she take an independent study making the disclosure and request very uncomfortable for both of them.

Understanding and Articulating Disability

The action of requesting assistance or being helped without requesting it places the person offering or being asked for assistance in a position of relative power over the individual with a disability. Asking for help or finding help can be problematic simply because the individual is not familiar enough with his or her own disability to know what information to disclose, how to disclose the information, or to whom. This difficulty causes the individual with a disability to appear insincere and inarticulate.

This can happen to an adult recently diagnosed with a medical, cognitive, or mental disorder. Frequently support groups, rehabilitation programs, and schools to train the newly disabled in living skills exist for individuals with visible disabilities or physical disabilities. Their involvement with therapists, counselors, doctors, and concerned, questioning family members provides a rich source of discussion opportunities which can increase their knowledge and develop new skills and compensation strategies for lost abilities.

Participants with invisible disabilities had problems with understanding how, when, and how much to disclose. Seven rationales for the problem of understanding the mechanics of disclosure emerged from the data. The following discussion begins with these seven rationales followed by the mechanics of how, when, and how much to disclose.

Not Understanding the Mechanics

First, less is known about adults with learning disabilities because most research is conducted on children. Research on learning disabilities in childhood has been increasing over the past twenty or thirty years, but still there is much to learn. For years it was believed that adults outgrew learning disabilities. This belief has been rectified through increased research in the past ten years (Gerber & Reiff, 1994, Reiff & Gerber, 1994).

Second, the person making the diagnosis may not communicate the information understandably to the client which could be the fault of the counselor or the client. People just being diagnosed would have little or no context for the information received from the counselor about the disability. They would not yet have learned communication or compensation skills to process the information properly. The disability itself also impacts the individual's capacity to understand and process the information presented by the counselor (Reiff & Gerber, 1994).

Third, individuals with invisible disabilities often do not have the same support systems available to individuals with visible disabilities. Medical, psychological, and other support personnel traditionally interact with individuals with visible disabilities and not with individuals with invisible disabilities such as learning disabilities, limiting the number of information resources available to these adults. Participants with learning disabilities interact with a much smaller group of professionals consisting of a diagnosing psychologist and counselor from disability services.

Fourth, information and opportunities for discussion do not exist for individuals with many types of invisible disabilities as they do for individuals with many types of visible disabilities. This is due to the fact that anything that cannot be seen or described in visual terms is difficult for many people to comprehend, including the person being diagnosed. In essence, conversations always have to be initiated by the person with the

invisible disability. Since most people have little knowledge and may be suspicious of invisible disabilities, it is less likely that a satisfactory conversation will ensue.

Fifth, difficulties with cognitive processing inherent in a variety of invisible disabilities (learning disabilities, traumatic brain injury, mental disorders) affect the way in which the person receives, interprets, and encodes the information about their disability. These same difficulties will affect the way the individual is able to talk about the disability. As in the case of one participant who felt a need to start thinking about her candidacy exam before she had completed many other necessary steps, she was unable to realize that she needed to explain to her advisor that she needed (a) to begin to develop a context; (b) to plan ahead; (c) to discuss this issue with a knowledgeable other; and after these things were settled in her mind, (d) to go back and finish the other steps. Since she couldn't give her advisor this background for her request, the advisor believed she was unrealistic, impractical, and irresponsible, causing frustration so great the student participant would leave the office in tears.

Sixth, there is much skepticism about the validity of cognitive disorders prevalent in society. The stigma attached to the skepticism may increase the person's hesitancy to discuss the disability with others for fear of being labeled or having their worth diminished. A member of the President's Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities, wrote, .

Today, I am often ashamed to say that I have learning disabilities, despite having spent the last decade promoting pride in that term and understanding of its meaning. The term *learning disabilities* (emphasis in original) continues to conjure images of intellectual ineptitude. (Brown, D., 1994, p. 47)

The stigma attached to having certain invisible disabilities is perhaps worse than for people with other types of disabilities. For example, individuals with visible disabilities are not generally thought to be "stupid" in addition to being "different" in an educational setting. Individuals with visible disabilities are subjected to irrational assumptions in other settings

as when some participants with visible disabilities described instances in retail and food outlets where clerks answered participant's questions by addressing their companions or speaking very loudly or slowly to them.

Last, participants with certain invisible disabilities such as learning disabilities have less opportunity for family support and understanding. Family members may react with disbelief, just as society at large does, accusing the adult of making excuses or being plain incompetent. One participant with an invisible disability talked about the difficulties her mother, husband, and son have with believing this intelligent woman when she asks questions or for restatement of information they think she should "get:"

What I find with people including my husband and my mother and everybody else, my son even, because you can't see the boo boo it doesn't exist. And it's very hard for them to believe me when I say I don't understand. (Reba 408-411)

It is no wonder that disclosure and requests for accommodation often sound tentative coming from participants with invisible disabilities. They have had far fewer opportunities to enjoy practice discussions of their disabilities with supportive others.

Mechanics: How, When, and How Much

These are some of the rationales for students with invisible disabilities finding disclosure difficult because of not being familiar enough with their disabilities to know what information to disclose. As a result of the disability, a student may not know how to discriminate between situations where more or less information is required. The student may not know how to disclose the information or to whom. For example, it might be good to disclose more to an advisor than to an instructor. An instructor needs to know only the information relevant to assisting the student with access to educational materials and information provided in the course. The academic or faculty advisor is someone the student should be returning to several times throughout the program for help and guidance. It is reasonable that this person should know everything the student can share about the

disability and its impact on learning. The advisor then can become a resource for the student, providing guidance on how to approach disclosure, when it is appropriate to tell an instructor, and the extent of information which should be shared.

Validation

Validation of the disability is the second step in the accommodation communication process. The disclosure and request for accommodation can be made by an individual with a disability, but if it is not believed, an accommodation would not be made. Validating the claim of disability is not a step defined by law. It is an administrative control measure to ensure individuals who are not entitled to accommodations don't "fool" the instructor. For instance, some faculty participants were afraid that an individual without a disability might claim a learning disability to be permitted extra time for test taking. The administration is concerned with cost containment and provided accommodations only to officially diagnosed students.

Validation is the process a student goes through with an instructor to establish a right to accommodation. This is accomplished only when the instructor is satisfied the disability exists and the student is not trying "to take advantage of the system." Three ways the instructor can seek validation of the claim is by (a) requesting written documentation verifying the disability or registration of the student with disability services, (b) calling disability services to verify information with a counselor, and (c) accepting the word of the student. Requesting documentation can be driven by the desire to follow procedure or by the (dis)belief in student truthfulness.

Validation can occur by simple acceptance of the truthfulness of the student. When the instructor feels trusting students is important, then he or she is more likely to take at face value the information the student is disclosing. One faculty participant expressed his dismay with instructors who think anyone would say they had a disability if they didn't, echoing the sentiments of participants with invisible disabilities who felt no one wants the

negative stereotyping that comes with disclosing. When the instructor is satisfied that the disclosure and consequent request for accommodation are valid, acceptance of the disclosure has occurred. The instructor controls whether or not validation or acceptance of the disclosure occurs.

Some student participants described handing an instructor the documentation provided by disability services which stated the various accommodations the student needed, such as extended test taking time or a distraction free room. This documentation served as the disclosure, request, and validation. Other participants with visible disabilities rarely provided such documentation, believing it was evident by observing them what was or was not needed.

Requesting Accommodations

The request for accommodation is made by the individual needing the accommodation. This request can be directed towards an individual, a department, or an institution. Participants in this study made their original request at the institutional level by notifying disability services. In most postsecondary institutions notification of disability services is required before any accommodations are provided. On the individual level, the instructor can request documentation of the disability. Once this is provided, the student is entitled to reasonable accommodations which have been determined in consultation between the counselor and the student.

In some instances, the accommodations needed by the student are provided by disability services, such as recording textbooks or providing scribes for recording test answers. When disability services has not adequately provided these accommodations, some participants request assistance from their home departments. The student participants who have done this were satisfied with the accommodations.

Other participants handled the request for accommodations by bringing the “temporary advisor, and the director of graduate studies together with the person from

disability services office” (Sandy 182-183). From Sandy’s perspective, she had little understanding of what a doctoral program would entail. She brought together individuals knowledgeable on course content and teaching styles with a disability services counselor conversant with accommodating individuals with visual impairments to discuss her long term academic plan.

Responsibility to Accommodate

The responsibility to accommodate a student begins with disclosure and the accommodation request. These two elements occur before an obligation to accommodate exists. Responsibility to accommodate means a legal and financial obligation to make accommodations which were seen first as an institutional responsibility. Both student and faculty participants felt the responsibility for accommodations was shared by the institution, disability services, the department, instructors, and students. One faculty participant (a lawyer) realized that he had a legal obligation and that he represented the institution. He spoke in terms of the rights of students with disabilities to access their education. Other participants did not seem to realize that faculty and their departments represent the institution.

