Exploring Community College Faculty and Administrators Work Providing Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD): An Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education

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Exploring Community College Faculty and Administrators Work
Providing Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities (IDD):
An Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education

A Dissertation by
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Chapman University
Orange, CA
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March 2024
Exploring Community College Faculty and Administrators Work Providing Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD):
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ABSTRACT

Exploring Community College Faculty and Administrators Work Providing Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD): An Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education

by Stacy Eldred Ellingson

There is a growing number of inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) programs and scholarship in higher education. Providing a spectrum of educational opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in higher education plays a pivotal role in creating inclusive and meaningful access to postsecondary education. However, little is known about the ways in which the faculty and administrators who are integral stakeholders on campus perceive their work developing and supporting higher education as a socially valued experience for students with IDD. Utilizing constructivist grounded theory, this study examines the ways in which community college faculty and administrators working in programs that provide educational opportunities for students with IDD understand and undertake their work. The study also explores the ways in which faculty and administrators think about and understand disability as a component of diversity, the actions that faculty and administrators take in working with students with IDD, and the advocacy they implore in fostering a sense of belongingness and inclusivity efforts for students with IDD as a campus-wide integral approach. The findings indicate that there are connections between faculty and administrators as individuals (Belongingness and Inclusivity Mindset), the practices they engage in (Disability Knowledge), the community space they work in (Campus Community), and the larger systems found in community colleges (Postsecondary Education Environment). In addition, the findings propose that these connections create an Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IF-
IPSE) which is defined as a campus-wide, intentional approach of individual and collective action that challenges ableism, advocates for belongingness and inclusivity, and creates educational opportunities for students with IDD. Suggestions are provided for ways to better support faculty and administrators as they navigate community college structures and systems and work toward accessibility, belongingness, and inclusivity for students with IDD.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Although progress has been made, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have historically been marginalized and excluded in education, community, and employment settings (Grigal et al., 2012). Throughout our nation’s history, college has been a dream for many people. In K-12 schools, there is an emphasis on the importance of attending college throughout a student’s school years and beyond (Kutscher et al., 2020). However, for some individuals, this dream has not been an expectation or reality. There are minority groups in our society that have historically been denied access to higher education (Barnes, 2007). Among these groups, people of color, women, and individuals with IDD have been excluded and marginalized.

In order to understand where we are today, it is important to look back at the historical background of where we have been. Including students with IDD in postsecondary education is a relatively new phenomenon (Butler et al., 2016). Thus, questions such as; what does it mean to be inclusive of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in postsecondary education (PSE)?; Do students with IDD belong in college?, are being raised. In this Chapter, I will provide a brief historical overview of the development of inclusive postsecondary education opportunities for students with IDD, definitions of terms, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, guiding research questions, and the significance of the study.

Historical Background

Given historical data, we know that individuals with disabilities, including IDD, have been segregated and lived in institutions, which for many, began from the time they were born (Wellerstein, 2011). Historically, if a mother gave birth to a baby with any abnormality, she was highly encouraged to either hide the baby in their family home or forget about the baby by
sending it to a state institution (Wellerstein, 2011). In addition, doctors believed that people inherited mental illness, criminal tendencies, and even poverty and that these conditions could be bred out of the gene pool (Appleman, 2018). Eugenicists, during the eugenics movement, believed they could make the world a better place by using scientific principles to influence the gene pool (Wellerstein, 2011). There was a desire to remove those with disabilities from society, and they saw sterilization as the best way to do that (Appleman, 2018).

After the eugenics movement and up until the 1960s, State Hospitals, Institutions, and developmental centers were the model of care for individuals with IDD due to their unique needs (California Health and Human Services Agency, 2014). Although there has been significant progress in realizing disability is a part of the human condition, as a society, we have been socialized to equate intellectual and developmental disabilities with deficits (Giangreco, 2017). One may argue that through the socialization process, individuals with IDD have been characterized as needing to be segregated, protected, and pitied (Giangreco, 2017). This marginalized lens has impacted our belief systems, including our beliefs about whether or not individuals with IDD belong in PSE (Kroeger, 2017). Legislators recognized this marginalization and began creating new opportunities for individuals with IDD in PSE.

In the United States education system, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) prescriptively mandated that students with disabilities in K-12 institutions be identified, evaluated, and provided services and accommodations as part of their right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). A detailed Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed, in compliance with IDEA, to guide the services and support the student in order to guarantee that FAPE in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) provision is met. According to IDEA, students no later than age 16 must identify whether postsecondary education is a
transition goal beyond high school. The identified transition goal and necessary supports are reflected in detail on the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) which is an important section of the IEP. Transition to adulthood is challenging for students with disabilities (Thoma, 2013). Transition planning provides guidance for students with disabilities and their families to prepare for the real world. The ITP is tailored to the student and provides options for their future including their postsecondary education goals.

Over the past two decades, there has been a steady increase in the number of students with disabilities in the United States who are included in general education classrooms with nondisabled peers (Danforth, 2014). Given this shift toward a more inclusive model in K-12 schools, students with IDD and their families are increasingly expecting to continue education beyond high school (Grigal & Hart, 2010). Consequently, a generation of students with IDD who had been educated with their same-age peers throughout elementary, middle, and high school, wished to remain with their peers as they went off to college (Grigal & Hart, 2010).

Professional journals have published a number of opinion pieces calling for changes in transition planning to provide more opportunities for individuals with IDD and other significant disabilities to go to college and/or participate in PSE (Hughes, 2009; Rusch & Wolfe, 2009; Talis & Will, 2006). As previously mentioned, transition planning for students with disabilities in K-12 schools is required by IDEA, 2004. In addition, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA), are foundational legislative initiatives that provided access to higher education for students with disabilities (Evans et al., 2017). As such, the laws that govern how students with disabilities are supported in high school are fundamentally different from laws governing how students with disabilities are supported in PSE (Littlepage & Clemson, 2018). In
the United States, there has been a recent expansion in postsecondary educational opportunities and improved access for students with IDD due in part to the authorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA; Griffin et al., 2012).

**Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)**

With the passage of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) in 2008, attending college became a reality for some students with IDD (Grigal & Hart, 2010). However, the idea of inclusion of students with disabilities in postsecondary education is not clearly defined (Singh & Gilson, 2020). Three commonly used criteria for inclusiveness identified in the literature are based on whether programs are labeled as substantially separate, inclusive, or a hybrid model. Further analysis of these inclusiveness criteria is discussed in Chapter 2. In addition, PSE for students with IDD can refer to (a) education on a college/university campus that occurs after high school (Blumberg et al., 2008), (b) a program located on a college/university campus for students who are still receiving education as mandated by IDEA (2004) through the age of 21 (Neubert & Redd, 2004), or (c) a program that supplements other education and/or transition services being provided by a local school district or adult service agencies (Kirkendall et al., 2008). Attempts to categorize these programs have focused on the degree to which students with IDD interact with peers without disabilities (Neubert et al., 2001), which may not be the most critical distinction regarding the inclusiveness of a program (Thoma et al., 2011).

Rather, some researchers have suggested focusing on “how educational institutions can create access, systems, and practices that support and enable people with disabilities to live and learn in their schools and communities without such participation being predicated on ‘overcoming’ characteristics associated with disability” (Bacon & Baglieri, 2021, p. 29). Furthermore, in the context of postsecondary education, instead of asking how well a person with
a disability can fit into the college environment as it currently is, Bacon and Baglieri (2022) suggested that programs reframe the question to ask how an environment can be recreated to encompass disability.

**Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE)**

According to Bumble et al (2019), the literature on IPSE suggests a wide variation in the size, scope, configuration, and curriculum available to students with IDD in IPSE. There are also various conceptualizations, definitions, and language described in the literature and across college campuses related to supporting students with IDD. For example, “inclusion” on some campuses is limited to coursework and a subset of campus activities; others extend students’ involvement in residential life, employment experiences, student organizations, and other aspects of student life.

In response to the innovative way of thinking about students with IDD in PSE, Think College was developed as a national organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving higher education options for individuals with IDD (Think College, n.d.). Think College is committed to developing and promoting inclusive PSE for students with IDD. According to Think College, there are proposed categories of IPSE programs that are labeled in three different models: substantially separate, inclusive individual support, and mixed/hybrid (Hart et al., 2006; Thoma et al., 2011). Gilson et al., (2019) further described these models as follows:

In substantially separate models, students attend classes with other program participants and may have the opportunity to participate in some social activities across campus. In
inclusive individual support models, students identify courses in the course catalog and take them for audit or credit with appropriate support. Historically, the most prevalent has been mixed/hybrid models, which provide a blend of the other two models. (p. 2)

While there are other opportunities for inclusiveness in PSE, these three models are widely used in the literature. I will discuss the three IPSE program model categories in depth in Chapter 2.

**Definition of Terms**

There are important terms in this study that need to be defined. These terms are defined in the following sections: disability, intellectual and developmental disability (IDD), inclusion or inclusive, and postsecondary educational opportunities.

**Disability**

The concept of disability in American culture was founded on deficit notions of human variance when compared to what is presumed as normal (Valle & Connor, 2019). This is known as the medical model of disability (Valle & Connor, 2019). The medical model of disability understands disability as personal affliction that requires treatment, or exclusion from society (Straus, 2013). According to the Americans with Disability Act Amendment (2008), the term disability refers to “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment” (PL 110-325). In order to align within the Disability Studies in Education perspective that serves as a critical framework, disability in this study is defined according to the social model of disability. According to the social model of disability, disability is socially constructed (Goodley, 2017). According to Shakespeare (2013), the social model of disability
says that people are disabled by barriers in society. These barriers can be physical or can be caused by attitudes towards impairment and/or differences.

**Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD)**

According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (2017), an intellectual disability is characterized by severe limitations in the areas of cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior. These limitations affect areas relating to executive functioning, social skills, practicality and, of course, learning. This is the definition that will be used in this study.

**Inclusion or Inclusive**

The definition of inclusion or inclusive can have different meanings depending on various circumstances and contexts. The concept of inclusion in research and practice is broadly defined and loosely interpreted in PSE settings (Thoma, 2013). It is challenging to construct a cohesive definition to encapsulate the complex philosophical concept of inclusion. The extent to which one student feels included may be vastly different from another student and it is important to take into consideration the individualized nature of an inclusive experience (Gilson, 2020). Thus, it is essential to define inclusion as it pertains to students with IDD for this study as being valued for what one brings to the interaction, having access to opportunities, and being actively engaged alongside others (Gilson, 2020). In addition, according to UNESCO (2006), inclusion is a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems but as opportunities for enriching learning.

**Inclusive Postsecondary Education (PSE) Opportunities**

The publications authored by professionals in the field generally used the terms postsecondary education and higher education interchangeably. Publications authored by
colleges and universities more commonly used the term higher education. In addition, the term tertiary education is sometimes used to describe the next educational level following the completion of primary education. Postsecondary education, or PSE, is the term used to describe education programs that follow the completion of secondary school. PSE programs can consist of two-year, four-year, and vocational learning programs. For this study, PSE refers to community colleges that support the education for students with IDD who have completed secondary school. The term inclusive postsecondary educational opportunities encapsulate a student’s sense of belonging, access to all programs, social and academic experiences, resources, and peer interactions that enrich and prepare students for academic and career success.

**Statement of the Problem**

In spite of the growing number (O’Brien, 2018) of inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) programs and scholarship on inclusion in higher education, there is little available information that describes how the faculty and administrators who are integral stakeholders on campus perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD. One is left to wonder if their philosophical beliefs and perceptions about their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD may be related to how they define, implement, and evaluate IPSE as a broader concept. In addition, how they perceive disability and inclusive postsecondary educational opportunities may contribute to their interpretation of IPSE programs and how students with IDD experience it. Consequently, the lack of this knowledge creates a gap that needs to be addressed to determine what role attitudes may play in supporting or not supporting inclusive practices.

In addition, students with IDD face barriers and challenges in IPSE environments (Adams & Brown, 2006). These barriers and challenges include structural, organizational,
behavioral, and attitudinal but all are underpinned by a society that, despite the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation, still does not fully embrace the inclusion of people with disabilities (Adams & Brown, 2006). According to a 2019 report by Think College, currently there are 271 IPSE programs across the United States, with 105 offered at four-year public colleges or universities (Think College, 2019). This report did not specify how many programs were offered at community colleges. According to The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) (2006), 60% of young adults with disabilities reported having continued to IPSE within eight years of leaving high school. While IPSE programs and opportunities develop across the country, the idea of inclusion is not clearly defined by the law. In short, although progress has been made by legislative mandates, little guidance exists regarding how inclusion could be applied in the higher education contexts (Gilson, et al., 2019).

Another relevant dimension related to inclusiveness, success, and educational opportunities for students with IDD is related to disability discourse in PSE. As noted in Linton (1998), there is a continuing misunderstanding of the mandatory elements included in the idea of diversity. Within the postsecondary learning environment, diversity has come to represent race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and, at times, disability. For example, disability discourse in PSE is focused on compliance rather than being part of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Consequently, disability remains under the misconception that it is of lesser value than other elements of diversity within the understanding of student diversity within higher education (Darling, 2013; Davis, 2011; Devlieger et al., 2007). If diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are crucial to the educational mission of institutions, it stands that understanding the processes by which community college faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD who are integral stakeholders on campus should
be thoroughly explored. That is, are faculty and administrators supportive of an inclusive college experience? Do they believe students with IDD can benefit from an inclusive college experience? Are faculty willing to fully engage in supporting students with IDD in their classes? Answering such questions represents an area of potential research. Therefore, this study will explore these questions.

**Purpose of the Study**

While two-year institutions are a common destination for many students with disabilities, there is a relative dearth of professional literature about community college programs and services (Madaus et al., 2018). In addition, community colleges have historically had the institutional role within the U.S. system of higher education of providing access to all who wish to pursue postsecondary education (Brint & Karabel, 1989). Moreover, in recent years, there has been an increase in postsecondary education opportunities for students with IDD (Baker et al., 2018). Community colleges around the United States are establishing programs that specifically provide educational opportunities for students with IDD. Therefore, the timing to conduct a study that specifically aims to understand these programs more directly is warranted. This study aimed to understand how faculty and administrators affiliated with such programs understand their work, including the challenges and opportunities of this work. This study will inform the field as to how these programs might be created and run in order to develop a campus culture that fosters a sense of belonging for students with IDD.

**Theoretical Framework**

Disability Studies in Education (DSE) will provide a framework for the study. DSE is a subfield that emerged from the field of Disability Studies. Disability Studies is an interdisciplinary field that developed in opposition to traditional notions of disability (Davis,
DSE focused on how concepts that are foundational in Disability Studies are carried out in education, including investigating “what disability means, how it is interpreted, enacted, and resisted in the social practices of individuals, groups, organizations, and cultures” (Danforth & Gabel, 2016, p. 5). Using DSE as a framework, the study will begin from a standpoint that frames issues of disability as an issue of human rights, social justice, and equality for all students. In addition, utilizing DSE as a framework will provide a starting point in exploring ways in which community college faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD.

In addition, Integral Theory is an analysis tool that provides a model to illustrate the connections between faculty and administrators as individuals, the practices they engage in, the community space they work in, and the larger systems found in community colleges as found in the data. Integral Theory describes an interconnected and evolving world in terms of not only matter and life but also culture and consciousness (Wilber, 2001). Designed as a quadrant model, with the notion of each quadrant working together to form a whole, the model aims to define the four areas of functioning to reach goals and further our capacity as humans (Wilber, 2001).

**Research Questions**

The primary research question and sub-questions for this study include:

- In what ways do community college faculty and administrators working in programs that provide educational opportunities for students with IDD understand and undertake their work?
  - In what ways, if any, do faculty and administrators' own perceptions about students with IDD inform their work?
What do faculty and administrators see as the challenges and opportunities to their work?

In what ways, if any, do faculty and administrators connect their work with campus diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts?

**Significance of the Study**

The dearth of research regarding how community college faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD in postsecondary education requires attention. The intention of providing educational opportunities is for students with IDD to be given the same equitable and accessible opportunities for success as neurotypically developing students. However, students with IDD continue to be excluded from postsecondary education despite continued efforts toward their inclusion (Uditsky & Hughson, 2012). For this reason, the proposed study will add to existing literature on supporting inclusive higher education as a fundamental human right for students with IDD.

This study will be conducted using constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014) to explore the processes by which community college faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD. The paucity of prior research in the area of attitudinal barriers and disability rendered a constructivist grounded theory methodology appropriate. Including the input of campus stakeholders (e.g., faculty and administrators) is essential to successful program development and implementation for community colleges (Izzo & Shuman, 2013; Jones & Goble, 2012). In addition, the perceptions held by faculty and administrators would likely impact how they run their programs and develop a campus culture that fosters a sense of belonging for students with IDD. As such, the work carried out in PSE based on these understandings might be greatly
informed by a theory that aids in explaining how faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD.

This study aims to serve community college faculty and administrators in their program development and implementation efforts as they create and evaluate inclusive postsecondary educational opportunities for students with IDD on their campus. In addition, this study aims to contribute to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging literature for students with IDD in PSE. This study focused on the perspectives of faculty and administrators at community colleges located in Southern California.

**Summary**

While an increase in inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) programs on inclusion in higher education has occurred, there is little available information that describes how faculty and administrators who are integral stakeholders on campus understand their work. This constructivist grounded theory study sought to contribute to this body of literature. Chapter 2 will explore faculty and/or administrators’ perspectives about providing educational opportunities for students with IDD attending PSE. In Chapter 3, I will outline and discuss the chosen methodology of this study and the methods to collect and analyze the experiences of the participants. In Chapter 4, I present the experiences of the participants, and in Chapter 5, I discuss those findings and the implications they have on community colleges and research communities.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This Chapter focuses on relevant literature regarding faculty and/or administrators’ perspectives about students with IDD attending IPSE programs. Specifically, this Chapter provides (1) the theoretical framework for this study, (2) an overview of the historical background of IPSE, and (3) the themes found in relevant literature regarding scholarship on IPSE, perspectives about inclusion, faculty experiences teaching inclusive courses, and the role and development of IPSE program.

Theoretical Framework

As previously mentioned, this study was conducted using constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014) to explore the processes by which community college faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD. The paucity of prior research in the area of IPSE stakeholders and disability rendered a constructivist grounded theory methodology appropriate. Disability Studies in Education (DSE) provided a framework for the study, and Integral Theory was used as a model for interpreting, analyzing, and conceptualizing data throughout the study.

Disability Studies in Education

DSE is an offshoot of Disability Studies (DS) and focuses on issues related to disability in schools. DS scholars conceptualize disability as a natural variation of the human condition (Baglieri et al., 2011; Hehir, 2002; Linton, 2005; Shapiro, 2003). Through this lens, disability is understood as a “social phenomenon” (Taylor, 2006). During the late 1990s, the term ‘social model’ gained wide use by those working in DS around the world (Connor et al., 2008). Also, during this time, a number of educational researchers became discouraged by traditional medical or deficit models of disability, which positions disability as abnormal and in need of a medical
fix in special education (Connor et al., 2008). This small, but growing group of educational researchers, developed a special interest group (SIG) in the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the Disability Studies in Education (DSE-SIG) held its first business meeting at AERA in 2000 (Connor et al., 2008).

At this AERA meeting the foundations of this special interest group was discussed and resulted in a mission statement for the DSE-SIG. This mission statement read:

The mission of the Disability Studies in Education SIG is to promote understandings of disability from a social model perspective drawing on social, cultural, historical, discursive, philosophical, literary, aesthetic, artistic, and other traditions to challenge medical, scientific, and psychological models of disability as they relate to education.

(Connor et al., 2008, p. 447)

As discussed by Connor et al. (2008), the tenets of DSE center on engagement in research, policy, and action that:

- contextualize disability within political and social spheres;
- privilege the interests, agendas, and voices of people labelled with disability/disabled people;
- promote social justice, equitable and inclusive educational opportunities, and full and meaningful access to all aspects of society for people labelled with disability/disabled people; and
- assume competence and reject deficit models of disability.

DSE acknowledges that disability is a natural part of the human experience (Valle & Connor, 2019). Grounded in the social model of disability, DSE challenges the medical model of disability and the myth of normality (Baglieri et al., 2011). According to Goodley (2017), the
social model of disability argues that people are disabled by barriers in society. These barriers can be physical or can be caused by attitudes towards impairment and/or differences.

There is a prejudicial history of IDD labels that is outside of the scope of this study. However, it is important to note that the label IDD is not without controversy. In this study, I acknowledge that intellectual and developmental disability is a construct resulting from meanings that emerge within social relations and is dependent on people’s knowledge and experience as well as from the context of the assignment of meaning (Goodey 2011; Rapley 2004). I am using the label students with IDD because the field I am studying and the literature in this review use this label.

As previously mentioned, DSE is an offshoot of Disability Studies and focuses on issues related to disability in schools. From a DSE perspective, education is an action (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2017) and an ongoing process (Danforth & Naraian, 2015). At the postsecondary level, this means colleges and universities must continually examine contextualized institutional and pedagogical practices to uncover points of marginalization that emerging adults, labeled with IDD, experience (Miller & Chun, 2022). Without actively examining practices, colleges and universities risk maintaining narrow, potentially exclusionary campuses under the guise of "doing inclusion" (Erevelles, 2011).

DSE is primarily interpreted as advocating for expansion of opportunity and participation through inclusive education in schools. The particular view of inclusive education in DSE avoids the assumption that the main way to study or improve inclusivity in schools and communities’ rests on the ability of people with disabilities to act and approximate the assumed competencies of non-disabled people. (Bacon & Baglieri, 2022, p. 29)
It is important to note that inclusive education or IPSE and DSE are not synonymous. DSE demands equitable and inclusive opportunities across life spheres for individuals labeled with IDD (Erevelles, 2002). Furthermore, using DSE as a framework, this study began from a standpoint that looks at issues of disability as issues of diversity, social power, and control. As a Disability Studies scholar, I used a social model of disability and DSE framework to guide me through this study. The next section will provide an overview of the historical background related to increased access in higher education for students with IDD.