It was interesting that many faculty participants felt they would like to help, but accommodations really are the purview of disability services. These participants felt their home departments did not have the resources or time to provide accommodations. Another reason faculty participants didn’t see accommodations as the responsibility of faculty or the departments was a lack of knowledge of what do for a student. Some faculty participants did describe self directed learning projects that were designed to inform them about particular disabilities.

Other faculty participants considered accommodations one more burden the institution was placing on them. Some faculty participants spoke in terms of their right to deny an accommodation. The right to deny an accommodation came from the faculty

participant's belief that he knew what was fair to him and to other students. This sentiment of fairness and personal rights was directed towards students with cognitive disabilities such as attention deficient or learning disabilities more often than those with visual disabilities. These disabilities are "suspect disabilities" meaning faculty participants expressed doubts as to whether they should be classified as disabilities.

Student participants registered with disability services as part of the admissions process or after diagnosis. Disability services was recognized as the institution's facilitator of accommodations by both students and faculty. Student participants utilized disability services for all accommodation needs until the office failed to make the accommodations. Student participants spoke of scribes for exams not being capable of writing mathematical symbols, or of books not being tape recorded well or in time. One participant didn't get his books recorded from disability services until the fifth week of class. He felt this was too long of a time for books that he had given disability services prior to the start of the quarter.

Most often student participants felt they had a responsibility to see that their needs were met and to create innovative ways to access information. When disability services failed to provide adequate accommodations, student participants responded in a number of ways. Some left the main campus to take courses only at a regional branch. Other participants went to their major department and worked out accommodations with the assistance of academic counselors and instructors; others recruited friends, relatives, or paid people to record written materials on tape.

Timing of the Request

The timing of the request for accommodation is important because the point in the term when an individual requests an accommodation has implications for the student's credibility and the ability of the various entities involved to facilitate the accommodation. Timing can affect the reception of the disclosure, the accommodation request, and the

responsibility to accommodate. The earlier a student discloses in the academic program or course, the more credible and “doable” is the request.

Student participants requests for accommodations ranged from some time during the quarter prior to course enrollment to the last weeks of a quarter. Faculty participants favorably remembered students who requested accommodations prior to the beginning of the quarter and on the first day of class. Two participants had experiences with students disclosing near the end of a course or program, one because of recent diagnosis and the other forced to when compensation skills failed him, both faculty participants were frustrated, but the ability to do the work was questioned of the student with the recent diagnosis.

Student Roles

Student participants’ timing of the accommodation request was dictated by the student’s personality, the type of accommodation needed, external funding sources, and through self discovery. A student’s personality affects timing in this way: the more conscientious the student is, the earlier the instructor is approached. It is not unusual for good students with or without disabilities to try to get syllabi and books early. Approach prior to the beginning of the quarter usually occurs when an individual has a disability interfering with the ability to read text. Therefore, more time is needed to make the required accommodations. An early approach to the instructor is necessary to have materials ready when class begins, given that it takes more time to read a book aloud into a tape-recorder. If the instructor or disability services does not comply with the request to record written materials, the student with a disability begins the course not having the same access to materials as students without disabilities.

External funding sources affected two participants’ access to textbooks. Two participants needing written materials to be tape-recorded received funding for their books only on the first day of class. In this way an external agency delayed the student’s

acquisition of course materials several weeks. This frustrating situation, whether received with patience or anger, affected the grade these students were able to achieve. It also affected the timing of the disclosure for these participants. There was no reason to disclose prior to the first day of class, regardless of the impression it left with the instructor.

Self discovery of another student participant affected the timing of the request in two instances. One student participant was being professionally counseled when towards the end of the quarter she was diagnosed with attention deficient disorder. The participant was joyful to finally have a diagnosis other than depression. She promptly went to the instructor and disclosed. (It happened that both the student and instructor participated in this study.) The faculty participant was dismayed and incredulous. He felt she was using this as an excuse for substandard work. He found her not to be credible, and was suspicious of the existence of the condition.

There were several things going on in this situation. First, the student participant did not know enough about the disability to speak convincingly about accommodations. Her words sounded to the faculty participant like rambling. Second, the student participant's work in this course had been unsatisfactory to the point that the instructor wondered if she was capable of doctoral level work. When she disclosed a disability she only recently discovered and didn't know much about, her credibility suffered. A common misperception is that individuals with attention deficient disorder are not very bright. It was easy for the instructor not to move from this belief especially when the student could not articulate why she was disclosing, and what if anything he could do for her so late in the quarter other than give her an incomplete for the course. The instructor would have given any student an incomplete with a reasonable explanation. This means this student participant's disability interfered with her accurate assessment of the situation and when to disclose.

Third, the counselor failed to provide adequate information about the disability and accommodations needed in college to the student. In this case, this counseling deficit contributed to a strained relationship between a doctoral student and an instructor. For undergraduate students, a loss of credibility produces discomfort for the duration of the course. For a graduate student and particularly a doctoral student, the instructor may be encountered repeatedly and serve on the exam or dissertation committees.

Another instance where self discovery played a role in the timing of the accommodation request was when a student went through most of the doctoral program without disclosing or requesting any accommodations. The faculty participant had known this student for about ten years and never suspected the student had a learning disability. This student was so practiced at compensating for the learning disability that problems only arose under extreme stress. The student was a full-time administrator, experiencing problems with his marriage, and trying to complete his dissertation in a short time span, certainly the necessary ingredients for extreme stress. The faculty participant's initial reaction was that the student was either intentionally, or because of laziness, not following the advisor's instructions on improvements to dissertation chapters. After the faculty participant angrily confronted the student, the student disclosed. Because of the student's concern with the stigma attached to having a learning disability, he didn't disclose in time to receive the assistance necessary to meet his graduation goals. The timing of the student's disclosure and accommodation request came too late and cost him his dream of graduating in the spring quarter commencement.

Instructor Roles

Instructors influence the timing of the request by their availability, understanding, and willingness to comply. This is not to say that an instructor initiates the process, only that an instructor can influence when the request is made and carried out. Student participants who wanted to communicate accommodation needs to the instructor before the

first day of class can only do so if they can reach the instructor by phone, in person, or by electronic mail. Faculty participants admitted not always being available and sometimes forgetting to return phone calls, or reply to other messages.

An instructor can delay and hinder a requested accommodation in other ways as well. Student participants described instances where the instructor did not provide an initial reading list, or loan a book, or send in a book order in time to have it tape recorded by a volunteer. Students without disabilities can access the material on the reading list the same day they receive the list, it is their choice. It can take several weeks before a student can have a book taped, depending on the backlog at disability services. On occasion instructors have refused to accommodate student participants with invisible disabilities because they didn't believe their disclosure. This reaction increases the time delay before accommodations are started because an additional new step has to be taken by the student--to request the disability services counselor advocate on his or her behalf. If the instructor does not believe the student then the accommodation communication has not been finalized. This usually results in intervention by disability services or the student may chose to withdraw from the course.

Negotiating Accommodations

Negotiating accommodations is the act of determining to what degree each party, the instructor and the student, finds the request and its compliance reasonable and adequate. The concept of negotiating accommodations emerged from conversations with faculty participants. According to one faculty participant, "it comes down... to the student and faculty member and I guess it has to almost be a negotiated sort of thing....Maybe a shared responsibility. Sort of a problem that people work collaboratively together" (Rod 362-363). Negotiation is thought of as a process that people engage in who each have something to offer that they other party wants or needs. The idea is each party gives something and gains something.

In this case, faculty participants were more concerned with losing something such as academic freedom, decision-making control over the course, lowering academic standards, or time. These negotiations weren't entered into by faculty who thought they would gain in any way through the experience of accommodating a student with a disability. One faculty participant did speak of changing his teaching style and becoming more aware of different senses because of his experience accommodating a student with a vision impairment. Other faculty participants felt that accommodating a student would take time away from their other duties, time they didn't want to waste. One faculty participant spoke of students with learning disabilities and attention deficient disorder needing more guidance on writing assignments and believed this to be time taken away from other students.

Communicating Expectations and Needs

Communicating expectations is a theme that emerged from conversations with faculty participants while communicating needs emerged from the conversations with students with invisible disabilities. Faculty participants used phrases like, "They need to be able to tell me what they need" (Jim 79) and "I'd have to take my cue from her" (Rod 263) to indicate they just wanted to know what was expected of them. Since the student is the primary source of information about the disability and the accommodation, students "have to have a sense to know what to ask for" (Rod 264). Faculty participants felt it was very important for students to communicate clearly their needs and expectations to the instructor. Student participants with invisible disabilities were hesitant to say too much, feeling that handing an instructor a piece of paper was the "kind of thing they [instructors] can relate to" (Ray 419). The student participants felt that the instructor as a knowledgeable authority figure would take the lead, asking questions the instructor felt were necessary. When negotiating accommodations, needs and expectations are not going to be clear for either

party when both sides feel the other one is knowledgeable and will take the lead in the conversation.

Many students with invisible disabilities have cognitive or mental disorders including learning disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and depression. In the case of learning disabilities (and possibly the other two) social perception difficulties exist such as an inability to interpret social situations, judge another's moods or attitudes, and anxiety (Reiff & Gerber, 1994). A student being diagnosed with a learning disability as an adult has not had an opportunity to learn about the disability. Students diagnosed sometime during their primary or secondary schooling have had time to learn about the disability and how it impacts their strengths and weaknesses. Areas that students learn after diagnosis include (a) finding ways to explain to others (disclose) the nature of the disability, (b) discovering abilities, (c) compensation strategies, (d) understanding accommodation needs, and (e) being able to articulate their needs to instructors. These difficulties are all in addition to the added responsibilities and stressors of the returning adult student.

An illustration of a student's inability to interpret a social situation comes when Nan stated her fear of disclosing because "it may be held against [her]" (Nan 078) and her revelation that "telling everything just isn't appropriate in every situation" (Nan 079-080). Even though it seems as if this student participant understands the information an instructor might need, I do not believe this is the case. She was extremely frustrated with her advisor. She would go to see the advisor and want to talk about generals or her proposal when she had several incompletes on her transcript and hadn't yet formed a committee. The student participant at the point of the interview had not told the advisor that she needed to think ahead in order to develop a context, plan for the event, and imagine the event's execution. Even though she had these other things she had to do, she needed to "start thinking about things" and "mull them over for as long as possible" (Nan 251-252). This need if not satisfied could have immobilized her, creating much frustration. Advisors and instructors

should not be put in a position to guess what a student with a disability needs. This too can only lead to frustration.

Waiting Patiently

The idea of negotiating is lopsided. Faculty participants considered it much more a reality than did student participants. Faculty participants shared examples of negotiating compromises between their time constraints and a student's needs. Student participants would make the request for accommodation and wait for compliance. If the instructor did not take the lead in offering alternatives or compromises, the student participants did not know how to take the lead. Instead they waited patiently for compliance. If the instructor didn't provide the reading list until the first day of class the student scurried to do whatever to get written material tape recorded as quickly as possible.

One student participant was afraid to make an issue of not getting the reading list or the loan of some of the material early because she had the same instructor for other courses. She was afraid to offend or alienate the instructor. This is an instance where student initiated negotiations might have improved the situation. On the student's part, the negotiation might simply have included a description of some aspect of the physical process of having books tape recorded. It is very likely that the instructor having no experience with this, just didn't think about the time it would take. The instructor could have been made aware that before one book became accessible it had to be completely read aloud into a tape recorder. The instructor might not have known that there is a waiting list for recording books on tape or that this is done by volunteers.

Failed Negotiations

Part of the dynamic between faculty and students negotiating accommodations includes the fact that the student is trying to communicate needs and the instructor is trying

to communicate expectations. If the instructor fails to communicate his or her expectations the instructor's attitude toward this student or students with disabilities may be negatively impacted. This may affect the student's grade in subtle ways. If the student fails to communicate needs to the instructor so that the instructor understands or the instructor fails to comply, the negotiations will fail and the student will take some action. The action taken varies in intensity and impact. The intensity will be determined by the student's experience, attitude, coping ability, and the number and severity of similar failed negotiations. These student actions (see Table 7.1), from least resistant to most resistant, are becoming: (a) withdrawn, (b) passive, (c) an advocate, or (d) adversarial. The impact the student's action has can affect not only the student but the university. The impact will be discussed along with the actions.

Withdrawn. When a student withdraws there are two choices. The student can withdraw into herself or himself or withdraw from the environment. The environment could be the particular course, department, major, or the university. There are two potential impacts, one involves the loss of revenue while the other involves teaching and learning.

At a time when many universities are moving towards cost-based management and are concerned with income generation, instructors or administrators who continually and unreasonably fail to accommodate students with disabilities could become costly. The numbers of students with disabilities who are academically prepared and capable of earning four year degrees is growing. Of the freshman class of 1996 10.2 % self-reported as having disabilities (Chronicle of Higher Education January 7, 1997). This figure has been increasing over the past several years and is a larger percentage than African Americans self reporting in the same class.

The student whose student-instructor negotiation failed does not have access to the course material in the same manner as students without disabilities. As discussed previously, accommodations made for students with disabilities such as copies of the

instructor's notes and overheads, can also be made available to all students. The availability of the instructor's notes may assist other students with learning the material while providing access to students who cannot take notes in class or who cannot see overheads. Just as an instructor who reads the overheads and the writing on the board is assisting a student with a vision impairment, at the same time other students having difficulty "seeing" the board are being assisted too.

Passive. A passive response to failed negotiations has two outcomes. The student can (a) excuse the behavior or (b) ignore the difficulty. A passive student starts out by excusing the behavior of the instructor for three reasons: (a) being nice is expected, (b) feelings of helplessness, and (c) fear. The student is afraid that (a) services will be curtailed, (b) the instructor will be offended, or (c) the grade might be affected. Ironically, the student participant who said that she was brought up to be nice and not to advocate on her own behalf was an ADA consultant prior to returning to school. Feelings of helplessness were prevalent with student participants who didn't know how to articulate their needs or felt the more they pushed the instructor, the less they would be liked. For graduate students who interact with the same instructor many times this can especially be a problem.

The fear of services being curtailed refers to the administrative services a university provides in particular, disability services. Some student participants instead of fighting with disability services over accommodations went instead to their home departments to request assistance. The home departments pitched in and accommodated the student. These students felt that other services could be accessed through disability services because the student had not alienated the people in that office by "pushing too hard." Fear of offending the instructor and to the extent that it affects a student's grade are ideas that might be founded in paranoia. I would imagine, that most instructors believe themselves to be fair-minded, therefore not likely to let their attitude towards a student affect the grade the

student earns. The faculty participant who had a negative attitude about a student's disability and did not think the student capable of the level of work expected believed he could fairly grade her work and that the student did not know he held these negative attitudes towards her. The student participant did in fact know the instructor held negative attitudes towards her and expressed feeling these negative emotions. Even if the instructor was able to grade her work fairly the feeling that a grade might be affected by something not really in one's control such as an attitude, is stressful. Possibly, the uncertainty is more stressful than the reality of knowing that a grade was affected by any part of the accommodation communication.

When a student ignores the difficulty, the student just waits until the information is provided to the entire class, for instance a course reading list. Then the student will make up for lost time by trying to encourage others to do their part quickly (tape recording a book), or just wait patiently on this outcome, pretending it doesn't matter. Another tactic would be to go around the instructor by going to a former student to get the reading list or to disability services for intervention.

Advocate. Advocacy is the proactive, firm, and responsible pursuit of reasonable accommodations. Student participants advocated for accommodations on behalf of themselves, other students, and they formed groups to work with the administration. Advocating involves persistence in dealing with the instructor to get a reading list. The first request for the accommodation includes a time frame for the instructor. When the instructor does not have the material(s) ready when discussed, more information can be provided to the instructor either about why the material is needed when it is, the mechanical process of tape recording written material or information about the disability and how it affects the student's ability to learn from written material. This information might encourage the instructor to meet the next negotiated deadline. If these tactics don't work, disability service providers can be asked to call the instructor to advocate on behalf of the student.

Sometimes fellow students become advocates on behalf of other students by accompanying them to visit the instructor to discuss accommodations.

Two student participants founded organizations to advocate on behalf of students with disabilities to provide the moral support of such a union and to have greater strength when discussing issues with the administration. Moral support included listening to other students, discussing ideas, and making some of their own solutions. One student advocacy group worked with disability services on a successful grant application for equipment for the office. Other members of this same group did volunteer work with disability services to assist with accommodations like tape recording written material and proctoring exams.

The consequences for the university when students form advocacy groups can be positive. The administration can gain by listening to the innovative ideas and practical solutions offered by students. If the administration encourages the students to help, an additional source of volunteers to assist with the work of disability services is available, saving the university money. If the students in the advocacy groups are not listened to and given positive outlets for their frustration, they may become adversarial in their dealings with the university.

Adversarial. The student reaction to the breakdown of negotiations on accommodations becomes adversarial after the student has tried the other three approaches. Students do not enter a university believing they are going to have to fight for every accommodation they receive. On the contrary, this reaction comes about over time accompanied by much frustration. A formal complaint can be made with the university through the ombudsperson, testimony with the Board of Trustees, the President and other high level administrators. An external complaint can be filed with the appropriate state or federal agency and pursued through the courts.

A few student participants mentioned knowledge of someone taking legal action. One was actively engaged in a complaint begun with the Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission that is now in the court system, while another filed a complaint with Office for Civil Rights and is helping others to do the same against the university she attended at the same time. These reactions can cost the university real money, not estimated dollars from the loss of a potential market. This real money is spent on lawyers, extra security when protests ensue, and to rectify the situation. If the court orders a university to rectify the situation, the terms, conditions, and time frame for making these accommodations will no longer be at the discretion of the university. There are also costs incurred when publicity is negative for any institution.