**Integral Theory and Integral Perspectives of Peace Leaderships (IPPL)**

Integral Theory (Wilber, 2000) and Integral Perspective of Peace Leadership (IPPL; McIntyre Miller, 2016) are used in this study as models to illustrate the connections between faculty and administrators as individuals, the practices they engage in, the community space they work in, and the larger systems found in community colleges, as indicated within the findings. Integral Theory describes an interconnected and evolving world in terms of not only matter and life but also culture and consciousness (Wilber, 2001). Designed as a quadrant model, with the notion of each quadrant working together to form a whole, the model aims to define the four areas of functioning to reach goals and further our capacity as humans (Wilber, 2000). The IPPL is a theoretical framework based on Ken Wilber’s (2000) All Lines, All Quadrants (AQAL) model of Integral Theory. As seen in Figure 1, this theory is comprehensive and includes numerous components, concepts, and ideas. Integral Theory is a four-quadrant model that focuses on the interior experiences as defined within the self or the inner work of ourselves (Top left “I”); the individual, exterior experiences such as the knowledge, behaviors, practices, and skills that it takes to engage in this work (Top right “IT”); the collective, interior experiences such as the spaces where we exist in community and we build in groups and social spaces
(Bottom left “WE”); and then the collective exterior experiences such as the larger system, structures, and environmental pieces at play (Bottom right “ITS”; Wilber, 2005; McIntyre Miller & Green, 2015). This model will be revisited in Chapter 5.

*Figure 1 Wilber’s Integral Theory (AQUAL – All quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types)*


**Overview of Historical Background**

There are a number of laws that were enacted in order to discourage discrimination against individuals based on their disability. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA), are foundational legislative initiatives that provided access to higher education for students with disabilities (Evans et al., 2017). Although instrumental to improved access for individuals with disabilities, employment and physical access legislation are outside the scope of this review. In this section, I will discuss and provide the legislative context
in order to understand Section 504, ADA, the HEOA and their important implications for students with disabilities, including students with IDD, in higher education.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Postsecondary Education

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (28 CFR 35.104) is a law that protects college students with disabilities. Under this law any school that receives federal funds may not discriminate on the basis of a disability (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Colleges and universities receiving federal financial assistance must not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, or treatment of students. Students with documented disabilities may request modifications, accommodations, or auxiliary aids which will enable them to participate in and benefit from all postsecondary educational programs and activities. Postsecondary institutions must make such changes to ensure that the academic program is accessible to the greatest extent possible by all students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). In addition, according to the U.S. Department of Education (2020), Under the provisions of Section 504, universities and colleges may not:

- limit the number of students with disabilities admitted;
- make preadmission inquiries as to whether or not an applicant is disabled;
- use admissions tests or criteria that inadequately measure the academic qualifications of disabled students because special provisions were not made for them;
- exclude a qualified student with a disability from any course of study;
- limit eligibility to a student with a disability for financial assistance or otherwise discriminate in administering scholarships, fellowships, internships, or assistantships on the basis of disability;
- counsel a student with a disability toward a more restrictive career;
• measure student achievement using modes that adversely discriminate against a student with a disability; or
• establish rules and policies that may adversely affect students with disabilities.

Section 504 states that a postsecondary school must take necessary steps to ensure that disabled students are not denied the benefit of, excluded from participation in, or subjected to discrimination under the education program because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Postsecondary Education**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public (PL 101-336). The ADA covers both private and public universities. In addition, the ADA applies to schools, including postsecondary institutions, that don’t receive federal funding.

**Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)**

The primary law related to increasing access to educational opportunities that are important and relevant to this study is the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) (PL 110-315) was enacted on August 14, 2008; it reauthorized the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, as amended (Grigal & Hart, 2010). This reauthorization included provisions to increase access to higher education, in particular for students with IDD. There were two main features of the support for students with IDD that grew out of the legislation. One feature was for the United States Department of Education to recognize a new type of initiative within institutes of higher education, a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTP) for students with IDD. The second feature
authorized funding for colleges to create model programs to develop inclusive higher education opportunities for students with IDD. These were called Transition Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSIDs) (VanBergeijk & Cavanagh, 2015).

The HEOA has created the legislation and the funding to encourage a sizable increase in inclusionary activities in higher education (VanBergeijk & Cavanagh, 2015). Programs that emphasize college learning, are designed for students with IDD labels, and integrate disabled and non-disabled students for at least 50% of the time can apply to U.S. Department of Education to be labeled as CTP or TPSID (Bacon & Baglieri, 2022). In the next section, the development of Think College, Comprehensive Transition Postsecondary (CTP) programs, and Transition Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSIDs) are discussed.

**Think College**

The HEOA authorized $10.6 million for the creation of TPSIDs. At the same time, Congress funded a national coordinating center for TPSIDs, which is housed at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Their ThinkCollege.net website contains information for both families and professionals about CTPs, TPSIDs, and the general inclusive movement to make higher education a more inclusive environment (VanBergeijk & Cavanagh, 2015). The work of the Think College project has been important in helping guide the development of postsecondary programs for students with IDD and, in particular, those programs funded under TPSID competition from the Office of Postsecondary Education in the U.S. Department of Education. Projects funded under this five-year grant program had to meet very specific guidelines and program requirements and were chosen based on a competitive peer-review process (Thoma, 2013). Project staff members at Think College were charged with providing training and technical assistance to the 27 projects funded through
TPSID and collecting and analyzing evaluation data on project effectiveness (VanBergeijk & Cavanagh, 2015).

Think College is currently developing an accreditation system to evaluate the structure and quality of IPSE programs using eight standards (National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup, 2021). Grigal and Hart (2011) discuss these eight standards and the range of approaches to them that are apparent in IPSE. The standards address: academic access, career development, campus membership, self-determination, alignment with college systems and practices, coordination and collaboration, sustainability, and ongoing evaluation. According to the National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup (2021), the implementation of model accreditation standards will move Think College forward on the path to inclusive higher education opportunities that lead to competitive integrated employment and community living. In addition, they claim that establishing and implementing model program accreditation standards will create benchmarks that will be useful for quality assurance and improvement of higher education programs enrolling students with IDD. Lastly, the National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup (2021) stated that these standards will be used to validate and strengthen programs and provide guidelines for colleges and universities considering establishing high-quality programs.

**Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTP)**

According to Think College (n.d.), Comprehensive Transition Postsecondary (CTP) program is a designation sought by college programs for students with intellectual disability who wish to offer access to federal financial aid to its students. CTP programs are degree, certificate, or non-degree programs for students with IDD that: (1) are offered by a college or career school and approved by the U.S. Department of Education; (2) are designed to support students with
IDD who want to continue academic, career, and independent living instruction to prepare for gainful employment; and (3) offers academic advising and a structured curriculum (Think College, n.d.). CTP programs require students with IDD to participate, for at least half of the program. Other requirements include: (1) regular enrollment in credit-bearing courses with nondisabled students, (2) auditing or participating (with nondisabled students) in courses for which the student does not receive regular academic credit, (3) enrollment in noncredit-bearing, non-degree courses with nondisabled students, or (4) internships or work-based training with nondisabled individuals (Think College, n.d.). If students with IDD are attending a CTP, they are able to use federal financial aid to help pay the cost of attendance.

**Transition Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSIDs)**

According to Thoma (2013), request for proposals for TPSID required that funded PSE programs have the following components/tenets: (1) provide individual supports and services for academic and social inclusion; (2) include academic enrichment, socialization, independent living skills, and integrated work experiences, and career skills; (3) integrate person-centered planning in the development of the course of study; (4) participate with the coordinating center in the evaluation of the program; (5) partner with one or more local education agencies (LEAs) to support students still receiving special education under IDEA; (6) plan for the sustainability of their program after the grant period ends; and (7) create and offer a meaningful credential upon the completion of the program (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). To be eligible for the grant, institutions of higher education must serve students with IDD (Think College, n.d.).

**Inclusive Postsecondary Education Programs**

Programs that are developed as IPSE programs are categorized based on how “included” students with IDD are in a typical college experience. There are three models that have been
identified to describe what category an IPSE program is defined as. These labels include (a) substantially separate, (b) inclusive individual support, and (c) mixed/hybrid (Hart et al., 2006). These models will be further discussed later in this Chapter. The literature on IPSE is heavily focused on the percentage of time students with IDD are learning alongside typically developing peers without disabilities as defined by the “models.” This approach to “inclusive” PSE is more aligned with K-12 education inclusion initiatives. O’Brien (2019) evaluated and critiqued attempts in the US to standardized IPSE programs through set outcomes and states: “The vocabulary and grammar of this disability focused initiative shows its origin in the world of special education and disability services” (O’Brien, 2019, p. 271). In addition, Bacon and Baglieri (2022) question whether the foundational and conceptual knowledge base of special education still permeates a great deal of IPSE research and programming. O’Brien (2019) urged IPSE to focus on creating opportunities for students to engage in authentic student experiences and not to put an emphasis on standardization. In the next section, the approach to the literature review and themes found in the literature review are discussed.

**Approach to Literature Review**

This literature review sought to gather and analyze the research focused on faculty and/or administrators’ perspectives about students with IDD attending PSE. There were multiple purposes for this review. First, an analysis of the varied studies on perspectives about students with IDD attending PSE may allow for considerations not readily apparent in single studies alone. The identification of themes found in such an analysis may highlight gaps for future research and provide insights for college personnel, which may lead to improved attitudes toward students with IDD. Second, a more complete understanding of perspectives about students with IDD attending PSE may serve to inform larger conversations about the nature of IDD in higher
education. Such conversations may be instructive in working with college personnel who are developing inclusive opportunities for students with IDD at their colleges or universities. Lastly, the review sought to understand attitudinal barriers under current inclusive PSE practices, which appears to be a crucial component in disability conversations that may question these practices or propose future alternatives.

When reviewing the literature on faculty and/or administrators’ perspectives about students with IDD attending PSE, the terms significant disability, disability, intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), intellectual disability (ID), cognitive disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), developmental disabilities, and mental retardation are generally used interchangeably to describe the same student population. It should be noted that the term mental retardation is an inappropriate term; however, in older literature, this term is used. I have included it here in order to understand the historical perspective. All of these terms were used when searching various databases for sources.

I conducted a broad review of the literature related to faculty and/or administrators’ perspectives about students with IDD attending PSE, which included using digital keyword searches of the ERIC, Academic Search Premier, and PsychINFO databases. These databases were selected because they provided extensive coverage of both education and disability-focused academic journals. A Boolean search was conducted for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities or IDD or disability AND attitude AND perspective AND college or university or PSE or higher education. No publication date range was applied. The initial search was conducted in November of 2022 and a date range was not identified so as to allow for consideration of whether faculty and/or administrator’s perspectives about students with IDD attending PSE institutions have shifted over time. The search produced 124 peer-reviewed
journal articles, 45 of which were reports of empirical research. Of these results, 37 studies were excluded due to a focus on learning disabilities and ADHD, as were two that had an international focus. Finally, the author reviewed the references of the remaining studies, adding other relevant research not captured by the original database search. Upon this addition, a total of 11 studies were identified for this review. The table in Appendix A provides a list of the titles, authors, publication years, research type, and description of these studies.

After the research studies were identified and the study characteristics were compiled, I used an inductive approach to search through the studies and identify common themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I read through the studies multiple times, looking for commonalities in the findings. All of the 11 articles included were conducted in the United States. Qualitative studies were most common (n=7), encompassing the use of qualitative interviews (n=3), focus groups (n=3), and phenomenology (n=1). Four articles reported on quantitative web-based surveys. Of the 11 articles included in this review, eight were conducted as a case study design. The results of this review and an overview of the themes that appeared with the greatest consistency across the literature are presented in the following sections.

**Literature Review Results**

This section begins with a general overview of scholarship on inclusive postsecondary education programs that were discussed in all 11 of the articles located for this literature review. These 11 articles also discussed the history, legislation, and increased scholarship around IPSE. Next, three themes that emerged from the literature are examined. These three themes include: (1) perspective about inclusion, (2) faculty experience teaching students with IDD in inclusive courses, and (3) the role and development of an IPSE program.
Scholarship on Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE)

As previously mentioned, individuals with IDD have historically been marginalized and excluded in education, community, and employment settings (Grigal et al., 2012). There are two key factors that Adams and Brown (2006) identified that determine whether or not a person with a disability progresses to higher education. The first is whether there is a belief in the individual’s ability to undertake postsecondary education, and the second is having appropriate access to the full educational experience. Inclusive PSE (IPSE) is a relatively new phenomenon and is intended to equalize opportunities, provide educational equity and access, as well as promote social justice for students with IDD in higher education (Butler et al., 2016). In recent years, there has been an increase in postsecondary education opportunities for students with IDD (Baker et al., 2018). Since the passage of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) in 2008, opportunities for students with IDD to attend college have become a reality (Grigal et al., 2012). These opportunities have the potential to extend the inclusion of students with IDD beyond K-12 schools into postsecondary institutions (Hart et al., 2006).

As previously noted, according to The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (Wagner et al., 2006), 60% of young adults with disabilities reported having continued to PSE within eight years of leaving high school. Very few of these individuals in the longitudinal study, however, were labeled with IDD. Given the HEOA legislation and TPSID funding, there has been an increase in opportunities for students with IDD in IPSE (Myers et al., 2019). Consequently, research about IPSE has increased. In fact, the first academic journal specifically focused on IPSE was launched by The Taishoff Center and The Helen A. Keller Institute for Human disAbilities at George Mason University and was founded by Beth Myers. In the inaugural 2019 issue of the *Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education (JIPE)*, the editors stated:
Inclusive postsecondary opportunities for students with IDD vary widely in terms of how many students they serve, age range of students, geographic location, and academic, social, and residential opportunities. Some programs are designed for dual enrollment students, those who are participating in a college environment while still supported through their school district under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Other programs are designed for traditional college-age students, while others serve a range of traditional and non-traditional students. Inclusive postsecondary opportunities exist in 2-year colleges and community colleges, in 4-year colleges and universities, as 1-year programs within a college, and as high school extension programs. Some opportunities serve only a few students, while others have 100 or more. Some universities offer student housing and residential supports, some have fully inclusive academic programs while others offer specialized classes, and many provide a myriad of social opportunities for students. (Myers et al., 2019, p. 1)

In addition, while there are a number of models for IPSE, the three models identified by Hart et al. (2006) were widely used in the literature. As previously mentioned, these models have been labeled as (a) substantially separate, (b) inclusive individual support, and (c) mixed/hybrid (Hart et al., 2006) and are further defined by Gilson et al. (2019):

In substantially separate models, students attend classes with other program participants and may have the opportunity to participate in some social activities across campus. In inclusive individual support models, students identify courses in the course catalog and take them for audit or credit with appropriate support. Historically, the most prevalent has been mixed/hybrid models, which provide a blend of the other two models. (p. 2)

The literature on these models provides background for understanding the movement
towards the availability of IPSE options for students with IDD. In addition to these program models, the researchers, experts, and practitioners in higher education at Think College developed Think College Standards for an Inclusive Higher Education Conceptual Framework (Grigal et al., 2011). This framework was developed in 2010 and includes eight standards (see Appendix B). The standards address: academic access, career development, campus membership, self-determination, alignment with college systems and practices, coordination and collaboration, sustainability, and ongoing evaluation. These standards provide a framework that addresses the principles of the HEOA and TPSID funding requirements.

While programs funded under the TPISD grant and the Think College standards had some consistency in program components, procedures, and experiences, these are not the only PSE programs for students with IDD (Thoma et al., 2011). In addition, post-secondary experiences for students with IDD vary. Since 2012, there have been 126 colleges and universities with TPSID grants and associated sites in 34 states (Think College, 2022). According to the Think College website, TPSID programs represent about one-third of higher education programs for students with IDD in the US. So, while there is an umbrella term, “IPSE programs for students with IDD,” these programs can look very different, making it more difficult for program directors and faculty to understand whether the findings of a specific research study are applicable to their own program or participants (Thoma, 2013). One theme that emerged in this review included perspectives about attitudes toward including students with IDD and definitions of inclusion.

**Perspectives About Inclusion**

Perspectives about inclusion were discussed in four articles (Gibbons et al., 2015; Gilson et al., 2020; Gilson et al., 2019; Thoma et al., 2013). In these articles, faculty indicated their
views of inclusion, their definition of inclusion, and attitudes toward prospective students with IDD. Throughout the articles, views and definitions of inclusion were often framed in terms of diversity.

In two studies, the research was carried out at the same large public research university in the south central United States (Gilson et al., 2020; Gilson et al., 2019). According to Gilson et al. (2020), the institution in the study at the time offered a one-year employment training program designed for students with disabilities to attain certification within a specific career field. Students attending this program received most of their academics in a separate setting from traditionally enrolled students, resulting in limited opportunities to interact with students and faculty across the university. A team of faculty members, prospective parents, and campus leaders received university approval to develop another PSE program at the university—a four-year, inclusive residential PSE program designed for students with IDD. In preparation for a new PSE program on campus, the Gilson et al. (2020) study was developed as a quantitative case study in which an online survey was administered to faculty and students. The survey was part of a larger study, including follow-up focus groups in Gilson et al. (2019), that evaluated attitudes about inclusion on campus and the extent to which students and faculty would be receptive to a new inclusive PSE program. The researchers claimed, this study was instrumental in obtaining administrative approval of the new program (Gilson et al., 2019).

In both of the Gilson studies (Gilson et al., 2020; Gilson et al., 2019) the researchers made an attempt to develop an inclusive framework for PSE. Through their analysis, they developed a co-created, comprehensive, and shared definition of inclusion. The themes identified in both studies included defining inclusion as: (1) an all-encompassing concept, (2) the option to determine and make a choice of involvement, (3) seeking a diverse perspective, (4) ensuring
equal access to opportunity, (5) being welcomed in group membership, (6) interacting in reciprocal engagement, (7) appreciation and recognition of unique identity, (8) respecting and valuing all community members without exception, and (9) feeling a sense of belonging.

Specifically, both students and faculty in the Gilson et al. (2020) study indicated the strongest level of agreement for the following tenets of inclusion: being valued for what one brings to the interaction, access to opportunities, and being actively engaged alongside others (Gilson et al., 2020; Gilson et al., 2019).

In another quantitative case study (Gibbons et al., 2015), faculty and students were asked to participate in an online survey. The researchers wanted a better understanding of the current attitude on campus about college-level inclusion of students with IDD. Specifically, the researchers wanted to know how comfortable faculty and students felt about having students with IDD on the college campus and engaging in student and class activities (Gibbons et al., 2015). The institution was preparing for a PSE program to begin on its campus.

In developing the survey instrument, the researchers in the Gibbons et al., (2015) study consulted with other university researchers who were experts in special education. This was argued to provide evidence of content validity about inclusion. The survey included detailed descriptions of the types of students who would participate in the new program. These descriptions included definitions of intellectual disability and autism. The demographic questions asked participants if, based on the definition provided about IDD and the proposed postsecondary program, they thought that students with IDD should be granted opportunities to learn at the university.

In the Gibbons et al., (2015) study, faculty and student surveys contained shared items and items specific to the participants being surveyed. For all items, a four-point Likert-type scale
was utilized (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Faculty-specific questions explored the perceived effect on teaching resulting from integrating students with IDD into regular classes. In general, faculty completing the Gibbons et al., (2015) survey reported:

- a somewhat favorable view of modifying their teaching style to provide an equal opportunity for learning for all students, including those with IDD (64.7% agreed/strongly agreed);
- on average, somewhat believed that other university students would feel uncomfortable with having students with IDD in regular courses (45.1% agreed/strongly agreed);
- overall, somewhat believed that integrating students with IDD in their courses would disturb routine educational activities (47.1% agreed/strongly agreed); and
- in general, moderately believed that students with IDD would take more than their share of instructor time (25.5% agreed/strongly agreed).

These survey questions may suggest that the program was attempting to align inclusion practices often seen in K-12 and apply them to PSE. In addition, the survey questions focused on the perceived impact of having students with IDD and autism on campus and in courses. The questions also focused on beliefs about the academic rights of and access for students with IDD (Gibbons et al., 2015). One question in particular that was asked of faculty stated, “officials should not place students with IDD and students without IDD in the same university course” (Gibbons et al., 2015, p. 157). There is an implication that “officials” are being labeled as the expert in placing students with IDD in typical college classes.

In a phenomenological study by Thoma (2013), the researcher investigated similarities and differences between program components, procedures, activities, and experiences in nine different postsecondary programs in Eastern, Southern, and Midwestern states. While programs
had some commonalities and their scopes were relatively wide (range of program types: inclusive, hybrid, and substantially separate), these programs all had very specific missions/priorities. This resulted in a range of program components and even for those with the same designation for inclusiveness (inclusive, hybrid, or substantially separate). Two universities in particular identified themselves as inclusive programs, but their differences highlighted a range of ways that students with IDD were included on the college or university campus. For example, inclusion was not narrowly defined as inclusion in academic courses alone but having opportunities to be included in the range of campus learning, social, and recreational activities.

In the Thoma (2013) study, a variety of data collection procedures were used including semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data collection began with and interview with the project director by phone, followed by observation visits, interviews with key program staff on site and/or conducted follow-up interviews with the project director, and collection of documents for analysis (e.g., application materials, examples of student work, listings of courses and/or programs of study, DVD film, and brochures or flyers used to recruit students). Some projects shared the application submitted for the TPSID grant and one project shared results of a formal evaluation of their program that was used to guide program improvements.

One of the more profound findings from the Thoma (2013) study was the complex layers related to determining the status of the student with IDD being admitted into the program. Some university programs admitted students with IDD into a certificate program, while others admitted students into their program with a “special student” status. Others accepted students into the program without having a university student status. Instead, they were “X-program” students, which denote a marginalization of the program and its students by the university community.
“Every project director interviewed for this project described his or her struggles working with university staff to determine the status of students accepted into the program” (Thoma, 2013, p. 295). This idea of labeling students with IDD is again aligned with K-12 special education practices. In addition to perspectives about inclusion, another theme that emerged in this review included perspectives from faculty who taught students with IDD in their inclusive course.

**Faculty Experience Teaching Students with IDD in Inclusive Courses**

Faculty experience with teaching inclusive classes was discussed in six of the 11 studies in this review. In five out of the six studies, a case study methodology was used in the data collection and analysis (Burgin et al., 2017; Carey et al., 2022; Hall et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2016; McCabe et al., 2022). The sixth study was a qualitative study that included ten faculty members representing seven different colleges across the US (Taylor et al., 2021). In all six studies, faculty participants were selected from colleges and universities that had received federal funds (TPSID grant) to create or expand a higher-education program for students with IDD. This is an important component of the articles because one of the central components/tenets of a TPSID program is to support the inclusion of college students with IDD in typical college classes. According to Grigal et al. (2012), it is access to the traditional courses that remains the distinguishing feature of the inclusive movement.