Type of Response (from least to most resistant)	Level or Direction of Response	Examples of Internal-External Responses
Withdrawn	(a) Into oneself;	
	(b) From the environment	1. Class 2. Major/department 3. University
Passive	(a) Ignore difficulties	1. Make up for lost time 2. Go around the instructor
	(b) Excuse the behavior	1. Being nice is expected 2. Feelings of helplessness 3. Afraid to do anything <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services will be curtailed • Of offending the instructor • Might affect the grade
Advocacy	(a) On behalf of oneself	
	(b) On behalf of others	1. For support 2. Coalition of students 3. Interactions with management
Adversarial	(a) File complaint with the university	1. Disability Services 2. President, Vice Presidents, Deans 3. Board of Trustees
	(b) File external complaint	1. State or Federal Agencies 2. Public Opinion 3. Media

Table 7.1: Student Reactions to the Breakdown of Negotiations

Summary

This section described the six elements of the accommodation communication which are disclosure, validation, request, responsibility, timing, and negotiations. Three main reasons were given to disclose by participants with visible disabilities--comfort, ground rules, discrimination. Seven reasons were given why it is difficult for an individual with an invisible disability to disclose: (a) little research, (b) misunderstanding the information provided by counselors, (c) lack of support system, (d) fewer opportunities for discussion, (e) cognitive processing difficulties, (f) skepticism about the validity of cognitive disorders, and (g) lack of family support. A disability can be validated through documentation, speaking to disability services, and by accepting the student's word. Once the disclosure has been validated and the request to accommodate has been made, a responsibility exists by the institution to provide academic access for the student. Most faculty participants did not view themselves as representing the institution. The timing of the accommodation request has implications for the student's credibility and the ability of the institution to facilitate the request. Both the student and the instructor play a part in the timing of the request; students affect the timing by choosing when to disclose, faculty by being available to receive the information or accept it. Negotiating accommodations involved faculty expressing expectations and students explaining needs. Failed negotiations results in the student becoming (a) withdrawn, (b) passive, (c) an advocate, and (d) adversarial. These reactions can have financial and legal implications for the institution. The next section discusses the ideas faculty and student participants had for improving the accommodation communication.

Improvements to the Accommodation Communication

Participants in each sample were asked, "What improvements she or he would make to the accommodation communication?" Each sample had advice for faculty, the

administration, and students with disabilities. Recommendations for each group--faculty, administration, and students--are discussed below and summarized in Table 7.2.

Suggestions for Faculty

Across all three samples the most frequent recommendation for faculty was to increase their knowledge about disability issues. Formal training was the intervention each sample believed would relieve any problems with communication of accommodation needs. Communication as such was not considered a problem persay, the problem lay in what faculty did not know or thought they knew about disability issues.

Faculty participants recommended that faculty attend workshops to learn more about disability related issues. Both student samples had specific recommendations for faculty. Participants with invisible disabilities wanted faculty to know more about disabilities and their impact on learning. These student participants thought faculty needed information on their legal obligations to accommodate students. Participants with visible disabilities had two suggestions. The first was that faculty awareness needed to be increased that different disabilities required different accommodations. The other suggestion was that faculty should understand that an accommodation request does not warrant either special favors or special accommodations on their part. In addition to learning about disability issues, the participants with invisible disabilities recommended that faculty be trained on how to be advisors. Discussions on the differences in power between students and instructors should be part of training for the faculty role of advisor, a suggestion that would benefit all students.

Given the overwhelming amount of data from this study suggesting that instructors are very ill informed about disability issues, it is interesting that some faculty participants thought faculty should be a resource for students with disabilities. As a resource, faculty

should be able to direct students to appropriate services on campus. Another suggestion was that faculty should be able to discuss with the student ways the disability affects the student in the classroom. As part of this conversation, the instructor could share insights into learning styles, adaptations, and accommodations that could be made to increase access to course material and information revealed in the classroom. Suggestions for the administration follow those made for faculty. Many of the suggestions focus on how the administration can better educate faculty.

Suggestions for the Administration

For the administration, all three samples had one broad recommendation: the establishment of formal training programs. Both student samples believed the administration was responsible for training students with disabilities and faculty on "rights and responsibilities." Faculty participants suggested inservices where information on disabilities would be provided so that faculty would not be "caught of guard," and programs to increase awareness of disability issues. One faculty participant stated that such training should be required for new faculty. Another participant thought it might not be realistic to think faculty would voluntarily attend workshops and inservices, despite the need. The sample that experienced the most resistance, participants with invisible disabilities, wanted faculty to be trained in "legal obligations to accommodate."

The administration stands to lose if a faculty member is charged with violating the ADA or Section 504. Even if the university wins the case, resources are wasted in defending the university that could have been used to disseminate information on the legal obligation to accommodate. Many faculty participants thought accommodation was an administrative responsibility, not really "seeing" how their actions or inactions might affect the institution or how they might represent the administration. The belief of the faculty sample was that they could choose whether or not to accommodate and whether or not the

request was reasonable regardless of the fact, most freely admitted, of not knowing very much about disabilities.

Some thought that early notification that a student with a disability would be in class would help the instructor think about altering teaching strategies and course materials to make them accessible. Some faculty participants suggested this early notification should come from the administration. The contradiction here is that the faculty participants that suggested this as a mechanism for improving accommodations also spoke of not returning phone calls or being available for an early disclosure from a student. Most faculty participants expressed it was the student's responsibility to disclose and request an accommodation. In fact, early notification is attempted by many good students with disabilities and the data suggest that these requests are sometimes ignored. To suggest that early notification by the administration would be heeded when the student's disclosure was not, implies that the word of a student is worth less than the word of the administration.

Both student samples had suggestions for the administration, which for them is represented by disability services. In addition to training faculty, these participants wanted students with disabilities to receive formal training in suggested areas such as how, what, and when to disclose. This came from participants with invisible disabilities, not surprisingly, because for this sample it is most difficult to know when to disclose. One aspect of the difficulty is that until someone with an invisible disability discloses, the instructor does not know the person has a disability. Participants with visible disabilities wanted training to understand their rights and responsibilities, legally and within university guidelines.

Suggestions for Students with Disabilities

The three samples agreed on two suggestions for students with disabilities. The first suggestion was concerned with self-advocacy. Faculty participants suggested that students not "take any gas" from a professor, while both student samples wanted the

student to learn to speak for him or herself. The other suggestion was that students needed to learn to clearly state accommodation needs.

Faculty participants and participants with visible disabilities indicated that students should disclose and make accommodation requests early. For faculty participants, this meant early in the quarter, most likely because of misconceptions that accommodation simply means some adaptation to the test taking procedures. Student participants suggested disclosing a week or more before the quarter begins depending on the type of accommodations requested.

Participants with visible disabilities noted students should describe what kind of student she or he is to the instructor for example by providing information on GPA or study habits. They also suggested students should set goals including breaking down research papers into components that can be readily completed. Students with invisible disabilities suggested that students with invisible disabilities join support groups so they can learn how, when, and what to disclose.

The final two suggestions from faculty participants place an additional burden on students with disabilities while diminishing the responsibility of faculty. The suggestions were to be good natured, with a sense of humor about the disability and to constantly remind the instructor of the accommodation request. A sense of humor or good nature come in handy when a faculty member repeatedly forgets to give the student a reading list in order to have course materials at the same time as other students.

Summary

Table 7.2 summarizes the suggestions for improvements to the accommodation communication. Each column represents the advice one sample--faculty, students with invisible disabilities, or students with visible disabilities--gave to faculty, administration, or students. The receiver of the advice faculty, administration, or students are depicted in the rows.

Sample→ Advice To ↓	Faculty	Students With Invisible Disabilities	Students With Visible Disabilities
Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • act as resource for students • talk to students about how the disability affects them functionally in the classroom • attend workshops to learn about disability related issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • train faculty to be advisors • need to know more about disabilities and their impact on learning • need to know their legal obligations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase awareness that different disabilities require different accommodations • don't give special favors or special accommodations
Admini- stration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inservices needed • increase in faculty awareness • early notification of enrollment of students with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teach students how, what, and when to disclose • teach faculty their legal obligations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need formalized training programs • disability services should make students aware of rights and responsibilities
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "don't take any gas" • be good natured with humor • clearly state accommodation needs • constantly remind faculty • disclose early in quarter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • join support groups to better understand what to say and how to say it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be straightforward about "what you'll need and how you'll need it" (Drake) • approach the instructor first and early • disclose at least a week in advance • tell the instructor what kind of student you are • set goals

Table 7.2: Recommendations for Improvements to the Accommodation Communication

Employment Issues

Employment issues varied by sample with less agreement on issues and fewer shared experiences. Three participants in the faculty sample had experience assisting a student with a disability locate an accessible internship or job. Participants with invisible disabilities had little experience with work or finding work once diagnosed with a disability. Four of the participants with visible disabilities had work experience as individuals with disabilities. One of the four had experience with work as a person without a disability. This may be confusing to the reader. Consider that, some participants were born with a disability while some became disabled as adults. Also, having a disability from birth does not imply that the disability affected the individual in the same way all of his or her life. One participant, born with a progressive vision disorder, gradually losing her sight, experienced school and work differently depending on the status of her vision.

Participants with invisible disabilities may have been born with a learning disability and, subsequently learned compensation skills that proved inadequate for graduate work. These participants had work experience prior to being diagnosed as having a disability. One participant in this sample was diagnosed with the disability as a child and had work experience. The rest had reached a crossroads where they could no longer function and were subsequently diagnosed with a disability. Four of these participants had cognitive disorders and three had invisible physical disabilities.

Career Choices

Career choices are influenced by a variety of factors. For most individuals, parents influence career choices by example and suggestion. For adults with disabilities, the most influential person may well be the rehabilitation counselor or academic counselor, especially when the person is an adult at the onset or first diagnosis of the disability.

The Advice of Others

A participant with a visual impairment had wanted to study electrical engineering, instead he studied computer science. His rehabilitation counselor had told him it would be impossible for a person who is blind to become an electrical engineer. In fact, when he finally switched from computer science to electrical engineering his academic counselor informed him that the last time "a blind student" attempted engineering was during the seventies; the experiment was unsuccessful.

The rehabilitation counselor was wrong on both counts that computer science was a good choice and engineering was a bad choice. In fact the reverse was true. Given the conversion in the early nineties from a DOS to Windows platform, computer science was an impossible field. Assistive technologies such as voice synthesizers that read computer screens worked on a DOS platform, making computer science laboratory work impossible using the Windows platform. This same assistive technology made it possible for a student with a visual impairment to study engineering in the nineties. The engineering programs ran on a DOS platform and could be read aloud by the computer. There are other factors in this participant's background that make it difficult to understand the rationale behind the rehabilitation counselor's advice. This participant already had an associate's degree in electrical engineering and had already proven an apt student. He was within two to three quarters of graduating at the time of the interview for this study, and had been asked by his faculty advisor to apply to the graduate program, continuing as his advisee.

Another participant with a visual impairment told her rehabilitation counselor that she wanted to major in English. The counselor tried to direct her to major in elementary or secondary education. The participant explained that the rehabilitation counselor felt a "blind woman" could get a job in teaching because of federal subsidies. She chose not to and at the time of this interview was finishing up two bachelor's degrees, one in English and the other in African American Studies. Her goal is to attend graduate school, possibly Harvard University to earn a doctorate.

Primary and Secondary School Influences

Two participants were in car accidents--one right before entering college and the other right after completing his first year. These participants spent the next twelve to eighteen months in recuperation and rehabilitation. Both pursued their education after rehabilitation as if nothing had happened. The one injured before college had five different majors as an undergraduate, the choice of only one being influenced by the disability. The others were all pursued because of interest. One major was dropped because of a requirement of taking a year off from course work to develop a portfolio which would have affected the funding received because of the disability. He ultimately got an undergraduate and graduate degree in social work. The other participant was in mechanical engineering before the accident and went right back to it after the accident. This participant was admitted directly into the engineering program from high school, a rare occurrence. This probably dissuaded the rehabilitation counselor from suggesting another major.

For other participants, the career choice was influenced by the disability. One participant took three courses his first quarter, struggling with psychology and doing well in a business course. He decided to major in business specializing in accounting. Two participants chose teaching as a career because they wanted to make a difference in the lives of children who learn differently like themselves. Their sentiments were in reaction to the negative feedback they received as children. Another participant having been a troubled youth was interested in becoming a counselor to help children and teenagers like himself. He did not want to be a school guidance counselor. He, like a few other participants, believed the school guidance counselor did nothing but put kids down by telling them they should aspire to janitorial work.

Disability as a Factor

One participant's career choice was influenced by her perception of the effect her disability had on others. She had an undergraduate and a master's degree. At the time of the

interview she was just entering a doctoral program, though she did not want to be a researcher or an instructor. She did not know what else to do. Up until completion of her undergraduate degree, her friends and family assured her that companies would beat her door down with job offers. This was not her experience. She seemed perplexed and full of rationalizations for why she was not offered a job or should not pursue a career in her areas of interest.

She was not proactive in finding resources, funding agencies, or accommodations. This struck me as particularly odd because she had been an ADA consultant giving workshops and talks throughout a two state area. When asked what she would really like to do with her life, her response was to direct a non-profit agency and work with volunteers. Instantly she dismissed this as possible because in her opinion all non-profits were poor and without resources. She also had believed that she was not entitled to accommodations after graduating from high school. This participant was intelligent but lacked the drive to make things happen. Her disability played a part in every explanation of her limited options and opportunities.

Other participants let their career choices be guided by their disability, not controlled by it. These participants were not using the disability as a crutch or excuse for a choice. Having some work experience prior to the disability, the disability became a factor such as a job's distance from home or amount of education needed for the career choice. The career choice was based primarily on interest and enjoyment of the field and secondarily on the disability. One participant who entered college for the first time in his forties had severe arthritis. He had owned his own pottery business which he could no longer do because of his arthritis. The arthritis caused physical pain if he sat or stood in one position too long. Accounting seemed like a reasonable choice because he knew that accountants take work home or simply work from home and he had enjoyed bookkeeping for his own business.

Another participant chose rehabilitation as her new field because she felt that supervisors would be more understanding of her disability related problems. Another was considering becoming a lawyer specializing in disability law. The disability was a factor in the decision for others when the participants felt forced to change majors or college campuses because of inadequate accommodations.

Interviewing

Once the career choice has been made and the appropriate education has been pursued, the next step is the job search. Job searches include preparing resumes and scheduling interviews.

Participants with Invisible Disabilities

This sample was composed of seven participants. Six lost jobs due to a disability. Three learned about the disability because of difficulties at work. One had developed his own business in a field that wasn't affected by his learning disability. None of the participants in this sample had begun a job search. The only one close to graduating had been self-employed.

The participants with invisible disabilities did not disclose on their resumes, nor did they choose to during an interview. Several said they would not disclose during the interview process. They would not disclose until after they had the job and for some reason it became necessary to do so. These participants are afraid that if they disclosed they would be treated as if they were less capable and intelligent. They were afraid of the stigma attached to disability. There is one other element attached to disclosing an invisible disability. It is invisible meaning people can't see it and it's difficult to know it is there. The explanation surrounding many invisible disabilities and how they affect the person's skills might make the person seem less competent to a prospective employer with no experience with an invisible disability. For a variety of reasons, participants with invisible disabilities believed that if they disclosed they would not be offered a job.

There is the potential for a catch-22 situation when an individual with a disability who needs accommodations to complete a college degree does not disclose to an employer. It is highly likely that the job will use the skills and knowledge gained from the degree. It seems highly likely that the participant will need similar assistive devices and accommodations on the job as he or she did in college. Another issue is that if a person waits to disclose until it is necessary, it is likely that the supervisor will question the individual's capability to do the job. The employer may also feel the employee lied to her or him, affecting the participant's credibility.

This sample has little experience with interviewing after being diagnosed. Only the participant with asthma has interviewed knowing she had a disability and she said she would not disclose during the interview. Three participants were working at jobs when they realized there was something wrong with them. One of these, a woman who increasingly lost most of her vision, kept complaining, trying a variety of things to make her data processing job accessible. After narrowly missing a child on a bike with her car, she finally went to a doctor and quit her job. The other two both became depressed seeking counseling when they could no longer function in jobs they should have been capable of performing. Both were diagnosed with learning disabilities that affected the interpersonal skills of one and the writing skills of the other. One was terminated and the other quit. Both were diagnosed shortly thereafter.

Participants with Visible Disabilities

This sample contained eight participants. Five had work experience after being disabled. Two participants had no work experience at any time. Six had experience interviewing as individuals with disabilities and college degrees.

Participants with visible disabilities overwhelmingly disclosed on the resume and during the interview. Four had participated in disability related activities such as advocacy groups, sport competitions, and public speaking which they listed on their resumes.

Disclosing during an in-person interview situation was somewhat redundant. The interviewer could see the person had a disability. The formal disclosure by the individual with a disability had three purposes. First, it relieved the interviewer's tension and discomfort with the subject of disability. Second, the way in which the person disclosed set up ground rules for the interviewer, letting him or her know what questions were permitted. The third purpose was for the participant to know whether or not the potential employer was open to hiring a person with a disability. Jed summed up the reasons to disclose:

Many of them [interviewers] said afterwards I wasn't sure what to ask I wanted to but I was afraid to ask. ...The way I see it is I don't want to have to go there and surprise them. I don't want the uncomfortable situation. The way I see it, if they don't want to hire me because I have a disability...then I don't want to work there. (Jed 366-372)

One participant's experience differed from the others in a few ways. He had two interviews by phone. One was for a job in a distant state. He was one of the top candidates for the position and they were negotiating the cost of his transportation and lodging to get to an in-person interview. He thought it best that he disclose over the phone. The tone on the other end of the line instantly changed with the interviewer commenting on the inaccessibility of the city. This experience was similar to the interviews he had in person locally, not getting very far with those either. He had another phone interview, this time without disclosing and was hired.

Everything went well for over a year until one day after taking an assignment and after showing up for work, he was told they didn't need him anymore. His job was as a substitute music teacher. The school administrators found out after he arrived at their school to teach that he was blind. The school that turned him away ironically had kept him as a substitute teacher to replace a teacher on maternity leave the previous school year. Their excuse was that two classes had now been converted into one class making too many

students for him to handle. After the incident he was offered special education assignments even though he had no training or experience with special education.