The McCabe et al. (2022) and Hall et al. (2021) studies focused on the same program. That is, both studies were done at the same top-tier research intensive university that had hosted an IPSE for almost ten years. In addition, these two studies analyzed data gathered from 23 faculty who participated in four focus groups. There were seven distinct research questions in total. The McCabe et al. (2022) study focused on faculty views across three areas: their motivations for getting involved, the impact of inclusion on faculty, and the impact of inclusion
on classmates. While the Hall et al. (2021) study focused on faculty views across four areas: their roles within the classrooms that involved students with IDD (referred to as “inclusive classroom”), the roles of students within their classrooms, the challenges they experienced, and the strategies they found to be supportive. Table 1 displays a summary of themes identified for each of the research questions in the McCabe et al. (2022) study and Table 2 displays a summary of findings identified in the Hall et al. (2021) study.

Table 1

Summary of Research Questions and Findings (McCabe et al., 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and motivation</td>
<td>Desire to educate all learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colleague encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prior experience (e.g., family, professional experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other motivations (i.e., diversity, classmate request, student interest, research interest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on faculty</td>
<td>Methods of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Views of student capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Views of inclusive education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Views of campus culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on classmates</td>
<td>Raising disability awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fostering relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A way to relate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Summary of Findings (Hall et al., 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and motivation</td>
<td>Desire to educate all learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colleague encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prior experience (e.g., family, professional experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other motivations (i.e., diversity, classmate request, student interest, research interest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on faculty</td>
<td>Methods of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Views of student capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Views of inclusive education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Views of campus culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on classmates</td>
<td>Raising disability awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fostering relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A way to relate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Summary of Findings (Hall et al., 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do faculty describe their role in courses enrolling students with IDD?</td>
<td>Requiring somewhat less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Requiring somewhat more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Requiring the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did faculty describe the involvement of students with IDD?</td>
<td>More than their classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same as their classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than their classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did faculty find challenging?</td>
<td>Disability disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insufficient support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What strategies did faculty say supported the inclusion of students with IDD?</td>
<td>Program support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Universal Design for Learning (UDL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class peer supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behavioral supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodations and modifications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers in the McCabe et al. (2022) and Hall et al. (2021) studies claimed that faculty who teach and support students with IDD in their university courses have a unique vantage point from which to address the broader impact of the inclusive movement. In addition, they claimed that faculty teaching these courses were able to see first-hand the capabilities and contributions of students with IDD and that this experience challenged their preconceived ideas about what students with this label could do or what inclusion entailed (McCabe et al., 2022).

There were also commonalities shared in the Carey et al. (2022), Taylor et al. (2021), Burguin et al. (2017), and Jones et al. (2016) studies. In all four articles, the focus of each study was related to the experience of the faculty who included students with IDD in their class. In addition, all four studies interviewed faculty to solicit their perspectives on the benefits and
challenges of instructing students with IDD. The overall findings (see Table 3 for Carey et al. (2022), Table 4 for Taylor et al. (2021), Table 5 for Burguin et al. (2017), and Table 6 for Jones et al. (2016)) in these studies determined that faculty wanted more information on how to teach students with IDD. Also, findings indicated that faculty wanted more information about the capabilities of the students with IDD before the class started. Lastly, in all four studies, findings indicated that faculty were confused about the status of students with IDD. That is, whether or not the student was taking the class for a pass/fail grade, whether they were auditing the class, and if they should make modifications to their course requirements.

Table 3

Summary of Findings (Carey et al., 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits gained from including students with IDD in University courses</td>
<td>Inclusivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impressed with students and program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges experienced when including students with IDD in University courses</td>
<td>Uncertain of expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty suggestions for improving the experience</td>
<td>Providing strong pedagogical instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementing structured behavior management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking the time to get to know the students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Summary of Findings (Taylor et al., 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Benefits to students with IDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benefits to typical students and the classroom environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benefits to faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Challenges faculty by faculty related to instructing students with IDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding the status of students and faculty responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire for more student information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty perceptions of their own capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements sought by faculty to</td>
<td>Prepare faculty before they begin teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhance the experience for all</td>
<td>Provide ongoing support to faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinate with IHE to address structural barriers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Summary of Findings (Burguin et al., 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>Feelings of hesitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall experience</td>
<td>Increased student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact of auditing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blending in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive student attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness and support</td>
<td>Factors contributing to fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support from the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructor preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion for future</td>
<td>Advanced preparation support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increasing program visibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

Summary of Findings (Jones et al., 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>Personal and professional growth (academic gains, social gains, and personal gains)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insufficient skills and information (academic rigor, communication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits and challenges of postsecondary inclusion</td>
<td>Provide an orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide student information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide ongoing support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements and suggestions</td>
<td>No additional sub-themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polarizing views</td>
<td>The importance of inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questioning inclusive practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, in all four studies, findings indicated that faculty were confused about the status of students with IDD. That is, whether or not the student was taking the class for a pass/fail grade, whether they were auditing the class, and if they should make modifications to their course requirements. A possible contribution to this confusion about the status of students with IDD may be explained by how the programs created a “learning agreement,” or “learning plan,” or “modified syllabus” (Carey et al., 2022; McCabe et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2021). According to McCabe et al., (2022):

Following a student’s official enrollment, program staff develops an individualized syllabus (called a “learning agreement”). This learning agreement incorporates individualized modifications that are aligned with course topics and assignments, as well as addresses any distinctive academic and social expectations for the students. The document is reviewed by the student, the academic director of the IHE program, and the faculty member who teaches the course. (p. 73)

This idea of creating an individualized learning agreement is again aligned with K-12 special education practices. One of the surprising claims in many of the case studies in this
literature review is that some programs for students with IDD still remained substantially segregated. It is also claimed by expert opinion that best practices in IPSE is to emphasize involving students in typical courses alongside other students without similar disabilities (Grigal et al., 2012). According to McCabe et al., (2022), this practice often involved auditing one or more university courses that align with a student’s current interests or future career plans. In these “inclusive courses,” IPSE program staff typically work closely with faculty to identify support students with IDD will need to participate in a meaningful way. In addition to perspectives about inclusion, another theme that emerged in this literature review included the role and development of an IPSE program.

**The Role and Development of an IPSE Program**

The role and development of the IPSE program were discussed by faculty throughout several studies. For example, faculty found it “rewarding” to teach at a university in which a progressive IPSE program was supported (McCabe et al., 2022). Faculty also indicated that with an IPSE program and its leadership, including students with IDD can happen (McCabe et al., 2022). Students with IDD received individualized assistance from the IPSE program. The IPSE program staff in many studies were responsible for creating alternate assignments and support in the classroom (Burguin et al., 2017). In one study, because students with IDD received accommodations and modifications related to course requirements that may have been noticeable to classmates, faculty were concerned about fielding inquiries about fairness without addressing the nature of the students’ disability (Hall et al., 2021).

There was one study included in this review conducted by Plotner et al., (2015) that solicited administrator’s perspectives about students with IDD attending PSE. This quantitative study gathered survey data from 79 administrators representing 30 states across the US. The
researchers surveyed administrators of PSE programs for students with IDD in order to identify perceptions of supports and barriers encountered during program development. The participants were asked to respond to one open-ended question (in addition to Likert scale questions) regarding what they felt to be the biggest barrier to implementing the PSE program. The answers in the survey reflected a multitude of interconnected aspects that hindered the complex process of providing services, educating, networking, and sustaining the IPSE programs.

There is an implication that IPSE programs and staff are being labeled as an expert in including students with IDD in PSE. One is left to question and further interrogate the literature base. A question to consider throughout this study is: Is the foundational and conceptual knowledge-base of special education still permeating a great deal of IPSE research and programming (Bacon & Baglieri, 2022).

Several of the authors of the studies reviewed participated in multiple studies and also had connections with the institutional TPSID programs in which they were studying. The potential for researcher bias was mentioned in each of these studies. For example, McCabe, Gibbon, and Hall were all primary authors of one article. Each of these researchers also co-authored four related articles (Burguin et al., 2017; Gibbons et al., 2015; Hall et al., 2021; McCabe et al., 2022).

While published literature can and has been conducted by those who are responsible for providing services, the credibility of such work is increased when done by neutral observers as well as when it is replicated by multiple researchers in multiple settings with different participants (Thoma et al., 2013). However, this was not the case for four of the eleven articles included in this literature review, as four of the studies received funding support from the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grant.
from the Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education. The last section of this Chapter will focus on the lack of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) literature for students with IDD.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)**

If higher education institutions claim to be committed to values of diversity, inclusion, equity, and offer programs and practices that support individuals of diverse populations, they should be including those with disabilities (Association of American Colleges and Universities n.d.; Uditsky & Hughson, 2012). This concept is often referred to as Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility (DEIAA) efforts on a college campus. “Universities committed to these values strengthen individuals’ autonomy, enable the development of student agency, support their sense of belonging, and materialize efforts towards representation, opportunity, and social justice” (Halpern et al., 2022, p. 2). Students with disabilities can benefit immensely from such higher education values because they tend to be marginalized on campus, adversely affecting their learning experiences (Corby et al., 2018; Judge & Izuzquiza Gasset, 2015; Leake & Stodden, 2014). Moreover, students’ academic success, motivation, and persistence are influenced by diversity, inclusion, and equity practices, impacting retention and graduation rates (Freeman et al. 2007; Gunay, 2014; Vaccaro et al. 2015; Wooffer, 2019). Most importantly, inclusive and welcoming campus and learning environments “serve as models for the wider society” (Leake & Stodden 2014, p. 406). Lastly, more exposure to individuals with disabilities may lead to better understanding of disability and higher levels of acceptance (Hong et al., 2014). Thus, attitudes drive behavior, which, in turn, affects the individual’s knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes (Babik & Gardner, 2021).
Throughout the literature reviewed in this Chapter, not one study referred to the education of students with IDD as being, first and foremost, a matter of human rights. According to Slee et al. (2019), the discourse of inclusion in IPSE journals and research has become a platform for special educators to apply misrepresentations of inclusion and assumptions about disability. This is evident by the dominant themes in higher education and disability research often being related to how well people with disabilities are approximating ways of learning, behaving, interacting, communicating, and achieving attributed to non-disabled people (Bacon & Baglieri, 2022). In addition, “to date, the literature base on IPSE programs has not largely engaged in DSE as a conceptual framework to support the development of programs or the associated growing body of scholarship” (Bacon & Baglierei, 2022, p. 29). IPSE is not about bringing special education to higher education (Bacon & Baglierei, 2022; Slee et al., 2019). According to Slee et al. (2019), IPSE programs may consider using a DSE framework in order to create and sustain fully inclusive programming based on human rights.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

UDL conceptualizes learners as unique and diverse in their needs (Cumming et al., 2022). UDL challenges the view that students learn in the same way and highlights that education is often designed with a specific “ideal-type” student in mind (Meyer et al., 2014). This conceptualization is significant for tertiary education, as it emphasizes that variation in student needs is normal, as opposed to the exception, which is an inversion of the thinking behind the provision of accommodations for students (Singleton et al., 2019). Through providing multiple means of engagement, representation and expression in the classroom, the diverse needs of students are normalized rather than stigmatized. As a result, students with and without disability
are provided with opportunities to engage in the classroom and have their diverse needs recognized and met (Singleton et al., 2019).

**Dimensions of Belonging**

Belonging can be defined as a subjective feeling that one is an integral part of their surrounding systems, including family, friends, school, work environments, communities, cultural groups, and physical places (Hagerty et al., 1992). There is general agreement that belonging is a fundamental human need that almost all people seek to satisfy (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Leary & Kelly, 2009; Maslow, 1954). However, there is less agreement about the belonging construct itself, how belonging should be measured, and what people can do to satisfy the need for belonging (Allen, et.al., 2021). According to Carter (2021), there are ten dimensions of belonging that may have particular salience to individuals with IDD. In his work, Carter draws upon research addressing the inclusion, relationships, and belonging of individuals with IDD across school, work, congregational, and other community contexts (Carter, 2021). Within Carter’s framework, belonging is experienced when people are present, invited, welcomed, known, accepted, supported, heard, befriended, needed, and loved (Carter, 2021). Colleges committed to providing educational opportunities for students with IDD should also consider whether the services and supports they deliver are leading toward belonging (Carter, 2021).

**Summary**

IPSE programs have been operating for several decades and are quite varied across the world (Grigal et al., 2012a; McEathron et al., 2013; Neubert et al., 2001). This Chapter provided themes found in the literature related to faculty and/or administrators' perspectives about students with IDD attending these IPSE programs. A DSE lens was used as a valuable frame throughout
the analysis process. Specific themes found in the literature included: (1) perspective about inclusion, (2) faculty experience teaching students with IDD in inclusive courses, and (3) the role and development of an IPSE program. I used the knowledge gathered through this review of the literature surrounding inclusive PSE to inform the construction and the implementation of my research study, outlined in Chapter 3.
Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

With the statement of the problem and purpose of the study defined, and the relevant literature considered, the next component of this study is the methodology and the specific methods that were utilized. I begin this Chapter by discussing my positionality as it relates to the research topic, as well as my role as the researcher. Next, I explain and describe the choice made to utilize a qualitative research design. I will then discuss the history and practices of constructivist grounded theory. Finally, an explanation and description of the methods used in this study to collect and analyze data will be provided. Finally, the Chapter will conclude with a summary.

Researcher Positionality Statement

It is important to begin this Chapter with my research positionality statement because as the researcher in this study, I was involved in the co-construction of meaning with the research participants which is consistent with constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). I approach research involving students with IDD with my own prior experience as a faculty member, former Special Education teacher, and sibling to a sister with an intellectual and developmental disability. I am currently a faculty member at a community college serving students with disabilities. My work in a program that provides educational opportunities for students with IDD in higher education has contributed to experiential knowledge. I am a former Special Education teacher and engaged in work with adult students in K-12 adult transition programs for nearly a decade. This work provided insight into wrongfully made assumptions by secondary K-12 schools that students with IDD do not need to be included in postsecondary education transition planning conversations. I also grew up in a childhood as a sibling to an older sister with an intellectual and developmental disability. This experience has given me a daily encounter with
disability which in turn has influenced my belief in presuming competence in every human being.

My appearance throughout the research project had an influence on the creation of meaning throughout the analytical process. This constructivist positionality is also consistent with the Disability Studies in Education concepts that was utilized in this study. Lastly, I am positioned in the research as someone with a professional background in supporting students with IDD in higher education.

Methodological Approach and Rationale

The goal of this study was to explore the processes by which community college faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD. Given the focus on exploring the complex, varied, and individual experiences faculty and administrators may have, a qualitative approach was most appropriate (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Specifically, the study utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory broadly, and a constructivist approach to grounded theory specifically, is appropriate for this study based on the research questions posed. This section begins with a discussion of the constructivist grounded theory methodology that was utilized. Following this, the specific methods of the study are presented.

The primary research question and sub-questions for this study included:

- In what ways do community college faculty and administrators working in programs that provide educational opportunities for students with IDD understand and undertake their work?
  - In what ways, if any, do faculty and administrators' own perceptions about students with IDD inform their work?
What do faculty and administrators see as the challenges and opportunities to their work?

In what ways, if any, do faculty and administrators connect their work with campus diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts?

Overview of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is intended to explain a phenomenon of study (Birks & Mills, 2012). Over the course of a study, a grounded theorist attempts to both generate and test concepts and the relationships between them (Parry, 1998). As such, research questions appropriate for grounded theory studies should aim at explanation rather than verification or confirmation. The purpose of grounded theory is to make patterns visible and to imbue them with understanding (Charmaz, 2014).

History of Grounded Theory

Glaser and Strauss (1967) are considered the founders of grounded theory. Their work explained how theory could be generated from data inductively. The benefit, Glaser and Strauss argued, of this approach was that it allowed for theory to be generated in a specific context. During the time when Glaser and Strauss first published their work, their approach was considered controversial in that research traditions were rooted in testing pre-existing theories. They argued for the benefit of theory generation compared to theory verification such that the generation of additional theory would be beneficial in understanding the social world (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

There are grounded theory scholars who have followed and advanced the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). These scholars have presented their own summaries of the core concepts of the grounded theory methodology (e.g., Birks & Mills, 2012; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007;
Charmaz, 2014; Parry, 1998). To summarize these various descriptions, several central concepts of grounded theory include: (1) the purpose of the methodology is theory generation; (2) data is collected and analyzed simultaneously and iteratively; (3) prior hypotheses or theories should not guide the analysis; (4) categories are developed inductively and refined through the constant comparison of data and categories; and (5) relationships between categories lead, through theoretical sampling and abductive reasoning, to theory (e.g., Birks & Mills, 2012; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2014; Parry, 1998).

The history of grounded theory can be thought of as a distinct methodological genre that evolved from traditional grounded theory associated with Glaser and Strauss (1967). Constructivist Grounded Theory is a genre that was developed by Charmaz (2014). The distinction between the postpositivist foundation of Glaser and Strauss and the constructivist perspective by Charmaz will be critical to the aim of this research study, with further explanation of constructivist grounded theory below.

**Constructivist Grounded Theory**

Constructivist grounded theory was developed and explained by Charmaz (2014), who described constructivist grounded theory as symbolic interactionism that has its roots in constructivism. Constructivist grounded theory’s methodological underpinnings focus on how participants construct meaning in relation to the area of inquiry. It assumes that social reality is both multiple perspectives and constructed and that the researcher’s perspectives and experiences, as well as their interactions with the data, play a role in the development of the research. A constructivist researcher co-constructs experiences and meanings with participants. While there are commonalities across all genres of grounded theory, there are factors that distinguish differences between the approaches, including the philosophical position of the
researcher, the use of literature, and the approach to coding, analysis, and theory development. These can be seen in the method practices discussed in the next section.

**Grounded Theory Methodology and Methods**

In order to expand on the previous highlights of the central concepts of grounded theory, the following section attends to the steps of grounded theory methods and includes (1) asking grounded theory questions, (2) gathering grounded theory data, (3) conducting grounded theory coding, (4) theoretical sensitivity and memo-writing, (5) theoretical sampling and category saturation, and (6) developing theory. The visibility of the process of grounded theory is one of its strengths, as compared to other, less tangible qualitative methodologies (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

**Asking Grounded Theory Questions**

As previously mentioned, grounded theory is intended to explain a phenomenon of study (Birks & Mills, 2012), and over the course of a study, a grounded theorist attempts to both generate and test concepts and the relationships between them (Parry, 1998). As such, research questions appropriate for grounded theory studies should aim at explanation rather than verification or confirmation. As also previously mentioned, the purpose of grounded theory is to make patterns visible and to imbue them with understanding (Charmaz, 2014). The focus on processes and patterns informs grounded theory research questions. Grounded theory questions should be those that invite answers that make meaning across individual experiences but in ways that still acknowledge contextual relevancies.

**Gathering Grounded Theory Data**

As clarified by Charmaz (2014), in grounded theory, the focus on pattern development requires a substantial amount of data. The process of data collection in grounded theory is more
than a process of interviewing as a way to gather an individual account. A constructivist approach to interviewing acknowledges that the interaction implicit in the interview impacts the responses the researcher elicits. It is impossible to ask questions in a way that removes the researcher from the co-construction of responses. While the purpose of grounded theory is to identify themes and theories that emerge from the data, existing ideas that surround the topic of study still play a role in the process. Charmaz suggested that these ideas be used to guide initial interest and idea development; they can serve as points of departure for a study but should not dictate the study or serve as the endpoint for inquiry.

**Conducting Grounded Theory Coding**

Charmaz (2014) suggested that initial coding is the first venture the researcher takes to “move beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic sense of stories, statements, and observations” (p. 111). Charmaz also recommended that the initial coding of interview data occur at the line-by-line level and in an active form through the utilization of gerunds. This coding process allows the researcher to define what is happening in the data in order to make sense of what it means. It is also a way to provide the researcher with ideas to pursue with additional data collection. Initial coding is considered the first interactive interpretation of the data. The researcher selects codes based on relevance to the research question in a meaning-making process. In constructivist approaches to grounded theory, this process allows the researcher to continue to analyze and further scrutinize as additional data collection and coding are pursued.

The next step in coding is what Charmaz (2014) referred to as focused coding. According to Charmaz, focused coding is driven by the principles of iteration and comparison. The focused codes are developed so that the researcher is able to compare and contrast initial codes and begin
to identify patterns within the data. This process is carried out while data continues to be gathered. In grounded theory, coding may inform interview questions and the way the researcher gathers data depending on what patterns emerge. According to Charmaz, by looking at initial codes and the patterns revealed, focused codes can be developed in ways that advance the initial codes with the most “theoretical reach, direction, and centrality” (2014, p. 141).

**Theoretical Sensitivity and Memo-Writing**

As described by Charmaz (2014), theoretical sensitivity exemplifies the iterative nature of the grounded theory methodology. Mills and Birks (2014) discussed theoretical sensitivity as central to understanding researcher positionality, particularly in constructivist grounded theory. Charmaz (2014) also connected the relationship between theoretical sensitivity and focused codes. This relationship allows for the emergence of abstract concepts and the development of relationships in the data. Glaser (1978) asserted that theoretical sensitivity requires that grounded theory researchers be steeped in the field of study so that they can understand the context in which they are developing their theory. Mills and Birks (2014) discussed that the knowledge of the researcher and their understanding of the research topic allows them to “recognize and extract relevant elements of data” (p. 112). It is through the constant theorizing and intersecting of ideas with new data that grounded theorists are invited to look at ideas from multiple perspectives. Furthermore, grounded theorists are invited to try out concepts and rethink them as new notions emerge.

Memo-writing is a reflexive tool, designed to facilitate the researcher’s understanding of their own subjectivity on their analysis of the data (Birks et al., 2008). For example, a researcher uses memos to develop categories in a space where they repeatedly work through ideas while continuing to collect and analyze data. Memos provide the researcher with a means to conduct
further analysis, create meaning, or revise developed categories. Birks et al. (2008) noted that memos aid in the exploration of a qualitative phenomenon by initiating researcher writing and analytical momentum. Charmaz (2014) also noted that within grounded theory, memos are of particular importance because they further the constant comparison that is core to the methodology. Memo-writing provides grounded theory researchers a space to work through ideas and develop meaning within categories or category revisions while continuing to collect and analyze data.