I have to admit I have a hard time envisioning him doing his job because I have a hard time understanding (a) how one teaches music and (b) how someone who is blind can teach music. In his case the disability and the chosen career are hard to imagine together. There are many famous musicians without sight. The problem for me was how can he read the music to help his students with it? His response to that question was reasonable and workable. However, the administration did not ask him how he managed to assist the students "read" and play the music. The administration claimed a teacher with a visual impairment jeopardized the safety of the students in band or choir because he could not see them when they misbehave, and because the classes were much larger than the previous year. This may or may not be true. Is there then a special number of students that a visually impaired teacher can supervise without jeopardizing the safety of the students? On the other hand they may be discriminating against him because he is blind, thinking that under no circumstances can a blind teacher be accommodated, or it may be related to beliefs about this specific disability with this particular subject matter.

Participants in the visible and invisible disability samples approach disclosure and interviewing differently. Participants with visible disabilities disclosed and freely discussed their disability with the interviewer in an effort to alleviate it as a objection. Participants with invisible disabilities did not disclose believing that any mention of a disability would eliminate them from consideration for employment.

Faculty Insights into Job Opportunities

Participants in the faculty sample were each asked about employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The employment opportunities they shared insights on were those they were most familiar with: law, administration, education, higher education,

and research. Their responses focused on the affect of disability on skills and likely accommodations.

Faculty participants felt writing and research skills were necessary to successfully maintain a career in academia. Disabilities that impact the ability to put thoughts on paper made the individual with the disability suspect as a capable writer for one participant. He could not envision accommodations that would make it possible to write without pen and paper, essential ingredients from his perspective. This faculty participant's view of writing was so narrowly defined that using a computer for the initial draft was suspect. Another believed the individual must have the intellectual capacity to conduct research and that the disability was irrelevant. He felt sure that if someone had the intellectual capacity that accommodations could be made.

The participant who felt there was only one way to write also believed that it would be easier for a person with any disability to utilize quantitative methodologies and that qualitative methodologies would be too difficult because of the amount of text data. One participant who uses the experimental method with human subjects thought back about what he did and how, deciding that a person with a visual impairment could do the same experiments. Another could not imagine a person with a visual impairment being able to do research in the hard sciences. She felt it was necessary to see the materials being manipulated and see with one's own eyes any changes produced by the manipulations.

For most faculty participants, the ability to teach in higher education was affected only by the ability to speak so that others could understand. One faculty participant reflected on his experience with teaching assistants in higher education and the student teachers he has placed in schools. He had advised two different students, both wheelchair users. The teaching assistant was assigned to a classroom so overcrowded with tables and chairs that the aisles were too narrow for him to get around. In order to teach effectively he needed to be able to maneuver around the classroom to assist students with computer skills.

The student teacher was assigned to an accessible room, his problem was not being able to reach more than six inches of the board. Simple accommodations would have alleviated this problem. The participant who advised both of these students thought it terrible they weren't accommodated and tried in vain to work something out with the schools. He felt these two students could be quite capable teachers with access to the same tools as a person without a disability.

The faculty participants who had worked closely with students with disabilities were confident in their ability to do the job. This confidence in individuals they knew spilled over onto individuals with disabilities in general. It was much easier for them to imagine individuals with disabilities having successful careers with appropriate accommodations. One had two different student assistants, one with a learning disability and the other student with a single amputee. She expressed her concern for the future of the student with a learning disability because in order to learn course material and get A's she scheduled and withdrew from courses multiple times. In spite of this, the student received a fellowship to a prestigious university. The participant believes this student will become prominent in her field. She feels the other student, with an amputated leg, will become a prominent attorney if his nonchalant attitude about his medical problems doesn't kill him first.

The faculty participants in general had no advice for their students with disabilities on the issue of disclosure during an employment interview. They were ill-prepared to discuss any disability and employment issues with two exceptions: (a) the participant in rehabilitation who should know a lot about it and (b) a participant who cared deeply for the welfare of his students. This care for all his students motivated him to find out about accommodations for academic and employment access. He did not embark on a formal learning program but instead used trial and error to inform his interactions with employers and discussion with his students.

Faculty participants fell into two camps: those that believed a disability meant less aptitude and those that felt the disability was just one factor in determining success and not the most important one. It seemed if faculty enjoyed a close working relationship with students with disabilities that they felt were capable, this influenced their overall view of the potential employment success of the student.

Faculty do have a role as employment advisors to students: writing letters of recommendation, acting as a clearinghouse for job information, and advising students on content of the resumés or vitae. These tasks are self-taught for the most part, making this an additional area that faculty could receive training on to better serve all students.

Summary

Experience with employment and the employment process was limited for all three samples. Students with visible disabilities chose to disclose, students with invisible disabilities chose not to disclose until they had to. Both samples made career choices based on: advice others gave them, earlier school influences, and the nature of the disability. Student participants felt that when it came time to look for a job their faculty advisors would be able to give them advice about disclosing and accommodations. Unfortunately, faculty participants had little experience with disclosure and accommodations. They also had difficulties imagining students with various disabilities serving as instructors, researchers, and academics in postsecondary institutions.

Summary of Analysis and Emerging Data: Across Samples

This chapter discussed the accommodation communication, improvements to the accommodation communication, and employment issues. The model of the accommodation communication that emerged from the data contained six elements: disclosure, validation, request, responsibility, timing, and negotiations. The three that were mandated by the ADA--disclosure, request, and responsibility--still emerged from the data as distinct elements.

Disclosure was different for each sample. Participants with visible disabilities wanted to disclose to increase comfort, to establish ground rules, and to determine the potential for discrimination. Participants with invisible disabilities were not eager to disclose. Seven reasons emerged for the difficulties they experienced: (a) little research, (b) misunderstanding the information provided by counselors, (c) lack of support system, (d) fewer opportunities for discussion, (e) cognitive processing difficulties, (f) skepticism about the validity of cognitive disorders, and (g) lack of family support.

A disability can be validated through documentation, speaking to disability services, and by accepting the student's word. Once the disclosure has been validated and the request to accommodate has been made a responsibility exists by the institution to provide academic access for the student. The timing of the request varies according to the type of student and the student's need. Its occurrence has implications for the student's credibility and the ability of the institution to facilitate the request. Both the student and the instructor play a part in the timing of the request; students affect the timing by choosing when to disclose, faculty by being available to receive the information or accept it. Negotiating accommodations involved faculty expressing expectations and students explaining needs. If negotiations failed the student can react by becoming (a) withdrawn, (b) passive, (c) an advocate, or (d) adversarial. These reactions can have financial and legal implications for the institution.

Suggested improvements for the accommodation communication were shared by participants in each sample and involved advice to faculty, administration, and students. Participants from all three samples felt that formal training programs were necessary to assist faculty with changing attitudes, learning about disability, and the legal implications. Participants from all three samples believed students with disabilities needed formal training on advocacy, their rights, and their responsibilities to the institution.

There were few common experiences across samples on employment issues. Visualizing students with various disabilities employed in academic positions was hard for most faculty participants. The career choices of students were influenced by other's advice, earlier educational experiences, and the disability. For most the disability was simply a factor to be considered. Most advice was provided to direct the participant away from a field based on outdated or biased information. Students with visible disabilities would disclose during a job interview for the same reasons as for accommodation: comfort, ground rules, and discrimination. Students with invisible disabilities would not disclose during the interview for fear of not being hired. They believed it better to disclose after being hired only if an accommodation was necessary.

Recommendations for practice and future research are outlined in the next chapter. The recommendations for practice include suggestions for the fields of adult and higher education, rehabilitation services, and postsecondary disability service providers. Areas for future research include: disclosure, rehabilitation counseling, and teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 8

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will present recommendations for practice and inquiry, for the fields of adult education, higher education, rehabilitation services, and postsecondary disability service providers. Areas of further research are: accommodation communication, disclosure and employment, rehabilitation counseling, and teaching and learning. There are certainly more areas where little or no research has been done when focusing on the experiences of students with disabilities in higher education than are remarked on here. In the adult education literature adults with disabilities are still relatively unexplored in terms of learning, access, and social movements.

Recommendations for Practice

Recommendations for practice cover three areas: adult and higher education, postsecondary disability service providers, and rehabilitation counselors. Each area represents a perspective interested in the accommodation process. Adult and higher education represents the instructional perspective, postsecondary disability service providers represent the institutional perspective, and rehabilitation counselors represent external funding agencies.

Adult and Higher Education

Recommendation 1: *All syllabi should contain a statement of accommodation.*

Instructors should discuss this statement as they cover the syllabus during the first class. This will create a friendlier atmosphere for students with disabilities in the classroom

possibly, encouraging a discussion of the differences in accessing information among all students. Students with and without disabilities may benefit from learning about different ways to access information.

Recommendation 2: Faculty should receive training on how to advise all students.