**Theoretical Sampling and Category Saturation**

Another aspect of grounded theory that separates it from other forms of qualitative research is theoretical sampling and category saturation. Theoretical sampling provides researchers a methodical way to check and refine their ongoing analyses (Charmaz, 2014). As discussed by Urquhart et al. (2010), the purpose of theoretical sampling is to further strengthen grounded theory analyses in tandem with the constant comparison in which the researcher is engaged. Glaser and Strauss (1967) explained that theoretical sampling allows the researcher to select intentional literature and samples from the field in order to further analyze and refine their categories. Furthermore, theoretical sampling is a way to deepen analytical connections between categories.

Another way that grounded theory is distinguished from other qualitative research is what Charmaz (2008) described as the analytical shift from induction to abduction. Through the abductive process of analysis, rather than the overall inductive process of grounded theory data collection, grounded theory allows for categorical relationships to be more deeply explored and fully developed. Charmaz described abduction to provide an important path for interacting with data and emerging analysis. This involves relying on reasoning or making inferences about
empirical data. It is abductive reasoning and theoretical sampling that aids the grounded theory researcher in reaching category saturation. This allows for categorical development and is essential in moving toward the generation of themes and finally toward building theory.

**Developing Theory**

The purpose of grounded theory is to inductively generate knowledge from the data at hand (Mills et al., 2014). The grounded theory coding process integrates and synthesizes categories that are derived from coding and analysis in order to create a theory. Initial coding fractures the data, while theoretical codes “weave the fractured story back together again into an organized whole theory” (Glaser, 1998 p. 163). This allows the researcher to identify and follow clues from the analysis, fill gaps, clarify uncertainties, check hunches, and test interpretations as the study progresses (Chun et al., 2019). The generation of theory from this view produces theories that assume a position that is dependent upon the researcher. The quality of the final theory rests on the way in which these steps have been shown to intersect and connect with each other. The goal of grounded theory is to develop answers to the questions posed by the researcher and to thoroughly engage with questions and answers of how and why from a constructivist point of view.

**Applying Constructivist Grounded Theory to Faculty and Administrators' Understanding of Their Work**

There is a range of qualitative methods used to understand an individual’s interpretations of their socially constructed world. Out of this range of qualitative methods used, grounded theory is a method most often used to gain understanding of a phenomenon (Charmaz, 2014). Birks and Mills (2012) suggested that grounded theory is particularly appropriate when there is little known about the topic of study, when explanatory theory is the desired aim of the research,
or when there is a process likely to be explained by the research. In choosing a research topic with limited existing data in the literature, the most appropriate framing of this study is through a qualitative research approach, in particular, grounded theory methodology. These points serve as a guide for considering the appropriateness of grounded theory for this study. After attending to these points, consideration is given to the specific fit of constructivist grounded theory for this topic and the role of Disability Studies in Education and Integral Theory as it relates to the methodology.

As previously mentioned, there are several reasons why a constructivist grounded theory approach and standpoint would be particularly appropriate to support a study of how community college faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD in postsecondary education. To be consistent with the foundation of grounded theory, the field of Disability Studies in Education, particularly higher education, provided a valuable frame for this study. Disability Studies in Education was utilized in a way that aligns topically with the focus of the study, and methodologically, with the guidelines of grounded theory.

**New Area of Research**

As mentioned in the literature review on faculty and/or administrators’ perspectives about students with IDD attending PSE, issues of philosophical beliefs and perceptions about disability emerged as potentially an important area for additional research and consideration. As also identified in the research, attitudinal barriers play a substantial role in supporting or not supporting inclusive practices in PSE (Morina, 2017). Faculty and/or administrator’s philosophical beliefs and perceptions about disability may be related to how they define and evaluate IPSE as a broader concept. As the field continues to develop, additional research into
attitudinal barriers will provide an important foundation from which discussions of inclusion, equity, and diversity regarding intellectual and developmental disabilities in higher education may expand.

There is very little research on faculty and administrators’ philosophical beliefs and perceptions about their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD in postsecondary education. The perspectives about inclusion, experience teaching students with IDD in inclusive courses, and the role and development of an IPSE program have received considerable research attention (Burgin et al., 2017; Carey et al., 2022; Gibbons et al., 2015; Gilson et al., 2020; Gilson et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2016; McCabe et al., 2022; Plotner et al., 2015; Thoma et al., 2013; Taylor et al., 2021). However, less research has been conducted regarding the ways in which faculty and administrators understand their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD. The absence of research in this area supports the use of grounded theory.

A Desire for Explanatory Theory

Faculty and administrators are an integral component of building and embracing an inclusive campus and culture of belonging. Their philosophical beliefs and perceptions about educational opportunities for students with IDD may also be related to how they define and evaluate IPSE as a broader concept. Consequently, without this knowledge, one is left wondering what role their attitudes may play in supporting or not supporting inclusive practices. Furthermore, faculty and administrators' understanding of their work may contribute to their interpretation of IPSE and how students with IDD experience IPSE. Given the extent to which developing or evaluating inclusive campuses and/or a culture of belonging would likely rely on faculty and administrators, any such recommendations might be informed by a theory that aids in
explaining how faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD, and how they carry out their work based on these understandings. Beyond identifying what faculty and administrators do or think regarding educational opportunities for students with IDD, this study sought to contribute insight into how they think about disability, how they work with students with IDD, and how they connect their work with campus diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts. The desire to move the analysis beyond the descriptive, grounded theory appears to be a strong fit for this study.

**Study Design and Methods**

In this section, I begin by discussing the ethical considerations I took to conduct this study. I then discuss the methods I used to collect and analyze the experiences of participants in this study. I begin by describing the site and sample selection. Next, I will explain the methods used for the collection of data as well as the data analysis. Finally, I will describe the trustworthiness and credibility of this study.

**Ethical Considerations**

This study was reviewed by the university’s Institutional Review Board to ensure that all potential risks were adequately considered within the research plan. It was important to seriously consider all aspects of the study related to the ethical treatment of human research participants to be sure that the study was conducted responsibly. I completed a CITI training refresher and was fully apprised of the necessary protections for human research subjects. As I was not working with a vulnerable population for this study, it required an expedited IRB review.

As I researched the processes by which community college faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD, it was important
to develop rapport with all participants to establish a safe space which contributed to my ability to gather robust data. When meeting with faculty and administrators, I spent time discussing the ways in which data will be collected, analyzed, and conveyed in my research. It is important to be upfront not only about what I am seeking to understand but also my plan to share findings.

With years of professional experience working with other professionals who provide support to students with IDD, I demonstrated professional competence throughout the study process.

Prior to the dissemination of interview invitations, I informed all potential participants of the purpose of the study, underscoring the importance of obtaining data to better understand how the intention of providing inclusive post-secondary education experiences is for students with IDD to be given equitable and accessible opportunities for success. Ensuring the principle of beneficence, participants were informed of the possibility of risks involved with participation in the study (McMillan, 2016). It is expected that this act of transparency empowered participants to provide honest feedback and allowed me the ability to interpret results accurately in meaningful ways.

For security purposes, all personally identifiable information collected was removed and replaced with a pseudonym, and a list linking the pseudonym and identifiable information was kept separate from the research data. Research data was maintained in a secure location. Research data was stored electronically on a laptop computer in an encrypted file and was password protected. The audio recordings that can identify participants was also stored in a secure location; then transcribed and erased as soon as possible.

The primary form of reciprocity in this study was my commitment to share my findings with the participants involved in the study, and their related professional associations. As a researcher, I seek to contribute to socially constructed understandings of disability. Further, as a
community college faculty member, I have a firm commitment to creating a truly inclusive higher education environment where students with and without IDD are treated as having equal worth as members of one community. To this end, I view reciprocity as a practice in which I engaged throughout the study.

**Participant Population and Sample Selection**

The decision to select community college faculty and administrators supporting students with IDD as the sole focus of the study was determined due to the personal and professional experiences I have as a faculty member. The California Community College system is the largest public community college system in the nation, with over 100 campuses serving over two million students (CCC Chancellor’s Office, 2016). These institutions serve more students than all other systems within the state combined, and as such, allow me the opportunity for a wide population of faculty and administrators supporting students with IDD.

The specific institutional characteristics selected for this study was driven by the type of institution with which I am most familiar as a faculty member, my experience as a former Special Education teacher, and as a sibling to an older sister with an intellectual and developmental disability. Such familiarity and experience required that I be both cautious and intentional regarding the ways in which I guarded against potential interpretive bias (Charmaz, 2014). However, it also supported my ability to better understand the institutional contexts within which I sought to explore faculty and administrators' perceptions of their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD.

In order to select participants that meet the desired characteristics of the proposed sample, I used purposeful and criterion sampling (McMillan, 2016) and thereby contacted only faculty and administrators who provide instruction and or direct support to programs serving students
with IDD at their college. Using purposive sampling directs the collection and/or generations of data in order to answer the research question (McMillan, 2016). Individuals were identified through professional relationships with current program faculty and administrators serving students with IDD in community colleges. As individuals were identified, snowball sampling was also implemented as an additional step in the sampling process. I limited the inclusion criteria of participant to ensure a group of people who could speak to the research questions. The explicit criteria for participation in this study included: (1) 18 years or older; (2) currently employed in a community college of California; and (3) have at least six months of experience working with students with IDD in PSE.

The type of institution from which faculty and administrators were recruited was narrowed in several ways. A decision was made to concentrate the study around community colleges in southern California. I identified a potential list of participants for the study and crafted a recruitment email, as seen in Appendix C, to send to each, which clearly laid out the details of the study and why their participation was requested. Those who were interested in participating in the study responded to my email and I answered questions if they asked any. Upon receipt of agreement emails, I then sent a follow up email to schedule a date and time for an interview. Once the date and time was confirmed, I sent a reminder email a few days before, confirming attendance and included the consent form, as seen in Appendix D, for participants to sign and return.

Ultimately, a sample size of 17 participants was recruited. The sample size was appropriate for the study and a robust number meant more opportunity to best understand a wide array of experiences. The participants were from six different suburban Southern California Community Colleges and ranged from small, midsize, and large institutions. Table 7 shows the
study participants’ pseudonyms, demographics, role as Part-Time (PT) Faculty, Full-Time (FT) Faculty, or Administrator, and institution type. Next, the data collection process utilized in this research project will be discussed.

Table 7

Participants’ Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Years in role</th>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>PT Faculty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Large-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>PT Faculty</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Mid-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>PT Faculty</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mid-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>FT Faculty</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mid-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>PT Faculty</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Large-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>FT Faculty</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mid-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>PT Faculty</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mid-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>PT Faculty</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mid-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Small-size; urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>FT Faculty</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Small-size; urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>FT Faculty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mid-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Large-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Large-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zack</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mid-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Mid-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mid-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>FT Faculty</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Large-size; Urban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection for this study was by interviewing faculty and administrators. Each faculty or administrator participated in one interview. The interviews were semi-structured in nature, as recommended by grounded theory methodologists (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), with questions for each participant that focused on exploring the processes by which community college faculty and administrators perceive their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD in community colleges. This approach allowed for an open-
ended yet direct, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted experience for the research participants (Charmaz, 2014).

Therefore, the interview consisted of nineteen guiding questions that thoughtfully challenged participants in order to better understand how definitions of disability and inclusion inform best practices and support equal opportunities and equitable access for students with IDD in higher education. Study participants participated in one interview, which took place via Zoom and lasted approximately 60-140 minutes. The average interview length was 90 minutes. An audio recording was made of each interview with permission. Following the interviews, the audio files were initially transcribed by uploading to a cloud-based transcription program. The initial transcripts were then reviewed alongside the audio recordings, and edits were made for accuracy. Appendix E contains the guide for interview questions.

**Data Analysis**

Consistent with a constructivist grounded theory approach, as previously discussed, the analysis of data commenced and continued alongside the collection of the interview data (Charmaz, 2014). The process involved three levels of coding: initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding (Mills et al., 2014). Using a grounded theory coding process, as mentioned above, allowed me to fully immerse myself in the data as I identified common themes that emerged across participants’ stories.

In the following sections, I describe the methods used to analyze participants’ stories. I will begin by describing the transcription process. Next, I will describe the multiple rounds of coding I utilized to identify the themes that emerged from the participants’ stories.
Transcriptions and Coding

The first step upon the completion of my interviews was the transcribe the recordings and ready them for coding. I utilized Zoom and Otter, both of which translated the audio recordings into transcripts. I used both sets of transcripts and reviewed the audio recordings multiple times to create one comprehensive and updated transcript for each interview. I then uploaded each transcription into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. While the technology aided audio transcription sped up the transcription process and provided me with material to edit rather than transcribing from scratch, it still required focused attention to detail in correcting and editing the transcripts for accuracy. This reflexive process allowed me to deeply connect with the data which emerged from the interviews. Once the transcripts were updated for accuracy, the original quotes were translated into codes. I identified initial codes, focused codes, and categories and then developed themes from these codes and categories (Charmaz, 2014). Table 8 shows the three themes that were identified across participants’ stories and their corresponding categories. Table 9 shows examples of the different steps of the coding process. Next, the coding methods I used to analyze the data will be described.

Initial Coding

In line with grounded theory methods, I began my coding process with initial coding. Looking at the transcripts, I chose to conduct line-by-line coding by creating short, simple codes, which “stick closely with the data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 116). When doing initial coding, I was searching for actions in each section of the data and using gerunds (i.e., the noun form of a verb ending with “ing”) to code for the actions (Charmaz, 2014; Birks & Mills, 2015).
Focused Coding

Next, I utilized focused coding to relate the initial codes to one another and then lead to the creation of categories. Memo writing, which occurred throughout the study, was specifically employed to further this coding step. As Charmaz (2014) stated, “this type of coding condenses and sharpens what you have done because it highlights what you find to be important in your emerging analysis” (p. 138).

Categories

Once focused codes were established, I analyzed these to parse out a smaller set of categories. Following the creation of categories, theoretical sampling was utilized to test for the theoretical saturation of concepts in the analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Some researchers call this third and advanced level of categorization axial or theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2014).

Themes

I then refined the categories combined with theoretical sampling, further to create themes in a fourth round of coding (Charmaz, 2014). The relationship between these themes helped narrow down and conceptualize the overall theory related to the study. Lastly, theoretical coding was carried out to conduct a theoretical integration of the themes that emerged from the data (Mills et al., 2014).
Table 8

*Themes Across Participants’ Stories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing an Understanding of Disability</td>
<td>Personal Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influences from Societal Views of Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to Belonging in Community Colleges</td>
<td>Bias and Stigma Toward Non-credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of Disability Knowledge and Language Used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disability is Not Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitudes and Resistance to Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of an Integral Campus Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging and Inclusion: An All-Encompassing</td>
<td>Spectrum of Services and Educational Programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Integral Concept</td>
<td>Meaningful Access for Students with IDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating a Sense of Belonging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 9

**Journey of a Quote**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Quote</th>
<th>Initial Code</th>
<th>Focused Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I think because I was able to find a family (for the baby with down syndrome she gave birth to) and figuring out the system and the adoption process also made me who I am today in my current position. I feel like that experience was the biggest reason that I went into special education because I really needed a way to give back.”</td>
<td>Finding an adoption family and needing a way to give back</td>
<td>Experience leading to current position</td>
<td>Personal Experiences</td>
<td>Developing an Understanding of Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There is a difference between what a college has to do, and what the culture of the college is. Every college has to offer accommodations. The culture makes it a very exclusive experience still for students with disabilities. There are staff and faculty who are judgmental and have biases and prevent real success because they limit the capability in people with disabilities.”</td>
<td>Feeling a difference between required policies and campus culture.</td>
<td>Culture preventing success</td>
<td>Lack of an Integral Campus Culture</td>
<td>Barriers to Belonging in Community Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Students want to feel like they are not a burden. They want to feel welcome on this campus, are wanted on this campus, are part of the board of trustees, are part of committees and different clubs and groups on campus, and that it’s not something that is just seen as something that has to be accommodated but something that is valued and appreciated and celebrated and that students with disabilities belong and feel like they’re part of the campus.”</td>
<td>Describing that students want to feel welcome, wanted, valued, appreciated, celebrated without being a burden</td>
<td>Defining belonging on campus</td>
<td>Creating a Sense of Belonging</td>
<td>Belonging and Inclusion: An All-Encompassing and Integral Concept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diagrams and Concept Maps

Using the initial codes, focused codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the data, I created a series of diagrams or concept maps to visualize the interrelatedness of my data. As Bryant and Charmaz (2007) explained, diagrams can serve to assist the researcher in visualizing concepts out of the complicated mass of their data. Sometimes this serves solely as a means to aid the researcher in organizing their thoughts around their data, and sometimes the diagrams and concept maps can also assist in explaining the data to others. Charmaz (2014) asserted that constructing visual images of emergent theories is a critical component of grounded theory methods, as it allows researchers to envision the connections between data categories. As my understanding of the data developed, my diagrams and concept maps were updated to reflect my increased understanding of the relationships between the categories.

Constructing a Grounded Theory

Following the identification of the initial codes, focused codes, categories, and themes and the visualization of these components in a series of diagrams and concept maps, I then integrated these themes into a comprehensive theory answering my research questions (Charmaz, 2014). After going through several rounds of refinement, finding relationships between the themes, and theoretical sampling, the data reached theoretical saturation and was ready to be built into a cohesive theory (Birks & Mills, 2015). Birks and Mills (2015) defined theory as “an explanatory scheme comprising a set of concepts related to each other through logical patterns of connectivity” (p. 108). While one of the most challenging components of the grounded theory method was the construction of a unique and cohesive theory, it was also a valuable experience as a researcher and served as a contribution to the shared body of knowledge on community college faculty and administrators experiences in creating inclusive postsecondary educational
opportunities for students with IDD, as well as their campus diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging efforts.

**Trustworthiness and Credibility**

In this study of perceptions of providing educational opportunities for students with IDD in a community college, there are several perceived risks involved. There are regulations related to disability in which faculty and administrators may have concerns regarding the potential liability implicit in their participation. Additionally, there is a potential for the emergence of information that may suggest noncompliance with these regulations. Additionally, faculty and administrators may have concerns about the way their perceptions of their work would be presented.

The integrity of the data generated from this study was maintained through member checking. Member checking is when participants have the opportunity to review the findings of their interviews (McMillan, 2012). All participants of this study were provided with a summary of the findings in order for them to provide comments and correct factual information. Member checking also ensured that the interpretation of the data resonated with the participants’ experiences. Lastly, I kept a journal in order to reflect on my experiences, feelings, thoughts, and reactions throughout the data collection and analysis process. This provided me with an opportunity to document ideas and make connections that resonated from the individual interviews as well as across interviews with the participants of this study. Additionally, journaling also provided me with an ongoing reflection on my role as the researcher of this study. In the next section, I will provide a summary of Chapter 3.
Summary

This Chapter described the history and methods of the chosen methodology of this research study. To understand the experiences and perspectives of the participants of this study, a qualitative research design was best suited for this study. This study utilized semi-structured interviews with questions that focused on exploring participant perceptions. This approach allowed for an open-ended yet direct, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted experience for the research participants (Charmaz, 2014). Through multiple grounded theory coding strategies, participant’s voices were highlighted and acknowledged. As a faculty member, former Special Education teacher, and sibling to a sister with an intellectual and developmental disability, as well as the researcher in the study, my positionality statement addressed my connection to this research topic to bring awareness to how my experiences may have influenced the direction I took in this research project. In Chapter 4, the findings of the study are presented.
Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings

This study explored and investigated the processes by which community college faculty and administrators perceived their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD. This study revealed that faculty and administrators in community colleges had a well-defined understanding of disability, which informed the ways in which they developed educational opportunities for students with IDD and advocated for belongingness and inclusivity, despite attitudinal barriers, as a campus-wide, integral approach. In this Chapter, I present the three themes that emerged from the analysis of the data that is grounded in the experiences of faculty and administrators in community colleges. First, faculty and administrators developed a greater understanding of the intricacy of disability through their personal experiences. The faculty and administrators in this study discussed how their understanding of disability is also influenced by societal views of disability. Second, faculty and administrators questioned campus views of inclusion and were critical of ways to create a sense of belonging for students with IDD in postsecondary education. In addition, they made connections to how awareness would allow for intentional campus support related to disability in DEIA work. They also discussed how this awareness may equip the campus to address inclusion as an all-encompassing concept on their campus. Third, faculty and administrators advocated for implementing opportunities for meaningful access, using Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and fostering a sense of belonging for students with IDD as a campus wide approach and not just the responsibility of Disability Services offices.

Developing an Understanding of Disability

When asked to describe their experiences related to individuals with disabilities or how they define disability, faculty and administrators spoke about disability in ways that were often
rooted in their personal experiences. These personal experiences included having childhood interactions with individuals with disabilities and experiencing or interacting with disability in their daily lives. In general, the faculty and administrators described themselves as having either a foundational, emerging, or an extensive understanding of disability. For many of the faculty and administrators, these understandings straddled the medical and social models of disability. The medical model appeared to frame faculty and administrators’ consideration of disability when they described influences from societal views or the accommodation process. Alternately, when faculty and administrators discussed belonging, inclusion, and accessibility, they appeared to describe their views from a standpoint more rooted in a social model of disability, as will be revealed in the sections that follow.

Within this theme, two aspects of faculty and administrators’ understanding of disability appeared. Personal experiences captured the faculty and administrators' focus on their own experiences with individuals with disabilities in their role leading to a greater understanding of disability. Through these experiences, faculty and administrators described the importance of influences from societal views of disability and how that plays a role in their understanding of disability.

**Personal Experiences**

Throughout the interviews, the faculty and administrators highlighted the importance that personal experiences played in their understanding of disability and how it has expanded over time. Within the theme of developing an understanding of disability, personal experiences appeared to be particularly notable for faculty and administrators when they identified themselves with a disability or with a close family member with a disability. Nicole spoke of her
own experience of ADHD and her work being intentional about accessibility and being inclusive of all:

This is where the hyper-focus of my ADHD comes in, and I've just been devouring information when it comes to accessibility for all and just really trying my hardest and my best to just really be inclusive and make sure that everything is accessible.