This suggestion came from a student with a visible disability while a faculty member suggested an advisor's role should be expanded to include becoming a broker of all services and activities important to the success of students. An orientation program for faculty on the resources available to students at a university, and particularly resources to assist with access to information and alternate forms of learning will increase the advisor's ability to assist students. After all, the faculty advisor represents the program area and stability to the student who is transient attending the institution for only a few years.

Recommendation 3: An effort should be made to recruit individuals with disabilities into the applicant pool of new students and new faculty.

This protected class has been largely ignored as members of any diverse group. In a college of education, whether students are being prepared to teach K-12 or adults, there are increasing numbers of individuals with disabilities capable of participating in mainstream educational settings. All students can benefit from being exposed to experiences different from their own.

Recommendation 4: Questions about what the student needs for accommodation should always be directed to the student.

Instructors with questions about how to assist a student with a disability in their courses should ask the student after the student has disclosed. Such a dialogue initiated by the instructor could open the way for a discussion about the specific characteristics of the course material and how it might be presented so that the student can have access to it. This may also provide an opportunity for the instructor to reflect on his or her teaching, as it did for a participant in this study.

Recommendation 5: *Adult educators and adult education should make a conscious effort to include people with disabilities and the disability experience in discussions of “other” group experiences.*

There is little awareness of adults with disabilities and their adult education needs in the literature. Initial interest in this population has been focused on adults with cognitive disorders in literacy programs. It is time for adult education to expand its awareness. A concerted effort should be made to increase awareness of these issues and to make sure programs are accessible to all individuals with disabilities.

Postsecondary Disability Service Providers

Postsecondary disability services providers are charged with assisting students with disabilities gain access to course materials. Some of the students participating in this study had problems with the accessibility of the materials produced by this agency. Others found the agency and its counselors responsive and helpful. Many of these recommendations come from suggestions of participants in this study.

Recommendation 1: *Individualized Education Plans should be utilized for students with disabilities especially in their major fields or graduate programs.*

An initial meeting for students with disabilities that includes the disability services counselor, the academic advisor, and either the graduate studies chair, the department chair, section head or the program area coordinator to discuss the components of the academic plan, accommodations, and other experiences such as student teaching, internships, field placements, job shadowing, and formal mentoring programs. This would serve several purposes. First, it would provide an opportunity for everyone responsible for advising the student to discuss issues relevant to all with each other and the student. Second, the responsibilities of the instructor, advisor, major area coordinator and student can be specified at this time. Third, additional resources and more efficient use of available

resources could be coordinated, producing shared responsibility, and relieving some of the load from service providers.

Recommendation 2: Faculty should be informed of the institution's responsibility and therefore their responsibility to accommodate a student to access course materials presented in any medium.

The administration of the institution should include disability issues in their “talks” to faculty, staff, and students in the same manner minority concerns are addressed. In addition, disability services can disseminate information via a variety of electronic, print, and other mediums to increase awareness. Unfortunately, institutions rely on disability services to disseminate information and raise awareness. Awareness and discussion must also be the realm of the leaders of the institution in the same way as other “minority” concerns.

Recommendation 3: Postsecondary education to employment transition issues should be discussed with graduating students, with special attention to disclosure and future accommodation needs.

Providing this service may increase the likelihood of successful employment for the graduating student. Students will need information on when and how to disclose. They should also be made aware of the potential consequences if they chose not to disclose and request a needed accommodation. Students need information on the types of accommodations they will need on the job and resources available to assist with these accommodations.

Recommendation 4: Institutional documentation should be available in accessible formats including disability services documentation.

Students should be repeatedly informed through a variety of mediums of all the services available to them, how to access them, and their responsibilities to disability services. Some of the participants with disabilities that impacted their ability to read were

expected to read traditional text documents about services offered by and responsibilities to disability services.

Rehabilitation Services

Many of the student participants were clients of rehabilitation services during the course of postsecondary education. The recommendations come from the participants or from my observations of what seemed to be lacking in the service given or counterproductive to the successful completion of the academic program.

Recommendation 1: *Counselors should learn to coach clients on all elements of the accommodation communication particularly when the client is diagnosed as having a disability as an adult.*

It is common to assume adults know what to ask and whom to ask about their disability, because they are adults. However, lacking experience with their disability and how it will manifest itself in their lives, clients need assistance with understanding the nature of the disability and how, in terms they can use for accommodation requests, it affects their learning, and ability to work.

Recommendation 2: *Funding provided to clients with disabilities should be provided in such a way that it does not detract from the educational experience.*

External funding sources affected participants access to textbooks because they received funding for their books only on the first day of class. The books therefore could not be tape-recorded and accessible by the first day of class. In this way an external agency delayed a student's acquisition of course materials by several weeks. This frustrating situation whether received with patience or anger by the student had to affect the grade either was able to achieve and therefore the success of the educational experience.

Recommendation 3: *As a broker for clients returning to school, every effort should be made to afford students with disabilities the same educational experiences as all other students.*

In many academic programs the quality of a graduating student's worth to the new employer is impacted by the internship experiences the student enjoyed. It seems senseless for agencies working towards mainstreaming and full employment of individuals with disabilities to prevent these students from pursuing paid internships by maintaining rules on income and benefits that make it impossible for the student to accept a paid internship. These graduates are less competitive in the job market because of the difficulties of acquiring any type of paid work because of the ramifications the pay will have on benefits the student needs. Diminished competitiveness equates to fewer employment opportunities and lower salary offers.

Recommendation 4: Information for a smooth transition to college should be provided for clients entering for the first time or returning from an earlier unsuccessful experience.

Adults with disabilities may be very intimidated by the prospect of attending college. The success rates of these clients should improve if they are provided advice on: how to work the system, where to go for answers, and more importantly what the questions should be. Clients with no experience or negative experiences with college need more guidance or the same amount of guidance as traditional first year students. It is easy to assume because of adult status the person should know what to do. However, the embarrassment of attending college as an adult, or the strangeness of formal schooling after a long absence may prevent the student from seeking answers to questions. Counselors should be sensitive to this dilemma.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research areas became apparent as the data was described and analyzed. The areas for future research are accommodation communication, disclosure, rehabilitation counseling, and teaching and learning. Inquiries into the accommodation communication should examine it as a process and from the perspectives of the participants of the

communication, the givers and receivers of information about the accommodation. One element of the accommodation communication, disclosure, is a vast unexplored area in terms specific to disability and accommodation requests. The quality and effectiveness of the rehabilitation counselor-client interaction warrants further investigation particularly from the perspective of the client. The last area, teaching and learning, is beginning to be explored on behalf of adults with disabilities. Most previous work has been concerned with the teaching and learning of children in primary and secondary education.

Accommodation Communication

This process should be further explored from the various perspectives in the disability community by specific disability category, age at onset of disability, and by disability and other characteristics such as gender or race. The process should be explored further from the perspective of instructors, service providers, rehabilitation counselors, and human resources personnel.

- How does the process differ for individuals with multiple and severe disabilities, developmental disabilities, and with speech impediments?
- How is the process different for Deaf individuals who communicate through American Sign Language?
- How, and to what extent do accommodations match functional limitations of the students requesting them?
- What is the advice of rehabilitation counselors to clients on accommodation requests?
- How do human resources personnel react to interviewing an individual with a disability?
- How, and to what extent are human resources personnel informed about disability issues and their impact or relationship to work?

- What influences determine the reception of a disclosure of disability status by human resources personnel?

Disclosure

Disclosure is the most important step in requesting an accommodation. Before any action is required, the individual with a disability must tell the instructor or human resources personnel that he or she has a disability. This is crucial information affecting the future interactions between the giver and receiver of the disclosure.

- What is the disclosure process for a person disclosing a disability to a person without a disability?
- What are the experiences of students with specific disabilities when disclosing to an academic counselor, advisor, or instructor?
- What types of interventions will make disclosure more accepted and understood?
- How does research conducted on disclosure between two people without disabilities predict outcomes for individuals with disabilities?
- What are the experiences of individuals with disabilities who chose to disclose disability status during the job interview?
- What are the experiences of individuals with disabilities choosing not to disclose disability status until after there is an accommodation need at work?
- What are the experiences of supervisors receiving a request for accommodation from a recently hired employee who didn't previously disclose a disability?
- How, and to what extent would training on disclosure techniques improve the success rate of rehabilitation clients seeking retraining through postsecondary education?
- What types of training are most effective for individuals with specific disabilities in understanding when, how and how much to disclose?

Rehabilitation Counseling

Rehabilitation counselors are “professionals whose multiple roles are used to help individuals with disabilities maximize the quality of their lives within an environment of countervailing factors and forces” (Rubin & Roessler, 1995, p. 210). The relationship between rehabilitation counselors and their clients, the advice given, and the perceived results should be investigated further. Qualitative research methodologies can be used to gather information that can improve the success rates of clients in formal postsecondary education programs, transition from education to work, and accessing learning opportunities on the job.