Similarly, Scott explained that he found the importance of sharing that he identifies as a person with a disability for leadership throughout the disability services community. Scott also described the value of being able to show empathy for people struggling with various things:

Just saying that I identify as a person with a disability when it wouldn’t be apparent to most people, it empowers other people with disabilities to feel supported in a variety of ways…. being in positions where I can say, I have disabilities as well, is important to our community. It’s also the empathy for people struggling with various things. I mean I never read a textbook and people are shocked by that….It’s just bizarre that here’s a guy with a Ph.D. who never read a textbook, but I learned right? But I had to seek out other ways to learn and we didn’t have this many tools back in those days.

Many of the faculty and administrators expressed a deeper understanding of disability when they identified with a close family member with a disability. Scott expressed how people with disabilities have always been in their lives. He spoke about growing up with a family member who helped raise them who was a person with quadriplegia. Scott explained that as a child and growing up, he was very aware of his family members' needs and that everyone in the family helped:

And everybody in the family participated, everybody helped. And so, I was very aware of his physical limitations and his need for support. I never saw him as disabled. And that
was it. That's a naive statement from a kid, you know, you just have this person in your house, and this is who they are. And so, your family learns how to navigate life with your loved family member. And you just do what you do. And when you're a little kid, you don't question it. You don't ask why. And so, you know, it's being exposed to all that.

Julie had a different experience and talked about her childhood experience attending an inclusive elementary school and described how this experience contributed to acceptance. Julie further explained:

I actually went to an elementary school for special education, so I grew up in a school with students who had moderate to severe disabilities, and it was just normal to me. It just became normal, you know, seeing all the equipment, using an adaptive swing, and seeing students in wheelchairs or those who were doing physical therapy on-site. It was always so fun playing on that side of the playground. It was just normal to me. And then when I went to High School, and there was a large Deaf and Hard of Hearing program, that was normal, and I didn’t blink an eye at that….I think that experience just made it so easy to just be accepting.

Julie also shared a story about giving birth to a daughter born with Down Syndrome and how her experience in an inclusive elementary school had an impact on her life during that time:

When I was 19, I gave birth to a daughter and during the fourth month (of pregnancy) we found out she was going to be born with Down syndrome. And I eventually decided, you know, the best thing for her would be to find a home that, you know, could give her all the medical necessity and love that they could give a child with special needs because I was not ready for that, and I knew that. And it wasn’t a bad thing for me. I was grateful for my experience growing up (in an inclusive school) which made that situation a lot
easier. And I think because I was able to find a family, figure out how to work the system
and the adoption process and all that, also made me who I am today in my current
position. I feel like that was the biggest reason that I went into special education is
because I really needed a way to give back. And this was the way, it just felt right. It felt
like okay, this is how you're just going to give back for that gift that you were given so
long ago.

Lauren also talked about her experience with disability in her childhood and in her life
today. She grew up doing volunteer work with individuals with disabilities, had friendships with
individuals with disabilities, and went to convalescent homes for people with really severe
disabilities. She shared their experiences growing up and as a caretaker for their mother. She
described this further when she explained:

And when I was 18, my mom became disabled and it only got worse, she became injured
which disabled her. Then in the process of all of that care, we found out she actually had
a genetic disability. And it has absolutely changed the course of the rest of her life, from
age 40 her life was so drastically different. And I became her caretaker, I became her
advocate in school when she decided to go back to school. And it was a lot, it was
stressful, it was frustrating, it was emotional. And it gave me so much empathy for the
folks who have to go through all of that on a daily basis. And so, I think personally I was
kind of primed to go into working with folks with disabilities because I do genuinely
understand, from a bystander point of view, some of the barriers that they face.

Many of the faculty and administrators identified and spoke about their experiences as a
parent and having children with a disability. Monica discussed their experience as someone who
has a daughter with Autism. Monica explained that their views on disability had evolved after their daughter's Autism diagnosis:

> When I had my daughter and found out she had autism, and I was like, whoa, I feel, devastated on one hand, but then also like, really guilty for feeling devastated because she's perfect the way that she is. And so there became a real wrestling inside of me and like, I’ve got to figure out what it means to be a human. Because I think disability is just human and it's not any less. Even though I think sometimes we think it (disability) as less than because of the way the world is sort of structured in a way where if you are a certain shape or size and you fit, then it works for you.

Nicole also talked about her experience with disability as a parent to a son with autism and Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and a daughter with sensory processing disorder, anxiety, and a carrier of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. She shared a story about planning a family vacation and how that impacted her views on accessibility. In her family vacation story, she described that her son kept falling while navigating uneven surfaces and how up until that point she had never thought about accessibility. As previously mentioned, Nicole also shared how their ADHD contributed to their ability to be hyper-focused on accessibility. They described this further when they explained:

> I couldn't believe that I didn't even think about it (accessibility). And so, because of my kid’s disabilities, I think I have finally gotten to the point where I think about everyone. Whenever we are creating things, whenever we are doing an event….I think about accessibility…I really make it a point to really be intentional with actually being inclusive of all now. Because that 2020 vacation I was like how, like how did I not even think of this, right? Like how didn't this even occur to me? And so, I have been, this is
where the hyper-focus of my ADHD comes in, and I've just been devouring information when it comes to accessibility for all and just really trying my hardest and my best to just really be inclusive and make sure that everything is accessible. And this is why I'm on so many committees because I am just like, but what about XY and Z, and half of the time nobody listens to me, but you know, it's like, oh, we don't have any money. Don't you? And so yeah, that's sort of been my big mission. Ever since that vacation.

Scott, Julie, Lauren, Monica, and Nicole’s descriptions highlight how personal experiences played in faculty and administrators' understanding of disability, how it has expanded over time, and how it has informed the work they do. In addition to personal experiences, faculty and administrators described the importance of influences from societal views of disability and how that plays a role in their understanding of disability.

**Influences from Societal Views of Disability**

Participants also discussed the influences of societal views in shaping their understanding of disability. In addition, faculty and administrators questioned ideals of normality in the human experience and the implications of disability labels. Faculty and administrators were specifically asked to describe what disability means to them. To avoid a *textbook* definition, they often referenced disability as a stereotype description followed by a reflective response to what the construct of disability means. Pamela described that “when I think of disability, just like the word, my mind immediately goes to a diagnosis.” This was further expanded by Andrea’s response when she said, “I think the typical first thing that comes to mind is like a physical disability.” Several faculty and administrators had a difficult time defining disability in what appeared to be discomfort, as Laura described, “I guess it’s so weird to put into words because I feel like it might not sound politically correct.” When asked to elaborate on their views of
disability, many faculty and administrators reflected on the social construct of disability and the difficulty of defining the idea, Ashley stated:

What does disability mean? I mean, what is someone that does not have a disability mean? Does that exist? I don’t even know what normal is. Are we all masking? Too much of a philosophical answer….Disability is, it’s somebody who is experiencing the world in a different way or in a way that maybe another person doesn’t understand….and some of us, maybe, are more affected by that or less, but really, who’s to say one is right and one is wrong?

Tracy described how uncomfortable she was in using the word “disability” due to her linguistic education degrees and background. She explained that it was difficult to answer that question and that she is very careful with what she says because those words carry meaning. This was further explained as she said:

I’m just not comfortable saying that [disabled] whether it's right or wrong. Personally, I would prefer saying people with different abilities…because I believe we’re all created equal no matter what abilities we bring together and we’re all humans…if I am uncomfortable with the word people with disabilities, meaning, that we believe these people have disabilities, means that they're not able to do things. I would like to see them like we see everyone else. We're all different.

The majority of faculty and administrators referred to disability in terms of just being a form of humanity, diversity of human beings, and a difference in experiencing life. Zack stated that disability is “just different abilities, different strengths, different challenges, and different limitations.” Julie also supported this idea when she said “it’s really just an area that is different and it may cause us to have to do things in a different way then let’s say I would do them, but
they’re not bad. I actually see it as a positive because it makes you who you are.” This was also highlighted by Scott’s response: “When you think about the diversity of human beings, if everybody got what they needed, based on whatever situation they were in, there wouldn’t be a need for even the concept of disability.” This was further supported by Pamela when she said:

The more people that I meet and interact with who do identify with having a disability, they can just crack open the world into seeing it in such a different way, viewing the world in such a different way, and interacting with the world in such a different way. It [disability] can be viewed, yes, as a limitation in certain ways, but it can also just be a way that can help us see the world differently and help change the world to make it all more accessible.

There were also faculty and administrators who referred to disability in terms of the structure of environments, universal design, and that disability is considered a strength or identity for that individual. Emily described how her views on disability have evolved. She explained that a few years ago she would have described disability as “some sort of impairment that keeps a person from participating in something.” She expanded on her response and stated:

I think now I look at it as more of a kind of global UDL perspective of like, yes, it is still an impairment that is keeping somebody from participating in something. but also, maybe the person doesn't view it as an impairment. Maybe they view it as a strength. Maybe they view it as just part of who they are. So, it's almost made it more difficult for me to try to define that because it can mean such different things to every single person who has a disability.

Disability as an identity was discussed throughout the interviews. This was described by many as disability being a part of who you are and part of your identity. Andrea spoke about this
as she reflected on her experience with students with disabilities. She describes disability by stating:

I think it's more of an identity. It's not just something that happened to you, but it's part of who you are. And that's been a piece that is becoming more and more clear to me every day when I work with our students.

Faculty and administrators gained a greater understanding of disability by questioning societal views, preconceived assumptions about disability, and the dichotomy of disability labels. Several instances highlighted these concepts. For example, Pamela said that “the world that we live in right now has been created and evolved for one type of person.” Zack further supported the idea that individuals with disabilities have a hard time navigating different aspects of society “because of the way systems and structures have been designed. They haven’t been designed with that universal thought process or framework in mind.” In addition, Kelly said, “the disability part is something that we put on them because we decide that they can't do this or that.” This was further highlighted by Andrea:

The thing that makes you disabled is the environment around you….So, how can we set up our environment in a way that supports all students, regardless of what their disability might be? Because a lot of the things that make life hard for somebody that is disabled, is the environment, it’s not something within themselves.

A few faculty and administrators talked about the fact that they need a disability label in order to qualify for certain services. There appeared to be a dichotomy between labeling students for the sake of receiving services and the impact that a disability label has on an individual. Julie elaborated on the dichotomy of disability labels and said:
And for the college, we have to code them under something so their qualifying disability is going to be coded in a certain way. I understand the need for labels because it does help qualify for certain programs, but I don’t feel like anybody should be stuck with that label. Scott also shared views on the dichotomy of disability labels and questioned the purpose of defining disability if everybody got what they needed:

One of the purposes of the concept of disability is to help make people eligible for services in the broadest sense, whether it’s the college, the Regional Center, or Special Education in K-12. Disability is a concept and it’s a concept we use to provide services to people…The easy thing to talk about is just the utilitarian idea or concept of disability…and we can define disability in terms of things people can’t do…but really, what would be the purpose of defining disability if everybody got the services they need or were accommodated in whatever ways they needed to navigate life…we can talk about that as a disability or just differences in navigating life.

Another dichotomy that Laura points out is the idea that if it were not for disability labels, she would not have a job. She also explained the negative and dehumanizing connotation to disability labels:

It’s really hard to define because everyone is a person and we come with different things that might not always be acceptable to society. A lot of people don’t like using the word disability because it’s very negative and has a negative connotation and it’s limiting. If students weren’t ever, I don’t like to use the word labeled, but given the title of let’s say IDD, then I wouldn’t have a job right now if it wasn’t for that label itself. Even though that label is in some ways dehumanizing because it is putting a label on a person instead of saying that they are a person.
Overall, faculty and administrators described how their understanding of disability was developed through their personal experiences and influences from societal views. In addition to developing an understanding of disability, faculty and administrators described bias and stigma toward non-credit, disability not being included, and attitudes and resistance to inclusion and how these components play a role in barriers to belonging.

**Barriers to Belonging in Community Colleges**

A desire among faculty and administrators to address barriers to belonging emerged as they discussed opportunities for improving an inclusive campus culture. Within this theme, five elements of barriers to belonging in community colleges appeared. These included: (1) bias and stigma toward non-credit, which captured the faculty and administrators’ perspectives regarding an inherent divide in overall campus culture concerning credit versus non-credit programming and curriculum, (2) lack of disability knowledge and the language used, (3) disability not being included, (4) attitudes and resistance to inclusion, and (5) lack of an integral campus culture.

**Bias and Stigma Toward Non-credit**

Faculty and administrators described barriers to belonging involved bias and stigma toward non-credit curriculum, non-credit programming, and students who take non-credit courses. Throughout the study, the faculty and administrators used the term “non-credit” to encompass non-credit curriculum, non-credit programming, and students who take non-credit courses. Many of the faculty and administrators described non-credit as something that was not prioritized and contributed to a divide in the overall campus culture. When asked to expand on this bias and stigma toward non-credit, Tracy in a sarcastic tone said, “Well in non-credit we’re like second-class citizens.” Greg explained that the bias and stigma problem comes from a deep history of the way people look at non-credit. He said, “The word alone (non-credit) can lead
people into thinking this is the program that lacks something.” This was further illustrated when Julie spoke about her experience as a non-credit and credit faculty member:

With non-credit and credit there seems to be a divide just overall in the culture. It’s my personal opinion that I think there’s a lack of awareness of what non-credit provides and that the population is very different. I’ve had other people from the credit side tell me like “they’re really not college students.” And I was like, “well, they actually are college students. They are enrolled at the college.” So I think there’s a stigma there that needs to be broken. I don’t see this same attitude from non-credit faculty toward credit faculty.

Other faculty and administrators acknowledged animosity toward non-credit followed by expressions of hope and encouragement for improvement. Scott described that “there are plenty of people throughout the college system that look down on non-credit, but I don't think it's quite the way it used to be.” He went on to explain that in previous decades, working with non-credit was “a real kind of stepchild situation. I think some people still look at it that way.”

Additionally, many of the faculty and administrators stated experience with non-credit being treated as what Andrea described as “less important and less rigorous compared to credit.” She went on to speak about the relationship between non-credit and prejudice towards people with disabilities:

I think sometimes noncredit in general is seen as less important, and less rigorous, compared to credit. And so, there's some of that non-credit stigma. And then I would say it's amplified by our student population and prejudice towards people with disabilities….And I don't think there's a lot of like intentional outright bigotry. They're not like, I hate people with disabilities, but there's a lot of, just really, a lack of
understanding of who our student population is….And when people meet our students, their attitude changes very quickly.

In addition, many faculty and administrators stated that bias and stigma toward non-credit was related specifically to curriculum. The state Chancellor’s office has defined specific pillars or categories of non-credit that qualify for certificate recognition and enhanced funding. The pillars of non-credit with certificate recognition and enhanced funding are defined as Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP). Alice explains that in non-credit, CDCP does not apply to specific student groups which include adults with disabilities along with others. There is however a pillar for CDCP courses that qualify under the pillar of “Workforce Preparation.”

Alice further explained:

In non-credit, there is not a category of adults with disabilities. But we did make a workforce preparation program that is targeted for adults with disabilities because it is specific for competitive employment. And I just kind of keep that on the down low because it’s really not allowed by the Chancellor’s office but that’s their’ mistake.

Faculty and administrators highlighted the rigor of non-credit to be comparable to credit. This was articulated well by Greg when he stated:

If you look at the course outline of record, it is designed generically enough to help any individuals to be better prepared for the workforce…the same work is done, but it’s tailored towards some of the unique challenges that the population of students might have in the workforce…they’re still teaching to the course outline of record, but the lens is different in terms of how to teach those topics.

Similarly, Scott explained that he found inequities in reimbursement as an issue and that people needed to be talking about it:
They pay less than CDCP which is an issue and people need to be talking about it. People shouldn’t be shying away from it. It’s stupid to be offering classes in community colleges that pay less than credit. CDCP pays the credit rate. As if the cost of instruction is less for non-credit. It’s just my opinion but it is stupid to offer instruction that gets reimbursed at a lower rate.

**Lack of Disability Knowledge and Language Used**

Throughout the study, faculty and administrators highlighted the overall lack of knowledge and the language used on their campus regarding disability. Specifically, the faculty and administrators attribute lack of knowledge to perceptions, underlying assumptions that people make about disability, a lack of exposure to students with IDD, and feeling generally uncomfortable around students with IDD. In particular, Greg described the perceptions of students with IDD as being a challenge due to differences people see in their behavior or academic processing. He went on to describe, “Those things stand out to more people, whether we like it or not. That’s the reality and so I think, unfortunately, that shapes perceptions.”

In addition, many faculty and administrators spoke about the language, tone, and inflection heard by others on campus when engaged in conversations about students with IDD or their program in general. Many of the faculty and administrators noted specific pitying, infantilizing, and dehumanizing language used by well-intentioned people on campus. Emily explained:

So many of our students are always treated like ‘Oh, we have to interact differently with you’ or ‘Oh, you're, you know, somebody that needs saving or somebody that needs help,’ and it's just like, no! Like, I would hate to be treated like that.
Additionally, Kelly described instances where students at her campus who are looking for service-learning opportunities often ask to volunteer in her class. She highlighted the infantilizing language used during conversations with service-learning students. “People come into my class for service learning saying: ‘I like people with disabilities. They’re so sweet. They’re so cute.’”

Similarly, Andrea explained that she understands that the language people use is not coming from a bad place, however, it also does not capture the brilliance of students with IDD:

I think we sometimes get the response that's like, “Oh, that's so sweet. You must be so patient. That's so nice.” That sort of pitying response. And, honestly, our professors and staff in the adults with disabilities program are the most tough! They don't put up with anything. They're like, “stop leaving class every 10 seconds focused on your work,” right? Like you have to be tough and set boundaries and be clear. We get a lot of like, “Oh, that's so sweet,” which I know is not coming from a bad place, but it doesn't capture the brilliance and strength of our students.

The idea of people not coming from a bad place was also articulated by Ashley. She cautioned that despite well intentions, language used can “keep people with disabilities in a space.” Ashley further explained:

And then you have a group of people who are very nurturing and well-intended but will almost keep people with disabilities in a space…it’s like they say to people with disabilities “Oh my gosh! Good for you! This is so great! Yeah!” And then I get people saying to me all the time “Oh you must be so patient; how do you do it?”
Similarly, Rachel described her struggle with the word “disability” and how it is misunderstood by many people. Rachel also referred to the pitying response she receives when she tells people about the work she does:

I hear the word [disability], I think it's just such a misunderstood word, you know, because even when I tell people I work with people with disabilities, you know that whole empathy ickiness happens, which is just the worst when people are like, “Oh, you're such a good person.” It's like, no! That is terrible.

When elaborating on language, Rachel further explained her experience when she hears the word disability specifically with how people who don’t understand disability interpret the word:

When I hear the word disability, I feel like I want to hold my breath because I'm concerned that the people who hear that word are going to hear, ”can't do,” ”incapable,” ”unintelligent,” and make really big assumptions and put really big limitations on a human as soon as they hear that word. Which is unfortunate. I wish words did not carry such assumption to them because the word itself is not a bad word, but it's like we've assigned all this meaning or assumption to it, which is unfortunate.

Emily specifically spoke about lack of knowledge and how “someone can know something and still not understand it.” She further explained:

If you aren’t around a lot of students with disabilities or haven’t seen what our students are capable of, I think you automatically assume, or you don’t know and are uncomfortable. And then it’s like, “Oh, I don’t want to do the wrong thing.” And so, a lot of people think it’s easier to just not deal with it a lot of times.

Another component of language used involved the way faculty and administrators described how the word special appeared to suggest a negative connotation toward K-12 Special
Education. Kelly specifically spoke about how her classes are named at her college. She said: “Why do we have to call them special education classes? There’s nothing special education about my classes.” Additionally, Zack encouraged his college to change the name of the disability services department which included “special” in the name. He further suggested the negative connotation toward special education:

We’ve always been known as Special Programs and Services for Students with Disabilities, and it has such a connotation towards special education. And we’re not special education you guys, we’re a college and I don’t want it to get confused. This isn’t a watered-down education. There’s still demand, there’s still expectations and standards that you need to uphold…so we needed to get rid of that name like now, like yesterday, like 50 years ago, it just needs to be something different. And I’m starting to have those conversations with people but they’re like “No, we’re Special Programs.” And I’m like, yeah, but it has a nasty ring to it and you’re not aware because you’ve been in this bubble. But if you go talk to anybody else, it’s got like a very childish, negative, sort of like special education connotation to it which is just not cool, I’m sorry. Just call it Disability Services or Disability Support Programs and Services. So anyway, I went on a tangent there.

The next section describes disability not being included in shared governance conversations and committee work.

**Disability is Not Included**

Throughout the study, faculty and administrators described that disability is often not included in shared governance conversations and committee work. When discussing the ways in which disability is not included, the faculty and administrators attribute a lack of knowledge
about disability and accessibility to be a factor. In addition, many faculty and administrators spoke about accessibility as being an afterthought in shared governance conversations and committee work. Many of the faculty and administrators noted that both disability and accessibility were often times only brought up if they were the ones to bring it up. Lauren said, “I’m still disappointed that I’m usually the one who has to think of it first.” This was also articulated when Greg explained:

How often does accessibility come up in conversations? I would say almost never. And that's just the reality. Especially at the college wide level, almost never. It comes up when an instructor is working with SAS (Student Accessibility Services) on a particular issue with a student or accommodations. It's at that individual level but broad conversations about accessibility and DEIA issues, it doesn't come up anywhere close to as much as race ethnicity, gender, or all of the other factors. Those come up 10 trillion times more than disability.

Greg described the sentiments shared by many faculty and administrators in this study. These acknowledgments were noted specifically when asked about campus-wide diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and accessibility efforts. Andrea further explained that her college had done a lot of work towards what their campus calls DEIAS (diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and social justice). She spoke of the positive initiatives on her campus that focused on race, sex, and other marginalized groups:

And disability really hasn't been part of that conversation. Until a couple months ago, the college was like, oh, we should put an extra A at the end for accessibility. And I'm like, Okay? well, that's a nice thought. But I think a lot of these bigger conversations around equity and inclusion are that people don't even think about disability as part of that
conversation. And there have been some movement and interest in improving those things with relation to race and sex and other marginalized groups, but we really haven't talked about it with disability.

Several of the college campuses included in this study are designated Hispanic Serving Institutions (HIS). This status is defined by the US Department of Education as having at least 25% Hispanic students enrolled along with other eligibility requirements. A few faculty and administrators spoke about the intersections of identities on their campus as it relates to their college’s HSI designation. When discussing professional development opportunities on her campus, Lauren described a lack of focus on disability and accessibility:

We are a Hispanic Service Institution as many are and I definitely see most of the DEIA conversations circling around that population which, rightfully so, we should be having those conversations but not to the exclusion of other populations. And so, a lot of our professional development in the past three years has been related to racial equity, and almost exclusively so. I have seen very, very, few professional development opportunities from the college, designed by the college faculty that relates to disabilities and accessibility.

Likewise, Nicole acknowledged a lack of focus on disability and accessibility professional development at her campus:

So, we have a DEISA workgroup which stands for diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice and anti-racism. There was no mention of accessibility…they didn’t have any faculty who worked with students with disabilities on the committee so how could they have even thought about accessibility. There's a lot of work with race and gender. A lot. I mean, they do a lot. But none with accessibility. I would say the only accessibility thing
would be this training that we're going to give which is only happening because I am a part of planning.

The next section describes attitudes and resistance to inclusion as they related to barriers to belonging.

**Attitudes and Resistance to Inclusion**

Faculty and administrators described barriers to belonging in relation to attitudes and resistance to inclusion. Many of the faculty and administrators described interactions with various departments that highlight attitudes towards students with IDD, non-credit, and resistance to inclusivity on campus. Throughout the interviews, faculty and administrators appeared celebratory that students with IDD were on their campus and that their program existed. However, faculty and administrators at times questioned how intentional students with IDD were being purposefully included.

When asked about what inclusive practices her campus was implementing related to students with IDD, Lauren said, “I don’t think that they are excluded but I also don’t think they are intentionally included. In terms of inclusivity, I don’t think we have done a very good job.” Additionally, Andrea questioned the role of campus services and connected a presumable bias and stigma toward non-credit:

The DSPS office is supposed to serve the entire campus, regardless of credit or non-credit…We have heard multiple times from students coming to us that they walked in, and the person over there said, “Oh, you're noncredit we can't help you.”…And then we walk them over and say actually, the student can be there. And that happens not just at the DSPS office, but at the library. And not just to people with disabilities, but to all non-credit students. They go to the tutoring, and they're turned away, they go to the library,
and they’re turned away and it’s just “oh, we don't serve non-credit.” That's just kind of attitude and so we never send the students to any campus office by themselves. We always have a staff member, counselors, and somebody go with them to help them advocate.

Andrea’s example highlights how attitudes may be a contributing factor in resistance to inclusion which consequently becomes a barrier to belonging for students with IDD. Andrea further describes the challenges she has faced with creating a welcoming environment:

The environment isn’t set up, even in our own classroom. We didn’t have ADA tables until a couple of months ago. I had to fight for a year to get an ADA table in a classroom. Well, we didn’t even have a classroom at first, so I had to fight for that! But then I had to fight for the table. And it’s like how can you expect someone to come into class and learn and feel welcomed if they can’t get up to the table, right?

In reflecting upon interactions faculty and administrators have had with the campus as a whole, Rachel described an implied inconvenient tone heard during conversations. She explained that specific words are not being spoken of inconvenience however she questioned responses given by people in other departments on campus. Rachel further explained:

The Health Department is very busy, especially during the COVID years, but there’s been a bit of ‘we don’t have time for that right now.’ And when asking if my students can come up and do some volunteer work or if they can share resources with my students. It’s a “we don’t have time for that right now.” They’re not all words being said like “we don’t have time for those students right now.” But it does seem a little curious to me. Like, why do you not have time?
The idea of an implied inconvenience was also discussed by Zack when describing inclusion:

It’s also making sure that staff, faculty, and administrators aren’t annoyed to see people with disabilities on campus. But to actually value and welcome it. And don’t stare at people but actually converse and act like everybody’s part of society and just being a human and being okay with people being different around you and not treating people differently and just having conversations with people that have disabilities.

Additionally, Greg shared the impact that opinions, experiences, and perceptions from students in other programs on his campus can have on attitudes and bias toward non-credit:

I have had a couple of occasions where business professionals who are taking courses at our site, courses in job training, and things like that. And they have seen the adults with disabilities student population and feel as though it takes away from their experience. According to them, it creates a different setting. And so that is a big challenge because society has those opinions, right? How do I change all of society? I can’t do that. But that’s an ongoing challenge that also affects the perception of non-credit versus credit.

The attitudes and resistance to inclusion component of this theme appeared to be connected specifically with students with IDD. In addition, attitudes and resistance to inclusion appeared to be connected in general to non-credit programming. As previously mentioned, pitying, infantilizing, and dehumanizing language was demonstrated specifically towards students with IDD. Implicit in faculty and administrators’ stated beliefs of an inclusive campus culture was also a questioning of how the campus culture supported the work that they do with students with IDD specifically and non-credit programming in general. Lauren explained her frustration related to how her campus referred to programming for students with IDD as a
daycare center. She went on to describe a heated argument with a particular faculty member in which she advocated for both students with IDD and non-credit programming:

There was a full-time faculty member who was the chairperson before me. And he and I got into a really heated argument at one point because he said that our program should not be a daycare center. And I asked him what he meant by that. He said, “well, these students take these classes endlessly. Their parents just drop them off for babysitting and they take the classes over and over.” I said to him, “Noncredit is literally set up at the state level to be repeatable indefinitely. That is the role of non-credit! Our older adults do the same thing! We’ve had some of the same people in my older adult creative writing class for 15 years! I’m not teaching them shit! They know everything and can teach me at this point. But we don’t say that we are babysitting them!” I told him he was being really insensitive and discriminatory… I have heard the same term babysitting at least five or six times from faculty at this college related to this program. And every time I’ve said, “how dare you!” That is not an acceptable way to talk about a program we intentionally set up to serve this purpose.

A final component regarding attitudes and resistance to inclusion was related to not identifying students as real or regular students. This sentiment was used related both to students in non-credit and students with IDD. Monica described an encounter with the Admissions and Records office that another faculty member in her program shared. “The faculty member brought her class to the office and the staff member commented to make sure and ‘let the regular students come through first please.’” Rachel further elaborated and explained the impact and connection to other encounters she has had:
We had an experience when a staff member specifically said “those are not the real students.” Actually used those words. And it happened a while ago. It gets stuck in all of our brains. And I won’t speak for all of our faculty but for me it’s a reference point now. And it was only said once but it’s enough to wonder how many more people are thinking that these are not the “real students.” But then you start to fill in the blanks when somebody says we don’t have time right now. It’s easy to fill in the blank with because they think they are not the real students.

The next section describes operating in silos, campus operations, location, and structure, and perceptions of inclusion as contributing to a lack of an integral campus culture.

**Lack of an Integral Campus Culture**

Throughout the study, faculty and administrators connected barriers to belonging and a lack of an integral campus culture at their college. Specifically, the faculty and administrators attribute a lack of integral campus culture to factors including the campus operating in silos, having a program that is inclusive yet isolating, and the overall campus operations and structure.

**Operating in Silos**

Faculty and administrators reported that often either they were operating in silos or the campus as a whole operated in silos. Silos have been used as an analogy to describe offices or departments that function in relative isolation across college campuses – each with an area of functional expertise. This model was one that faculty and administrators most closely described as they discussed their interaction with various offices on their campuses. Many faculty and administrators described disability-related initiatives, conversations, or services on their campus that appeared to have an underlying expectation that the disability services department would take care of executing. Zack argued that students with disabilities are on the campus and that
everyone needed to get on board with accessibility, “It’s not just siloed on DSPS. I really do believe it should be an institutional responsibility and not siloed on DSPS.” This was further articulated by Greg when he described:

So, speaking of another challenge and it’s not just what we have but I think every college has and that is our silos. From an internal standpoint, Community Education is a completely different unit of the college than Continuing Education non-credit...there’s just a swirl of confusion...when I came in, those silos couldn’t have been more independent of one another...that is not unique to our college. That is something that happens at just about every community college.

Related to operating in silos, faculty and administrators described a challenge of the perceived and expected roles and responsibilities among campus staff. Rachel articulated this challenge when she said:

But we’ve all got rules and lanes we’re supposed to stay in at the college, you know. As a faculty, I have a certain lane I’m supposed to be in. As a DSPS Counselor, they aren’t supposed to reach out to students, you’re supposed to wait for them (students) to come to you.

Faculty and administrators also discussed how students with IDD oftentimes expressed a desire to further their college experience, including taking credit classes. Many faculty and administrators spoke about non-credit being a foundation or starting point for students with IDD in community college. According to the faculty and administrators, operating in silos appeared to prevent students from transitioning to credit classes. Rachel articulated this when she said, “My hope is for students to take credit classes and further their college experience. And I don’t see
how we can do that without creating a different system that helps them immerse further in the college experience.”

In addition, faculty and administrators spoke about their hope for improvements regarding operating in silos. Alice described an experimental pilot on her campus to divide credit and non-credit during the COVID-19 pandemic. She further explained that after the pilot, her campus opted not to stay divided. “We felt that we (as non-credit) would silo ourselves from our college if we went away. We all (non-credit and credit) work together in curriculum and Academic Senate and it makes a big difference when faculty are on the same projects.”

Related to operating in silos, faculty and administrators spoke with encouragement about having an inclusive program for students with IDD at their campus yet feeling isolated in their work. Rachel spoke about what inclusion means to her and how her program is working hard for more inclusion on campus. She further explained:

I think inclusion is a very fancy word and it’s another buzzword. We say the word and there’s a lot of hope and expectations and even like fantasy. I feel like our program is working hard for inclusion, but it’s isolated to our program…without the participation of the rest of the college, it’s such an uphill battle. And unfortunately, I think that maybe a lot of the college can be like, “Oh we are inclusive! Look at this program we have!” Then when you see it from the inside, it feels isolated.

Faculty and administrators appeared cautious that their programs were addressing inclusion as if it were a box to check. When discussing the program as being inclusive, Monica spoke about her concerns about the program being tokenized:

We have to be careful. I think the program is at risk of being tokenized because then you could say like, oh, we have inclusive practices, or we have an inclusive program. The
program will all of a sudden make it inclusive. It’s like, check that box. We checked the box. We’re good. We do it. We did it. We cover it. We have that program. Whereas it’s not necessarily like permeated throughout the wiring of thing.

This was further articulated by Julie when she explained why she believed her program was created:

And I know that sounds so bad but it’s really what I think. I think that the program was started because we needed to make a name for ourselves. I think it comes down to being recognized. Being recognized whether it’s from the state Chancellor’s office or…it’s just competitive. It’s a competition that’s in it, really. When it boils down to it, I mean, the commercials are going to advertise that we want our students to be the best in the workforce or we want students to be best in life or whatever. But in reality, programs spotlight a college and I think the more spotlight the college gets, the happier the Chancellor is. The happier the Chancellor is, the happier the presidents are and then the happier the districts are. And then everybody who is higher up who’s focused on the bigger picture of things, is overall happier.

**Campus Operations, Location, and Structure**

The last factor that contributed to a lack of an integral campus culture was the overall campus operations and campus structure. Faculty and administrators spoke specifically about policies, full-time faculty representation, and location on campus. Andrea described her experience in advocating for students with IDD in her program:

When it comes to the policies, practices, and big picture things, I think is where we have a long way to go….I’ve asked why we don’t do something and the answer I would get is it’s not in our policies. But it’s like, well, then let’s change the policies!
Faculty and administrators spoke about the importance of having full-time faculty representation on their campus. Several of the programs included in this study are operating without a dedicated full-time faculty. Zack said, “I need more full-timers. I need more full-time support for more consistency for our students.” Having a dedicated full-time faculty appeared to have a relationship with the bias and stigma towards non-credit. Alice explained that in her program, she used to have a full-time faculty. She said:

During the pandemic, my full-time faculty took another position that was in person…they thought we’d be able to hire someone else but that’s not how it works….I will never be able to get that position back….I can’t compete with credit. They [credit] get to decide. Lauren also spoke about the institutional support for a full-time position and how that may be connected to support for the program:

It would be great if we had a full-time faculty member dedicated to this program but that just hasn’t been the case. I think institutionally, and I think this is the same at most community colleges, they’re just seen as courses that benefit the community. They’re cool to have. They’re something we should have. But I do not think that institutionally there’s any necessary desire or pressure to fill a full-time position.

In addition to policies and full-time faculty representation, faculty and administrators spoke about location on their campus as a contributing factor to a lack of an integral campus culture. Monica said, “I want the program location to be more central and not off to the side.” Being more central on campus was also articulated by Rachel:

I think they should be put as a priority on building location, and it should be in the main campus. I think they should choose an accessible building and it should be very integrated into the main part of the campus and the quad. I think that would help with
inclusion and to help with accessibility to be able to be dropped off at the main bus stop and then have a building available where all the interaction and engagement is happening which is always in the quad.

Faculty and administrators highlighted the importance of transportation related to campus location. Laura expressed that at her campus, “We have a lot of families who are concerned about transportation.” Challenges related to transportation and campus location were further articulated by Alice:

A lot of it is transportation. We are not located in the easiest place to get to. We’re like on top of a hill so there’s not a lot of bus routes and you have to think of all of these things when you’re working with adults with disabilities. Many of them don’t drive or they have to take an Uber or the bus routes. And you know it’s a long walk from getting to where the bus drops off and our classes are on the opposite side of campus.

Perceptions of Inclusion

When asked to elaborate on her experience with inclusion, Lauren explained the challenge is comparing what a college campus is required by law to do versus addressing the lack of an integral campus culture:

I think from what I've heard, what I've read, what I've seen, and what I've experienced is that there is a difference between what a college has to do, and what the culture of the college is. Every college has to offer accommodations. Every college has to have ramps, every college has to offer extra testing time, all of that stuff. Right? I do think that the culture makes it a very exclusive experience still for students with disabilities, because there are still so many staff and faculty who are judgmental and have biases and prevent real success because they limit the capability that they see in people with disabilities.
They have this presumption of incapability, or this presumption that you are inconveniencing me, or I have to go do extra work for you, and I'm doing you a favor. And that is unfair, on every level, to be nice. That [unfair] is the nice word for it. So, I think it's a challenge. That's not to say that every faculty and staff member is like that, but I think that it is still very challenging. It's 2023. And I can say from when my mom went to school, you know, 15 years ago, genuinely there are night and day differences. I do see that. But does that mean that it is easy for someone with a disability to go to college. And in 2023? I don't think we've reached that point at all. I think we have a lot of a lot of room and so much of that goes back to culture.

In addition to barriers to belonging, faculty and administrators described providing a spectrum of services and educational programming, supporting meaningful access for students with IDD, implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and creating a sense of belonging and how these components play a role in belonginess and inclusivity as an all-encompassing and integral concept.

**Belonging and Inclusion: An All-Encompassing and Integral Concept**

The faculty and administrators in this study worked at community colleges that provided educational opportunities for students with IDD. Within this institutional context, the faculty and administrators frequently referenced a theme of belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing and integral concept. Within this theme, four elements of belonging and inclusion as all-encompassing concepts appeared. The elements of a spectrum of services and educational programming and meaningful access for students with IDD captured the faculty and administrators' perspectives regarding the community college system as a place where a continuum of opportunities exists. Implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and
inclusive practices, addressed the ways faculty and administrators spoke about best practices for all students. Lastly, creating a sense of belonging emerged as an approach to building a campus culture where everybody, regardless of their identity, feels welcomed, respected, and valued.

When faculty and administrators spoke about inclusion and students with IDD, it appeared to be difficult for them to explain. The concepts of inclusion and belonging were often explained by faculty and administrators in ways that described creating an environment where all felt respected, supported, and a feeling of being accepted, valued, and connected to the college. Emily articulated this sentiment well when she elaborated on her perspectives about what inclusion meant:

I think that idea of inclusion is taking a student with an intellectual disability and just plop them into a general education class and call that inclusion. And I think for me what I've heard from our students is that they want to feel like they are not a burden. Like when a teacher gets the accommodation letter, it's not “I'm glad you're in my class, but now I have to do all these things.” But more a sense of students with disabilities are welcome on this campus, are wanted on this campus, are part of the board of trustees, are part of committees and different clubs and groups on campus, and that it's not something that is just seen as something that has to be accommodated but something that is valued and appreciated and celebrated and that there's a place where students with disabilities belong and feel like they're part of the campus, not just being put in something.

The next section describes faculty and administrators views on how providing a spectrum of services and educational programming has a role in belonginess and inclusivity as an all-encompassing and integral concept.
Spectrum of Services and Educational Programming

Throughout the study, faculty and administrators highlighted that a community college district is here to provide a spectrum of services and educational programming for the community. When discussing ways in which community colleges operate, faculty and administrators attribute offering a spectrum of services and educational programming to be a factor of belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing integral campus culture. In addition, many faculty and administrators spoke about non-credit programming and support from campus administrators, faculty, staff, and the community as foundational in the pathway to postsecondary education for students with IDD. Many of the faculty and administrators noted that a community college is intended to be an institution that serves the community and therefore should respond to the needs of the community. Scott specifically spoke about inclusion as “anything an institution can do to maximize the opportunity for anybody that wants to participate in whatever that organization has to offer.” When further explaining, Scott said:

Is the ethically right thing to do is force everybody into an inclusive situation, or to offer people the widest range of opportunities so students can decide for themselves what’s the best track for them? That’s a continuum of instructional programming that provides opportunities for people to be included and being included in the educational assistance [non-credit] courses lays the foundation.

The element of providing a spectrum of services and educational programming as a factor in belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing integral concept was further articulated by Alice as she explained:

When I think of inclusion, it means that we have a starting space for our students with disabilities. It also means giving them the classes that they need…..you’ve got to meet
the students where they are. If we are the starting point at a community college for all students, to be inclusive of our adults with disabilities population, we have to have courses where they can succeed and gain skills. Inclusion is having a broader spectrum of wraparound services and courses that will allow students to build up their skills.

Several faculty and administrators spoke about non-credit specifically as an example of how college campuses can offer a spectrum of services and educational programming. Alice said, “Everyone is allowed to enter a non-credit class. You can’t deny someone because you can’t pass the class or this, that, or the other. That is non-credit. It’s open to everyone.” This was also articulated by Scott:

I think there are a lot of other people who just recognize that a community college district is here to serve your community and noncredit education, whether it's standalone or part of a college is a way of reaching your broader community, responding to their needs, and giving them what they need. So, a non-credit institution can be a really great asset to the credit college for a lot of reasons. It’s a contrast between old thinking and new thinking. Old thinking is higher education is for those who can, and if you can't it's not for you. I believe that community colleges are there for everybody in the community and provide various levels of access, meeting people where they're at and where they enter the system. So, if a student is not ready to enter the credit side, there are plenty of pathways through non-credit that can lead to a transition to credit and four-year institutions and beyond. So, there's just a lot that a lot of noncredit really offers the community that wouldn't be offered through credit but there are a lot of biases against noncredit.
Support from campus administration, faculty, staff, and the community was another component that faculty and administrators spoke about throughout the interview. The support mentioned was related to collaborating with the campus as a whole. Rachel said:

I do think we have a college president who is aware and kind of keeps social issues of diversity and inclusion on his priority. And then we also have an Academic Senate President right now who is very aware and engaged with specifically making a place for students with disabilities on campus. So, I think those are great things we have in our corner. We have some strong people in our administration who have awareness and want to do better. So, I think those are benefits to us.

Similar sentiments were shared by Alice about the administration at her campus:

We have a lot of support from our administration. Our President, our Vice President, our Chancellor, I think they have seen the value of helping students with disabilities get an education and take college-level classes which you know improves independent living skills.

Additionally, faculty and administrators spoke about support from campus administration, faculty, staff, and the community as a component of belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing concept. Kelly described her perception of support meant that inclusion is “who we are, and I don’t have to explain it.” Scott articulated this further when he spoke about the support he receives from the president, vice president, and board of trustees at his college:

We have a president and a vice president who are not questioning why we’re doing what we’re doing. This is what we do. And so, people, make up an institution. We’re making all these things happen because it’s the philosophy of the organization and I think that’s
such a critical component to play at any college institution to make anything like this happen.

The next section describes faculty and administrators views on how providing meaningful access for students with IDD had a role in belonginess and inclusivity as an all-encompassing and integral concept.

**Meaningful Access for Students with IDD**

When considering meaningful access for students with IDD, faculty and administrators often framed the discussion in terms of regulations and policies that govern access and accessibility. Specifically, they mentioned the rules, policies, and regulations outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title V, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Emily explained, “we have a lot of programs and services that go way beyond ADA and 504 requirements that help students feel like they are more included and belong on campus.”

The faculty and administrators expanded their descriptions of meaningful access for students with IDD to include access to postsecondary education, access to courses that meet student needs, access to campus life opportunities, and access to community integration. Monica spoke about access to postsecondary education in regards to students with IDD in community college, “they get to achieve something in a system that has historically been pretty hard for them to achieve in.” Julie further articulated access to postsecondary education when she spoke about non-credit and community colleges, “It’s open to all. We can’t tell anybody they can’t take a class. That’s just how the community college is made.” Kelly described her appreciation for the community college system that students don’t have to verify their disability, “I don’t have to get a case file. I don’t have to have a diagnosis…they [students] just walk in my door.”
Overwhelmingly, the faculty and administrators discussed the value of providing a spectrum of services and educational programming, specifically courses that meet the needs of students with IDD. Many faculty and administrators refer to their program development and courses offered with students with IDD in mind. Alice said, “These courses are really geared for students with cognitive disabilities who can and want and need to enter the workforce at a competitive wage. That is how we set up the program.” Zack articulated this factor as well when describing ways that community colleges can develop inclusive postsecondary education programs:

And for students with IDD, it’s designing programs and classes that meet their needs, where they’re at…. they (the courses) are still college classes with a certain rigor and expectation. But it's tailored in a specific way that addresses their goals and also their educational limitations and helps them build up their strengths at the same time. So, they may be non-credit classes that you need to develop. And that's an example of an inclusive post-secondary education program. If you develop a variety of different non-credit classes or even credit classes for students with disabilities, you're helping them live that college experience. If you make your environment welcoming, you say we want you here, making it visible that they're part of the experience that's inclusive. Also, having representation of students with disabilities on the different committees.