- How, and to what extent do rehabilitation counselors coach clients on communicating accommodation needs to employers or instructors?
- How, and to what extent do rehabilitation counselors instruct clients to disclose a disability?
- How, and to what extent do rehabilitation counselors direct clients with specific disabilities to specific occupations?
- How, and to what extent are transition plans utilized by rehabilitation counselors to assist their clients seeking retraining through postsecondary education?
- What is the impact of transition plans for clients seeking retraining through postsecondary education?
- How, and to what extent are transition plans utilized by disability service counselors to assist their students seeking employment after postsecondary education?
- What is the impact of transition plans for students seeking employment after postsecondary education?

- What are the perceptions of recruiters about the chances for successful employment for students with disabilities?
- In what capacity and to what extent are teachers with disabilities hired by school systems?
- What fields do students with disabilities pursue? And why?

Teaching and Learning

Adults with disabilities especially those diagnosed or disabled as adults provide a unique population for study. Tennant and Pogson (1995) write “growth is largely based on accumulated life experiences, [and] the capacity to utilize experiences for learning and building expertise” (p. 34). Adults disabled as adults have accumulated life experiences based on self knowledge of themselves as a person without a disability. A variety of questions come to mind concerning how this circumstance affects the teaching and learning dynamic.

- How does experiencing disability as an adult affect learning?
- What relevance do adult development theories have for adults with learning disabilities?
- What relevance do adult development theories have for adults with specific disabilities?
- How can differences in learning styles be utilized to improve teaching?
- Where do adults with learning disabilities fit into the adult development models?
- Where do adults with specific disabilities fit into the adult development models?
- How, and to what extent is teaching effective for the whole group of students when addressing multiple ways of processing information or learning for specific students?

- How, and to what extent are workshops and inservices effective in changing instructors' attitudes about students with disabilities?
- What types of training are the most effective for instructors?
- What are faculty attitudes towards disability and the ability of students with disabilities?
- What do faculty feel is their role in accommodating students with disabilities?
- What are the similarities and differences between faculty and students' thinking about their roles, responsibilities, and rights in an accommodation situation?
- What are the similarities and differences between faculty and students' thinking about the educational experience and the meaning of the degree?
- How, and to what extent will awareness training improve the dynamic between and instructor and a student with a disability?
- How do disability rights movements differ from other civil rights movements adult education has been a part of?
- What relationship does adult education have to the social activism of the disability rights movement?

Conclusion

This study extends current knowledge about the process a student with a disability goes through when communicating an accommodation need to an instructor. The discussion of the accommodation communication process and the elements that compose it provide a beginning point for future research. Students with disabilities are growing up to become adult students with disabilities seeking educational and employment opportunities in line with their abilities. Accommodation to match the functional impact of the disability

does not lower academic standards anymore than allowing someone to use eyeglasses to read this document diminishes the quality of the experience or the learning that occurs.

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APPENDIX A
LETTER OF INTENT TO PARTICIPANTS IN ALL SAMPLES

October 29, 1993

Dear _____ :

The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of disclosure for accommodation purposes. I am investigating what happens when you describe necessary accommodations to participate in higher education or employment settings. Or what happens when you receive accommodation information or give advice on accommodation communications.

The information supplied to me will be used for my dissertation research. I will keep your identity confidential at all times. You may withdraw your participation at any time from this study without any penalty.

I will tape all conversations. After this project is completed the tapes will be erased. Each interview will be transcribed in its entirety. You will be given an opportunity to review what you have said to me. Either you can listen to the tapes or transcripts will be provided to you in accessible format. Corrections and additions will be made as you feel they are necessary to the discussion.

Thank you for your assistance.

Tonette Rocco
Ph. D. Candidate,
Adult Education
Ohio State University
614-297-0779

Kevin Freer
Assistant Professor,
Adult Education
Ohio State University
614-292-5037

I am agreeable to the stated use of this information.

SIGNATURE

DATE

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APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

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Participant's Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Address : _____

DOB _____ SEX _____ Ethnic Origin _____

Interview Questions

Disabling condition

1. At what age did you become disabled?
2. Would you describe how you learned about your disability?
3. Please; describe your disability to me.

Self-Disclosure

4. Do you feel comfortable discussing your disability with others?
5. Under what conditions do you feel its important to describe your disability to an able-bodied person?
6. How do you feel about telling people about your disability?
7. How do people react to your description of your disability?
8. How do you feel about the reactions of others?

Self-disclosure training

9. Have you received any coaching or training to describe what you need from any programs or instructors?
10. Tell me about the program or person.

11. Describe the training or coaching and who gave it to you.
12. What was said and why they might have given you the advice they did?

Higher Education, Training, Adult Education Programs

13. Tell me about your education.
 - 13a. What are you studying?
 - 13b. What types of institutions have you attended?
14. Do you feel you need any assistance or help to participate fully in school?
15. What kind of help do you feel you need?
16. Describe instances where you have gotten the assistance. What was the title of the person or office that helped you?

Self in control

17. Did you tell the person or office what you needed?
18. Please, tell me in the same words as closely as you remember them.
19. How did you feel about telling someone what you needed?

Other in control

20. Did the office or person tell you what you needed?
21. Please, tell me in the same words as closely as you remember them.
22. How did you feel about someone telling you what you needed?
23. Has any one's initial reaction prevented you from pursuing your education?

Instructors

24. What were some of your early experiences with teachers?
25. Describe any instances where they asked what you might need to participate in learning experiences.
26. Describe instances where you took the initiative and told them.
27. Describe the various reactions you have received from teachers.

Employment

28. Describe your work experience.

28a. Could I have a copy of your resume?

28b. Or could you describe the jobs you have had?

29. Describe what took place when a prospective employer discovered you have a disability?

30. Tell me about each job you have had after becoming disabled.

31. What were some of your early experiences with employers or potential employers accommodating you?

32. Describe the process of telling the employer what you needed.

33. Were there instances where you described your disability?

33a. What were the reasons to self-disclose?

34. Describe how you felt about self disclosure to an employer?

35. Describe any instances where an employer asked what you might need to do the job.

36. Please tell me what you told your employers about your accommodation needs to do a job.

37. Describe how you felt about the process of telling an employer what your accommodation needs were to do the job.

38. Describe the various reactions you have received from employers or potential employers to accommodation requests.

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FACULTY

Questions for instructors or administrators that work with adults with disabilities.

Participant's Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone number: _____

Address _____

Ethnic Origin _____ DOB _____ Gender _____

Interview Questions

1. Describe your title and education.
2. Please give me a brief description of the type of person you believe you are.

Disabling Condition

3. When did you first interact with a person with a disability?
4. What were your first impressions or feelings about the first person with a disability that you encountered?
5. How did you get involved in working with individuals with disabilities?
6. Describe the problems individuals with disabilities have in your view.

Disclosure

7. Do you feel it is important for the person with a disability to describe their disability to you?
8. Tell me the reasons this description is important to you.
9. Do you feel it is important for the person with a disability to describe their disability to an instructor or employer?

9a. Under what circumstances do you feel this is important?

10. What information do you feel you need from a person with a disability in order to accommodate them?

Comfort

11. How do you feel when a person with a disability describes the disability to you?

Describe your reactions to this information.

12. How do you feel when a person with a disability describes their accommodation needs to you?

12a. Describe your reactions to this information.

13. Have you ever questioned someone about their disability?

14. What did you think if you didn't believe the person had a disability?

Nature of Accommodation

15. Describe the problems you see associated with adults with disabilities going to college or becoming employed.

16. Describe the ways that you provide accommodation assistance currently.

Knowledge

17. How have you learned what an individual needed for accommodation?

18. Have you done anything to improve your knowledge or understanding of individuals with disabilities?

19. Are there plans for other methods of assisting students with disabilities that haven't been implemented yet?

19a. Describe them, please.

20. Have you ever given an individual with a disability advice about accommodation?

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Is there anything you feel I should know about you that hasn't been asked?
2. What does the Americans with Disabilities Act mean to you?
3. How do you think the Americans with Disabilities Act will affect your life?
4. What does the term "reasonable accommodation" mean to you?
5. Describe any work incidents related to your disability that you think are important.
6. What kind of overall experience did you have during your college years?
7. Please feel free to share any thoughts that you have had since or during our interview sessions that you feel is important.

APPENDIX E
REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM DISABILITY SERVICES OFFICE

Dear _____ :

I am a student working on my dissertation. I need your help to contact students with disabilities. I am interested in speaking to students who have had some work experience as well as a year or more working towards a degree.

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Please give my name and number to anyone who fits these criteria. Please remember to ask them to call me. I will explain the details to anyone who calls me.

Sincerely,

Tonette Rocco

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APPENDIX F
TIMELINE

TIMELINE

SP 95	Committee accepts proposal
SU 95	Human Subjects Approval
AU 95	Accumulated list of potential participants Began scheduling interviews
WI 96	Interviews hired transcriber
SP 96	Interviews Review and coding of transcripts for faculty sample
SU 96	Data description and write up faculty sample Review and coding of transcripts for students with invisible disabilities sample
AU 96	Data description and write up for students with invisible disabilities sample Review and coding of transcripts for students with visible disabilities sample Data description and write up for students with visible disabilities sample
WI 97	Write up of analysis across samples
SP 96	Dissertation Defense

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