When describing the importance of non-credit education, Greg highlighted that the “traditional model of education does not have the capacity for students with varied abilities.” He elaborated more specifically about offering non-credit courses:

I think part of the answer to your question is that we have to be inventive about opportunities where individuals with varied abilities have some connection point between
those individuals and opportunities whether that opportunity means employment, or whether that opportunity just means skilling up on life and being able to live more independently…that's a big part of why continuing education is important because the traditional model of education does not suit or have capacity for students with varied abilities…but in non-credit, there’s a bit more fluidity and flexibility in terms of how we respond in our student populations…it covers a broader definition of success.

The faculty and administrators also spoke about students with IDD having access to campus life opportunities, specifically when discussing belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing integral concept. This was articulated by Pamela along with many other faculty and administrators with a similar view, as she described what she perceived what an inclusive campus culture looked like:

Inclusion means representation and students having access to different classes or programs and opportunities. To be involved in different organizations or classes on campus. I also just think of, and I don't know if this is right, but I also think of integration like having students with disabilities take classes that are not necessarily written or designed for students with disabilities and vice versa. Like, students without disabilities taking classes together with students with disabilities. I also think like having students with intellectual developmental disabilities involved in decision-making on campus, involved in student government, and involved in the planning of events. And just having their voice included, having their voice heard and involved. Because it's such an important voice to have and that historically has not been included.
Lastly, the faculty and administrators spoke about access to community integration as a factor in belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing integral concept. Zack discussed ways that students with IDD experience community integration on his campus:

And they’re learning something. They’re learning skills and doing something worthwhile and meaningful. Every single day it’s an aspect of community integration for them. It’s an aspect of socialization. It becomes an aspect of who they are.

Scott further articulated how community integration contributed to an inclusive experience for students with IDD in community college:

It is a first step into higher education. Our classes are integrated on college campuses and students have tons of opportunities to participate in inclusive experiences on college campuses with other students who don’t have disabilities. So, they are inclusive experiences. But it’s also true that the classes are mostly contained as far as going to classes with other students with disabilities. But there’s a tremendous amount of benefit there. A lot of these students know each other from the past so they’re going to school with friends. They have a lot of social opportunities as a college student and a lot of them feel more comfortable starting there….Maybe it is just better to have a range of options for people so they can enter the community college district wherever they’re at. These are classes that provide a base for skill development, for people to be included in the community, period.

The next section describes faculty and administrators views on how implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and inclusive practices had a role in belonginess and inclusivity as an all-encompassing and integral concept.
Implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Inclusive Practices

Throughout the study, faculty and administrators spoke about implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and inclusive practices as a component of belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing integral concept. UDL has been used to describe an approach to instructional design and the environment in which the campus is designed to be welcoming and usable by a variety of people. Faculty and administrators spoke about UDL as a model that they perceived to be successful when imbedded in the campus culture. Throughout the interviews, faculty and administrators described their perception of inclusion as most aligned with the approach or model of UDL. Ashley described the way she defines inclusion as a practice of UDL: “I think it’s just more practice of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). It’s just built in. It isn’t something where you have to really advocate for said support. That, to me, is what I think inclusion really is.”

Throughout the interviews, faculty and administrators spoke about a decrease in using accommodations when instruction and the environment are designed using UDL principles. This was articulated by Andrea when she explained: “Our professors use universal design and they’re very flexible and they teach their classes in a way that all students can participate. That’s our expectation for our professors and so we don’t use the DSPS office.”

When discussing UDL and inclusive practices, Scott spoke about his educational experience and using accommodations. He highlighted the challenges of perceived advantages when using an accommodation, and if we did a better job with UDL, there would not be a need for accommodations:

You know when we talk about Universal Design for Learning, and I still come across people that say they don't want to implement an accommodation because they think it
isn't a fair advantage, or, if a person doesn't know how to do this, they're not going to be successful. So, my own experience makes it very easy for me to be compassionate towards people that learn in a variety of ways and need accommodations. If we just did a better job with Universal Design for Learning, then people wouldn't have to ask [for an accommodation], they would just get what they needed.

Many faculty and administrators spoke about implementing UDL and inclusive practices as a good approach for everyone, regardless of background or ability. Scott highlighted that “disability crosses all ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, everything. I always tell people that when I’m talking about best practices for students with disabilities, I am really talking about best practices that are good for anybody.” In addition, many faculty and administrators alluded to how implementing UDL and inclusive practices was a good approach regardless if they are teaching students with disabilities. Rachel described her thought process at the beginning of a semester as she was preparing to teach a class:

I think about, okay, I need to teach my students with disabilities this semester. I need to get them to engage in these learning outcomes. I am thinking more about; how can I introduce as many different angles to this topic as possible?....I don’t know enough about UDL to even use the word but I think it’s more intuitively it’s like UDL. Like let’s come from all the angles, let’s do as many different approaches as possible to learn this idea.

The next section describes faculty and administrators views on how fostering a sense of belonging for students with IDD had a role in belonginess and inclusivity as an all-encompassing and integral concept.
Creating a Sense of Belonging

When faculty and administrators spoke about inclusion and students with IDD, it appeared to be difficult for them to explain. The concepts of inclusion and belonging were often explained by faculty and administrators in ways that described creating an environment where all felt respected, supported, and a feeling of being accepted, valued, and connected to the college. Emily articulated this sentiment well when she elaborated on her perspectives about what inclusion meant:

I think that idea of inclusion is taking a student with an intellectual disability and just plop them into a general education class and call that inclusion. And I think for me what I've heard from our students is that they want to feel like they are not a burden. Like when a teacher gets the accommodation letter, it's not “I'm glad you're in my class, but now I have to do all these things.” But more a sense of students with disabilities are welcome on this campus, are wanted on this campus, are part of the board of trustees, are part of committees and different clubs and groups on campus, and that it's not something that is just seen as something that has to be accommodated but something that is valued and appreciated and celebrated and that there's a place where students with disabilities belong and feel like they're part of the campus, not just being put in something.

When considering the approach of creating a sense of belonging, faculty and administrators spoke about building a campus culture where everybody, regardless of their identity, feels welcomed, respected, and valued. This sentiment was shared by many faculty and administrators when describing belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing concept. Andrea explained that students with disabilities want to feel welcomed and are a part of everything on campus:
Creating a space where everybody, regardless of their identity, feels welcomed, respected and really, valued, I guess, is the word I'm looking for. So, it's not just you can come in, it's I value your insight, your perspective and it’s valuing people for their different identities and perspectives.

Many faculty and administrators spoke about collaborations on campus as examples of creating a sense of belonging for students with IDD. For example, Rachel highlighted her experience with the Career Resource Center on her campus and said, “they have been really receptive and accommodating and very welcoming and say, ‘please bring your class back,’ so that’s been a nice relationship to build.” As another example, Lauren described a disability themed lessons she taught in her High School Equivalency class and asked the part-time faculty teaching a class for students with IDD if they wanted to collaborate. She further explained:

I started doing that from my first or second semester. And it just was something that I felt was a natural thing we should be doing, they [students with IDD] are also a part of our campus. They [students with IDD] are a part of our college community, and they’re so excited to be there. Why wouldn’t we engage with them more?

Lauren elaborated as she explained her perspective on inclusion. She said that inclusion is “such a loaded term.” When pressed to further explain, she spoke about how inclusion is typically defined as inviting everyone. Lauren said:

I think inclusion should be an intentional process by which people want and they value a variety of people in their circle, and activities. I think inclusion is typically defined as we invited everybody. I don’t agree with that one. I don’t think that is inclusion, but I think it is how inclusion is viewed. But I think true inclusion is when you invite everybody, and
you value everybody who shows up and those people feel like they should be there. I think that’s inclusion.

Faculty and administrators spoke about how creating a sense of belonging also included what actions were carried out on campus. As Tracy said, “we can talk about inclusion and not leaving anyone feeling excluded and be on committees but it’s the actual work and what we do that counts.” In addition, actions that involved including student voices was frequently discussed by faculty and administrators. Andrea articulated this well when she said:

I would say to ask the students what they need. I mean I love the nothing about us without us mantra and I really believe in that. I think we need to ask the students and then do what they say. It’s not enough to just listen. We need to just ask our students what they need because they can tell us and then we need to actually do what they say. Because so often you have these forums and ask for feedback and then nothing happens.

Andrea further described a survey that was given to students with disabilities at her campus. The results were shared as part of a disability ally training. The survey included questions about what the experience has been like for the student. Andrea described that the students said, “I just want them to treat me like a person, I just want them to talk normally to me, I want them to not be afraid to make eye contact with me.’ These were very reasonable requests.” Scott also spoke about the importance of including student voices:

Is anybody talking to our students about what they want? If you ask them, they say that they feel a sense of community going to class together, they feel safer together, they want to be with their friends. And they don’t necessarily feel better in an inclusive class. Some do but not everybody. Inclusion is really important but taking away people’s options is not necessarily the answer. It’s providing a range of options and having the student
choose when it’s right for them to take the next step and then provide the support so they can be successful.

Lastly, faculty and administrators spoke about building community and having an inviting campus to be a factor in creating a sense of belonging. Throughout the interviews, faculty and administrators described ways students with IDD are motivated to be on campus. Monica explained a survey of her students where she asked if they felt accepted and they responded with, “It was a resounding ‘Yeah! I feel so great. I feel like I found my people. I feel like I’m here. I feel like everyone has been so kind. I really love this program. Every class I’ve taken in the program has been really good!”

Kelly spoke with enthusiasm in her voice as she described the students in her class:

Everyone is 100% present…they may struggle with just being themselves. But even then, they want to be there…my students are learners and that’s the lens I look at everything…they want to learn. They want to be a part of something. I know my students are different but there’s something for everyone in my class. They want to be accepted for who they are, how they are, how they are different, and how they work together. They learn from each other, and they grow because of that.

This camaraderie was especially clear during the pandemic. Ashley described what it was like when her campus shifted to online instruction during the pandemic, stating, “These are students that are like, yeah, you can throw a pandemic at me and I’m gonna show up to class!”

Scott further described building community and having an inviting campus to be a factor in creating a sense of belonging:

Our students are such fun students to work with. I mean you walk into one of our classes and no matter who you are, you’re a superstar to our students. It’s just such an amazing
dynamic. You can walk into one of those classes and just feel the love coming from your students, and then the fact that our students have in many ways lower academic skills, but in other ways, have better school skills than a lot of college students. They want to be there in class. They want to ask questions. They want to answer questions. They want to participate. They want to be there. That’s not as characteristic of your common everyday credit college students. I think that’s just a wonderful thing about our students. It’s just amazing.

**Summary**

This chapter presented the experiences of 17 faculty and administrators. Their stories revealed that they had a well-defined understanding of disability, which informed the ways in which they developed educational opportunities for students with IDD and advocated for belongingness and inclusivity, despite attitudinal barriers, as a campus-wide, integral approach. Additionally, their stories highlighted that their own personal experiences with individuals with disabilities, contributed to a greater understanding of disability. Through these experiences, faculty and administrators reflected on influences from societal views of disability and how that played a role in their understanding of disability. Additionally, faculty and administrators indicated that there is an overall lack of knowledge and dehumanizing language used on their campus regarding disability. Specifically, the faculty and administrators shared that they attribute lack of knowledge to perceptions, underlying assumptions that people make about disability, a lack of exposure to students with IDD, and feeling generally uncomfortable around students with IDD. Common themes were identified across the participants’ stories. However, to honor and center their unique experiences, their stories were presented in this Chapter. Chapter 5 discusses how the participants’ stories address the research questions of this study, connect to the
theoretical frameworks of this study and current research, and describe implications for practice, limitations, and areas for future research.
Chapter 5: Discussion

This study revealed that faculty and administrators in community colleges had a well-defined understanding of disability, which informed the ways in which they developed educational opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and advocated for belongingness and inclusivity, despite attitudinal barriers, as a campus-wide, integral approach. This Chapter explores the value and importance of the findings for this study and what they mean for faculty, administrators, and researchers aspiring to create inclusive postsecondary education opportunities for students with IDD. In this Chapter, I discuss the findings, as presented in Chapter 4, and connect them to the theoretical frameworks of this study and the relevant literature described in Chapter 2. I then discuss the implications and applications of the findings. Finally, I outline the study’s limitations, make recommendations for future research, and offer some concluding and final thoughts.

The following section begins with an interpretation of the findings using Integral Theory (Wilber, 2001) and Integral Perspective of Peace Leadership (IPPL) (McIntyre Miller, 2016) as models to illustrate connections found throughout the study. In the next section, I will discuss faculty and administrators understanding of disability, including personal experiences and influences from society. Moving into their role providing educational opportunities for students with IDD, the findings explore what faculty and administrators perceive as barriers to belonging in community colleges including bias and stigma towards non-credit, lack of disability knowledge, language used, disability not being included, attitudes and resistance to inclusion, and lack of an integral campus culture. The next area of the findings reveals how faculty and administrators advocate for belongingness and inclusivity as an all-encompassing integral concept including offering a spectrum of services and educational programming, providing
meaningful access for students with IDD, implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and inclusive practices, and creating a sense of belonging. These findings will be discussed in the following sections as they relate to the research questions of this study, the theoretical framework of this study, and relevant research.

**Interpretation of Findings**

The findings of this study are discussed using Integral Theory (Wilber, 2001) and Integral Perspective of Peace Leadership (IPPL) (McIntyre Miller, 2016) as models to illustrate the connections between faculty and administrators as individuals, the practices they engage in, the community space they work in, and the larger systems found in community colleges. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Integral Theory describes an interconnected and evolving world in terms of not only matter and life but also culture and consciousness (Wilber, 2001). Designed as a four-quadrant model, with the notion of each quadrant working together to form a whole, the model aims to define the four areas of functioning to reach goals and further our capacity as humans (Wilber, 2001). The IPPL is a theoretical framework based on Ken Wilber’s (2001) All Lines, All Quadrants (AQAL) model of Integral Theory (Wilber, 2005). This theory is comprehensive and includes numerous components, concepts, and ideas.

As a reminder, Integral Theory is a four-quadrant model that focuses on the interior experiences as defined within the self or the inner work of ourselves (Top left “I”); the individual, exterior experiences such as the knowledge, behaviors, practices, and skills that it takes to engage in this work (Top right “IT”); the collective, interior experiences such as the spaces where we exist in community and we build in groups and social spaces (Bottom left “WE”); and then the collective exterior experiences such as the larger system, structures, and
environmental pieces at play (Bottom right “ITS) (Wilber, 2001; Wilber, 2005; McIntyre Miller & Green, 2015).

Building on Integral Theory and IPPL, the findings in this study and literature on inclusive postsecondary education can be plotted into these four quadrants; however, they are not truly separate. Findings that may be placed in one quadrant likely do not exist in only one space. The findings in this study suggest that when Inclusive Postsecondary Education is envisioned, faculty and administrators think of it as nested components that overlap. As with IPPL, the quadrants, as described here are also interwoven with each as a nestled part of the whole, and all must be present for Inclusive Postsecondary Education to occur. The quadrant labels for an Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IF-IPSE) have been adapted from Wilber (2001) and McIntyre Miller (2016). These updated labels will be used for the remainder of this Chapter.

The I quadrant, that of the Belongingness and Inclusivity Mindset or the readiness to engage in IPSE work, involves internal understanding and perceptions of disability and inclusion. With Belongingness and Inclusivity Mindset, the focus is on the internal views and perceptions of disability and what faculty and administrators need to do to prepare themselves for IPSE work.

The IT quadrant, that of Disability Knowledge, or the behaviors and practices of IPSE, involves the use of accessibility in practices, providing a spectrum of services and educational programming, and creating meaningful access for students with IDD. With Disability Knowledge, the focus is on understanding and practicing the accessible approaches that make inclusive postsecondary education possible.
The WE quadrant, that of Campus Communities, or the space of working together to build relationships and for collective action toward IPSE, involves implementing UDL and fostering a sense of belonging for all students. With Campus Communities, this is the work that involves bringing like-minded faculty and administrators and those who might think differently than themselves together and how we can build capacity in those spaces.

The ITS quadrant, or that of the larger Postsecondary Education Environment working toward structural and systemic change, involves understanding larger Disability Studies in Education (DSE) movements and creating a culture of accessibility, belongingness, and inclusivity. With Postsecondary Education Environment, this is the overarching thinking about what it is like to challenge systems and structures that exist in postsecondary education, and how we can push for equitable and socially just policies, practices, and procedures.

This work of challenging systems can be accomplished by using the tenants of Disability Studies in Education as a framework when developing policies and taking action. This framework includes (1) contextualizing disability within political and social spheres; (2) privileging the interest, agendas, and voices of people labeled with disabilities; (3) promoting social justice, equitable and inclusive educational opportunities and full and meaningful access to all aspects of society for people labeled with disability; and (4) assuming competence and rejects deficit models of disability (Connor et al., 2008). The idea is that in order to bring about Inclusive Postsecondary Education, we need to deconstruct much of our existing systems and structures and think about ways we can build new systems and structures that work for all students, as opposed to just those privileged few. Therefore, the idea of an Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education is the nexus of all those pieces working together.
Figure 2

Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IF-IPSE)

Note. This concept map illustrates the connections between faculty and administrators as individuals (Belongingness and Inclusivity Mindset), the practices they engage in (Disability Knowledge), the community space they work in (Campus Community), and the larger systems found in community colleges (Postsecondary Education Environment). This image was adapted with permission from “A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality,” by K. Wilber, 2001, Shambhala Publications, and “Integral Peace Leadership: Challenging Violence and Aggression. Creating Positive, Just Change,” by W. McIntyre Miller, (https://www.whitneymcintyremiller.com/integral-peace-leadership) Copyright 2023 by Whitney McIntyre Miller.
An Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IF-IPSE)

As previously mentioned, I adapted Integral Theory (Wilber, 2001) and Integral Perspective of Peace Leadership (IPPL) (McIntyre Miller, 2016) to develop an Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IF-IPSE). I define IF-IPSE as a campus-wide, intentional approach of individual and collective action that challenges ableism, advocates for belongingness and inclusivity, and creates educational opportunities for students with IDD. The following sections will utilize this framework to illustrate the connections between faculty and administrators as individuals (Belongingness and Inclusivity Mindset), the practices they engage in (Disability Knowledge), the community space they work in (Campus Community), and the larger systems found in community colleges (Postsecondary Education Environment). Although the additional interconnected components of the IF-PSE (e.g., Campus Community and Disability Knowledge or Belongingness/Inclusivity Mindset and Postsecondary Education Environment) are instrumental to the framework are outside the scope of this study. The section that follows explains the internal understanding and perceptions of disability and inclusion that faculty and administrators described in the study and connects to the Belongingness and Inclusivity (I) quadrant.

**Belongingness and Inclusivity Mindset (I)**

The I quadrant, that of the Belongingness and Inclusivity Mindset, or the readiness to engage in IPSE work, involves internal understanding and perceptions of disability and inclusion. With Belongingness and Inclusivity Mindset, the focus is on the internal views and perceptions of disability and what faculty and administrators need to do to prepare themselves for IPSE work. This connects to Wilber’s (2001) Integral Theory in that it relates to the interior of the individual, where people find their immediate thoughts and feelings. In the sub-sections
that follow, I discuss the how personal experiences and influences from society contributed to faculty and administrators’ understanding of disability.

**Developing an Understanding of Disability**

Participant discussion began around the topic of understanding disability, and the experiences faculty and administrators had with disability in their personal lives. Participants spoke about their own personal experiences with individuals with disabilities, leading to their own greater understanding of disability. Through these experiences, faculty and administrators reflected on influences from societal views of disability and how those played a role in their understanding of disability. This section will discuss the findings related to personal experiences and societal views of disability, which shaped faculty and administrators’ understanding of disability.

**Personal experiences.** Faculty and administrators highlighted the importance that personal experiences played in their understanding of disability and how it expanded over time. Personal experiences were particularly notable for faculty and administrators who identified themselves with a disability, having a close family member in childhood with a disability, having childhood experiences with disability, having children with a disability, or coming into the field of disability by chance. This is significant because the personal experiences of faculty and administrators contribute to their belongingness and inclusivity mindset as well as their knowledge about disability. This aligns with what the literature says in that more exposure to individuals with disabilities may lead to better understanding of disability and higher levels of acceptance (Hong et al., 2014).

**Influences from societal views of disability.** Faculty and administrators also highlighted the importance influences from societal norms played in their understanding of disability. When
faculty and administrators described their views of disability, many reflected on the social construct of disability and had difficulty defining the idea. In addition, faculty and administrators questioned ideals of normality in the human experience and the implications of disability labels. Faculty and administrators gained a greater understanding of disability by questioning societal views, preconceived assumptions about disability, and the dichotomy of disability labels. A few faculty and administrators talked about the fact that there is a need for a disability label in order to qualify for certain services. The discussions revealed a dichotomy between labeling students for the sake of receiving services and the impact that a disability label has on an individual. The faculty and administrators shared views on disability labels and questioned the purpose of defining disability if everyone got what they needed. In addition, faculty and administrators explained the negative and dehumanizing connotations of disability labels. Faculty and administrators also referred to disability in terms of the environment and universal design. Lastly, faculty and administrators consider disability is a strength or an identity for an individual.

Collectively, these findings align with what the Disability Studies in Education literature says in that it acknowledges disability to be a natural part of the human experience (Valle & Connor, 2019). In addition, grounded in the social model of disability, DSE challenges the medical model of disability and the myth of normality (Baglieri et al., 2011). This is meaningful because faculty and administrators in this study developed a Belongingness and Inclusivity Mindset as they shared a deeper understanding and critical awareness of themselves, and in doing so, provided the opportunity to better understand the diversity of students including students with IDD. The section that follows explains the IPSE behaviors and practices that faculty and administrators described in the study and found in the Disability Knowledge (IT) quadrant.
Disability Knowledge (IT)

The IT quadrant, that of Disability Knowledge, or the behaviors and practices of IPSE, involves the use of accessibility in practices, providing a spectrum of services and educational programming, and creating meaningful access for students with IDD. With Disability Knowledge, the focus is on understanding and practicing the accessible approaches that make inclusive postsecondary education possible. This connects to IPPL (McIntyre Miller, 2016) in that the Knowledge quadrant provides the space for understanding, processing, and practicing the theories, behaviors, and skills that inform IPSE. The Disability Knowledge quadrant, when operating independently from other IF-IPSE quadrants, may not be successful in creating sustainable systems within community colleges. In addition, knowledge development is a critical element of progress toward IF-PSE, however, it must be nestled within a cohesive and collaborative campus culture to maximize benefit to the campus community.

Faculty and administrators in this study shared that there was an overall lack of knowledge regarding disability as well as ableist language used on their campus. Specifically, the faculty and administrators attributed lack of knowledge to perceptions, underlying assumptions that people make about disability, a lack of exposure to students with IDD, and feeling generally uncomfortable around students with IDD. In addition, many faculty and administrators spoke about the language, tone, and inflection heard by others on campus when engaged in conversations about students with IDD or their program in general. Many of the faculty and administrators noted specific pitying, infantilizing, and dehumanizing language used by well-intentioned people on campus. As outlined by Connor et al. (2008), the Disability Studies in Education tenant centers engagement in research, policy, and action that assumes competence and rejects deficit models of disability. This is important because when well-intentioned people
on campus engage in ableist behavior, it is counterproductive to belongingness and inclusivity for students with IDD.

Lastly, the faculty and administrators in this study discussed ways in which their knowledge about disability contributed to an understanding of what it means to provide a spectrum of services and educational programming for students with IDD. In turn, faculty and administrators spoke about how the spectrum of services and educational programming creates meaningful access for students with IDD at their college. In the next sub-sections, I discuss the faculty and administrator’s advocacy efforts on teaching their campus how providing a spectrum of services and educational programming contributes to accessibility, belongingness, and inclusivity for students with IDD.

**Providing a Spectrum of Services and Educational Programming**

Throughout the study, faculty and administrators highlighted that a community college district exists to provide a spectrum of services and educational programming for the community. For example, when discussing ways in which community colleges operate, faculty and administrators attributed offering a spectrum of services and educational programming to be a factor of belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing integral campus culture. In addition, many faculty and administrators spoke about non-credit programming and support from campus administrators, faculty, staff, and the community as foundational in the pathway to postsecondary education for students with IDD. Many of the faculty and administrators noted that a community college is intended to be an institution that serves the community and, therefore, should respond to the needs of the community.

Several faculty and administrators spoke specifically about non-credit as an example of how college campuses can offer a spectrum of services and educational programming. From a
DSE perspective, education is an action (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2017) and an ongoing process (Danforth & Naraian, 2015). At the postsecondary level, this means colleges and universities must continually examine contextualized institutional and pedagogical practices to uncover points of marginalization that emerging adults labeled with IDD experience (Miller & Chun, 2022). This is important because offering the widest range of accessible opportunities to students with IDD maximizes the opportunity for them to participate in whatever the college has to offer. Next, I discuss how faculty and administrator's encouraged community colleges to provide meaningful access for students with IDD.

**Meaningful Access for Students with IDD**

When considering meaningful access for students with IDD, faculty and administrators often framed the discussion in terms of regulations and policies that govern access and accessibility. Specifically, they mentioned the rules, policies, and regulations outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title V, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. While understanding regulations and policies related to accessibility is important, faculty and administrators connected their work with the Disability Studies in Education tenant that centers engagement in research, policy, and action that promotes social justice, equitable and inclusive educational opportunities, and full and meaningful access to all aspects of society for people labeled with disability (Connor et al., 2008). Despite access and accessibility regulations, faculty and administrators found that students with IDD face barriers and challenges on their campus. These barriers and challenges include structural, organizational, behavioral, and attitudinal, but all are underpinned by a society that, despite the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation, still does not fully embrace the inclusion of people with disabilities (Adams & Brown, 2006).
The faculty and administrators expanded their descriptions of meaningful access for students with IDD to include access to postsecondary education, access to courses that meet student needs, access to campus life opportunities, and access to community integration. Similarly, research shows that themes of inclusion include being valued for what one brings to the interaction, access to opportunities, and being actively engaged alongside others (Gilson et al., 2020; Gilson et al., 2019). This is important because providing a spectrum of services and educational opportunities allows for meaningful access for students with IDD. The section that follows explains what faculty and administrators described as working together to build relationships and collective action toward IPSE, which involves implementing UDL and fostering a sense of belonging and connecting to the Campus Community (WE) quadrant.

**Campus Community (WE)**

The WE quadrant, or that of Campus Communities working together to build relationships and for collective action toward IPSE, involves implementing UDL and fostering a sense of belonging for all students. With Campus Communities, this is the work that involves bringing like-minded faculty and administrators, and those who might think differently than them, together and how they can build capacity in those spaces.

Faculty and administrators reflected on both the challenges and opportunities within their Campus Communities. In terms of the challenges they faced, faculty and administrators considered operating in silos, having a program that is inclusive of students with IDD yet felt isolated on their campus, encountering attitudes and resistance to inclusion, and overall campus operations and structure as contributing factors of barriers to belonging. Conversely, faculty and administrators highlighted opportunities for collaboration and implementing UDL, which contributed to belongingness and inclusivity as an all-encompassing and integral concept. This
connects to McIntyre Miller’s (2016) IPPL in that it relates to the Community quadrant as a space for collective movements and action around issues. This also connects to the IPPL in that these communities should be inclusive of a variety of people and viewpoints, not only like-minded individuals, recognize the dignity of, and build relationships with, all people who are stakeholders in the work; even those who may be actively working against those efforts (McIntyre Miller & Abdou, 2018).

This is significant because the Campus Community quadrant is what brings groups or stakeholders together. The Campus Community is what connects the ongoing belongingness and inclusivity mindset work and disability knowledge that is required for effective systems improvement and sets the stage for larger systems work. Lastly, community colleges have historically had the institutional role within the U.S. system of higher education of providing access to all who wish to pursue postsecondary education (Brint & Karabel, 1989). The following section describes the influence barriers, implementing UDL, and creating a sense of belonging had on the experiences of faculty and administrators in this study.

**Barriers to Belonging**

As previously mentioned, faculty and administrators considered operating in silos, having a program that is inclusive of students with IDD yet felt isolated on their campus, encountering attitudes and resistance to inclusion, and overall campus operations and structure as contributing factors of barriers to belonging. Operating in silos contributed to faculty and administrators’ beliefs that disability-related initiatives, conversations, or services on their campus appeared to have an underlying expectation that the disability services department would take on the responsibility. This is contrary to approaching disability-related initiatives and issues as a campus-wide responsibility.
Related to operating in silos, faculty and administrators spoke with encouragement about having an inclusive program for students with IDD at their campus yet feeling isolated in their work. Faculty and administrators appeared cautious that their programs were addressing inclusion as if it were a box to check. In addition, some faculty and administrators described interactions with various departments that highlight attitudes towards students with IDD, non-credit, and resistance to inclusivity on campus. Similarly, research showed that students with IDD often experience stigmatization and social exclusion due to the negative attitudes of their peers and college personnel (Morina, 2017). This is important because it has become more urgent for college faculty to have a broad awareness of disability-related topics, inclusive teaching practices, and equitable access to higher education (Morina, 2017). Next, I will discuss how faculty and administrators encourage their campus community to implement Universal Design for Learning as a collective action toward IPSE.

**Implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

Throughout the study, faculty and administrators spoke about implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and inclusive practices as a component of belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing integral concept. UDL has been used to describe an approach to instructional design and the environment in which the campus is designed to be welcoming and usable by a variety of people. As discussed in the literature, UDL conceptualizes learners as unique and diverse in their needs (Cumming et al., 2022). UDL challenges the view that students learn in the same way and highlights that education is often designed with a specific “ideal-type” student in mind (Meyer et al., 2014). This conceptualization is significant for higher education, as it emphasizes that variation in student needs is normal, as opposed to the exception, which is an inversion of the thinking behind the provision of accommodations for students (Singleton et
al., 2019). Through providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression in the classroom, the diverse needs of students are normalized rather than stigmatized. As a result, students with and without disability are provided with opportunities to engage in the classroom and have their diverse needs recognized and met (Singleton et al., 2019).

Faculty and administrators also spoke about UDL as a model that they perceived to be successful when embedded in the campus culture. Throughout the study, faculty and administrators described their perception of inclusion as most aligned with the approach or model of UDL. Faculty and administrators also spoke about how when the campus community is designed using UDL principles, there is a decrease in the need for accommodations. This is important because IPSE work and being inclusive of disability should strive to be as barrier-free as possible and utilizing a UDL framework by the campus community can help in achieving that. Next, I will discuss how faculty and administrators discussed building relationships in their campus community involved creating a sense of belonging for students with IDD.

**Creating a Sense of Belonging**

When considering the approach of creating a sense of belonging, faculty and administrators spoke about building a campus culture where everybody, regardless of their identity, feels welcomed, respected, and valued. This sentiment was shared by many faculty and administrators when describing belonging and inclusion as an all-encompassing integral concept. This aligns with Integral Theory in that faculty and administrators connected a sense of belonging as collective, interior experiences in spaces where we exist in community and we build in groups and social spaces (Wilber, 2001). As Carter (2021) claimed, there are ten dimensions of belonging that contribute to the assurance of one’s value and place within a meaningful community. The ten dimensions of belonging Carter (2021) identified include: to be
present, invited, welcomed, known, accepted, supported, heard, befriended, needed, and loved. Carter also claimed that, like anyone else, students with IDD want to experience belonging.

In addition, faculty and administrators spoke about the committees, workgroups, and professional development sessions developed on their campus with the intention to increase accessibility efforts. The outcome of these sessions often included a sharing of ideas and strategies to better serve students. However, faculty and administrators often spoke about the lack of execution of these ideas and strategies. It was suggested by faculty and administrators to ask the students directly what they need and to follow through with actionable outcomes. Faculty and administrators spoke about the way that actions and follow through are a way to create a sense of belonging on their campus. Seeking input from students with IDD is directly related to the Disability Studies in Education tenant centering on engagement in research, policy, and action that privilege the interests, agendas, and voices of people labeled with disability (Connor et al., 2008). In addition, faculty teaching inclusive courses are able to see first-hand the capabilities and contributions of students with IDD and that this experience challenged their preconceived ideas about what students with this label could do or what inclusion entailed (McCabe et al., 2022). This is important because a sense of belonging is at the center of building an inclusive Campus Community.

As previously mentioned, the Campus Community quadrant is what brings the other quadrants together. The Campus Community is what connects the ongoing belongingness and inclusivity mindset work and disability knowledge that is required for effective systems improvement and sets the stage for Inclusive Postsecondary Education. The section that follows explains the structural and systemic changes that faculty and administrators described in the study and connects to the Postsecondary Education Environment (ITS) quadrant.
Postsecondary Education Environment (ITS)

The ITS quadrant, or that of the larger Postsecondary Education Environment working toward structural and systemic change, involves understanding larger Disability Studies in Education (DSE) movements and creating a culture of accessibility and belonging. With Postsecondary Education Environment, this is the overarching thinking about what it is like to challenge ableist systems and structures that exist in postsecondary education, and how we can push for equitable and socially just policies, practices, and procedures.

Faculty and administrators in this study revealed that the systems and structures on their campus impacted their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD. The faculty and administrators acknowledged the complexity of the community college system. Although faculty and administrators did find complexity in their college systems, they advocated for responses and approaches to students with IDD to be delivered with an equitable, diverse, inclusive, accessible, and social justice mindset and orientation. Through their experiences, faculty and administrators found that the Postsecondary Education Environment is a space in community college structures, where systems that increase or foster ableism can be challenged, and systems that work toward accessibility, belonging, and inclusion can be fostered or created.

Next, I discuss faculty and administrators experiences with bias and stigma toward non-credit.

Bias and Stigma Toward Non-credit

Faculty and administrators described how barriers to belonging in the Postsecondary Education Environment involved bias and stigma toward non-credit curriculum, non-credit programming, and students who take non-credit courses. Throughout the study, the faculty and administrators used the term “non-credit” to encompass non-credit curriculum, non-credit programming, and students who take non-credit courses. Many of the faculty and administrators
described non-credit as something that was not prioritized and contributed to a divide in the overall campus culture. There is limited research that draws similar connections, so more needs to be done, as discussed in the section on future research. This is still a valuable finding because all of the faculty and administrators in this study discussed the value of non-credit in community colleges as it contributes to providing a spectrum of services and meaningful access for students with IDD. Next, I will discuss participant’s views on disability not being included on their campus.

**Disability is Not Included**

Throughout the study, faculty and administrators described that disability is often not included in shared governance conversations and committee work. When discussing the ways in which disability is not included, the faculty and administrators attribute a lack of knowledge about disability and accessibility to be a factor. In addition, many faculty and administrators spoke about disability and accessibility as being an afterthought and that these topics were often only brought up if they were the ones to bring it up. These acknowledgments were noted specifically when asked about campus-wide diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and accessibility efforts. As outlined by Connor et al. (2008), the Disability Studies in Education tenant centers engagement in research, policy, and action that contextualize disability within political and social spheres. This is important because when a campus community does not include disability, they are fostering ableism, which works against accessibility, belonging, and inclusion. Next, I will provide a summary of the findings.

**Summary of Findings**

The findings of this study revealed that faculty and administrators in community colleges had a well-defined understanding of disability, which informed the ways in which they
developed educational opportunities for students with IDD and advocated for belongingness and inclusivity, despite attitudinal barriers, as a campus-wide, integral approach. Participants spoke about their own personal experiences with individuals with disabilities, leading to a greater understanding of disability. Through these experiences, faculty and administrators reflected on influences from societal views of disability and how that played a role in their understanding of disability. Additionally, faculty and administrators in this study shared that there is an overall lack of knowledge and dehumanizing language used on their campus regarding disability. Specifically, the faculty and administrators attribute lack of knowledge to perceptions, underlying assumptions that people make about disability, a lack of exposure to students with IDD, and feeling generally uncomfortable around students with IDD.

Faculty and administrators also reflected on the challenges and opportunities within their Campus Communities. In terms of the challenges they faced, faculty and administrators considered operating in silos, having a program that is inclusive of students with IDD yet felt isolated on their campus, encountering attitudes and resistance to inclusion, and overall campus operations and structure as contributing factors of barriers to belonging. Conversely, faculty and administrators highlighted opportunities for collaboration and implementing UDL which contributed to belongingness and inclusivity as an all-encompassing and integral concept. Through their experiences, faculty and administrators found that the Postsecondary Education Environment is a space in community college structures where systems that increase or foster ableism can be challenged, and systems that work toward accessibility, belonging, and inclusion can be fostered or created. Next, I discuss the implications of the findings for this study.
Implications

This study examined the experiences of faculty and administrators in California Community Colleges by centering their voices. The findings of this study identified personal experiences and influences from societal norms that contributed to faculty and administrators’ internal views and perceptions of disability. Additionally, findings revealed that the behaviors and practices, which focus on understanding and practicing accessible approaches, are what make inclusive postsecondary education possible. Faculty and administrators advocated for a campus community that works together to build relationships and argued that a collective action toward inclusive postsecondary education involves implementing UDL and fostering a sense of belonging for all students. Their drive for challenging ableist systems and structures that exist in postsecondary education and pushing for equitable and socially just policies, practices, and procedures was also highlighted through their experiences. These findings have implications for Community Colleges, faculty and administrators, and scholarship on Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE).

Implications for Community Colleges

Attending Community College offers a chance for students to explore education in more specific subject areas and engage in nonacademic experiences. In addition, Community Colleges could focus on promoting educational access and understanding the importance of setting high expectations for all students. Furthermore, Community Colleges need to be inclusive and accepting of students with IDD as members of society and provide opportunities for them to build their skills as effective communicators, collaborative teammates, and critical thinkers. Lastly, students with IDD deserve to seek and participate in higher education to build their skills. Next, I will discuss the implications of these findings for faculty and administrators.
Implications for Faculty and Administrators

Faculty and administrators are encouraged to challenge the meaning and purpose of higher education as being a space reserved for the intellectual “elite” who perform and communicate in normative ways. This way of thinking is exclusionary and oppressive, considering the very nature of intellectual and developmental disability is contradictory to this way of thinking. In addition, faculty and administrators may consider additional professional development opportunities related to accessibility, inclusive practices, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Also, faculty and administrators may wish to consider developing curriculum that focuses on providing a spectrum of educational programming and meaningful access to include non-credit and credit courses. Lastly, faculty and administrators are encouraged to engage in self-reflection practices and examine their own bias and attitudes toward disability and students with IDD. Next, I will discuss implications of these findings on overall scholarship and the field of Inclusive Postsecondary Education.

Implications for Scholarship on Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE)

The field of Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) and Disability Studies in Education (DSE) may consider working together when conducting studies on IPSE programs, perspectives on inclusion, and students with IDD in college settings. Perhaps, through such studies, accessibility, providing a spectrum of educational opportunities, and inclusive practices will be implemented for more students with IDD. Considering all institutions in higher education are subject to the same diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility laws and regulations, researchers are encouraged to consider developing studies that include disability in their DEIA scholarship. Next, I will discuss the limitations of this study.
Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. The first limitation was the limited number of participants in this study. A total of 17 participants who currently serve as faculty or administrators in six Community College settings in Southern California participated in the study. The Southern California Community Colleges were a small geographical area. If broadened to other areas, the results may be different. The number of participants was appropriate for the methodology. However, due to the limited number and small focus on region, the transferability, while appropriate, might be limiting. Additionally, there was limited gender and racial diversity among the faculty and administrators. The selection criteria of this study did not purposely examine the experiences of gender or racial identity; however, these identities may have impacted the results without it being explicit. In the next section, the implications of these findings and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

Recommendations for Future Research

With scant literature on the topic, more research is needed in examining the experiences of postsecondary education faculty and administrators providing educational opportunities for students with IDD, broadly defined. Additionally, there is even less scholarship examining the experiences of community college faculty and administrators. More research on this particular group’s experiences an approach to inclusive postsecondary education would benefit community colleges.

There is also very little research utilizing a grounded theory research methodology to examine the experiences of faculty and administrators. Utilizing this research methodology may allow for the opportunity to highlight how faculty and administrators think about disability, how
they work with students with IDD, and how they connect their work with campus diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts.

This study was limited to Southern California community colleges. Research that replicates this study in community colleges across the nation and extends the research to any postsecondary education institution could be considered. Additional questions to consider include: In what ways are programs similar across states? In what ways are they different? Is the experiences the same at a four year institution, two year institution, vocational schools, etc? The research questions in this study are applicable to all institutions in higher education since they all are subject to the same diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility laws and regulations.

In addition, there is a paucity of research on ways to best educate faculty and administrators about disability, accessibility, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Results from this study revealed that disability seems to be missing from DEIA efforts. Therefore, research to explore why this exclusion is happening should be taken into consideration.

Follow-up research with community college faculty and administrators could be done in a longitudinal study to learn whether changes have been made and to investigate whether community college faculty and administrators have received training about accessibility, inclusive practices, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This could also include examining curriculum development, specifically non-credit. A related study could be designed that examines one or more community college Disabled Students Programs and Services areas to objectively measure how the college experience impacted the lives of students with IDD. In addition, research that examines how to facilitate a change of attitude toward students with IDD and to how to foster a sense of belonging is needed. A related study could be designed that examines ways for postsecondary institutions to see the benefit of having educational
opportunities for students with IDD on their campus. Next, I conclude this dissertation with my call to action and final thoughts.

Call to Action and Final Thoughts

The implications of this study primarily involve the support of faculty and administrators in their work with inclusive practices and concepts of disability in higher education. Because students with IDD often experience stigmatization and social exclusion due to the negative attitudes of their peers and college personnel, it has become more urgent for college faculty to have a broad awareness of disability-related topics, inclusive teaching practices, and equitable access to higher education (Morina, 2017). Understanding the ways in which faculty and administrators think about their work providing educational opportunities is vital to the overall effort to support the inclusion of students with IDD in postsecondary education. On the basis of these understandings, campus stakeholders may better engage with developing inclusive practices, support equal opportunities, and provide equitable access for students with IDD in postsecondary education.

Faculty and administrators need to be aware of how their understanding of their work is influenced by their personal and professional experiences. This awareness may allow for intentional support to the faculty and administrators related to their work providing educational opportunities for students with IDD and their understanding of inclusion. Such awareness may also equip faculty and administrators to better articulate the need to address barriers to inclusion on their campus while implementing inclusive practices. Institutions of higher education have an opportunity to shape the discourse surrounding how society should treat adults with IDD. It is the responsibility of researchers, practitioners, educators, community members, and families to continue facilitating meaningful inclusion of students with IDD in higher education to ensure
that effective change in societal attitudes occurs. Together we can create a truly inclusive environment where students with and without IDD are treated as having equal worth as members of one community.

The success and quality of community college systems for all students have significant relevance to our broader society. Therefore, it is imperative that faculty and administrators adopt an Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IF-IPSE), where success is measured within and beyond the immediate campus environment. In IF-IPSE, faculty and administrators are perceived as the vehicle for this type of change. Given the fact that there are so many program design models of inclusive postsecondary education opportunities for students with IDD (Myers et al., 2019), I argue that the actual program model chosen by the college is less consequential than the strength of an implementation approach that is rooted in a Disability Studies in Education perspective and systems of accessibility and belonging.

Providing a spectrum of educational opportunities, creating meaningful access, fostering a sense of belonging, and embracing the humanity of students with IDD are at the core of an Integral Framework for Inclusive Postsecondary Education. The presence, acceptance, and embrace of this student population on a community college campus emphasizes the civic and social purposes of higher education. In addition, active participation in higher education is a benefit of accessing lifelong education as a socially valued experience and a human right for all. We as a culture must do our part in being an inclusive society and making inclusive postsecondary education a reality for students with IDD.
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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Literature Review Table

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<thead>
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<th>Author &amp; Year</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Methodology, Methods, &amp; Sample Size</th>
<th>Research Questions/Purpose</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Burgin, E. C., DeDiego, A. C., Gibbons, M. M., &amp; Cihak, D. F. (2017)</td>
<td>Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability</td>
<td>Qualitative - Interviews (Faculty n=9). Case Study (TPSID Program)</td>
<td>1. What was the experience overall of having a student with IDD in audit classroom instructors’ class? 2. How prepared and supported were the audit classroom instructors prior to hosting the student with IDD? 3. What suggestions do audit classroom instructors have for improving the experience of subsequent instructors who host students with IDD?</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Carey, G. C., Downey, A. R., &amp; Kearney, K. B. (2022)</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Qualitative - Interviews (Faculty n=8). Case Study (TPSID Program)</td>
<td>1. What are the perceived benefits to faculty when students with ID are included in their university classes? 2. What challenges do faculty face when including students with ID in general university classes? 3. What suggestions do faculty have for improving the experience of future faculty working with students with ID?</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Gibbons, M. M., Cihak, D. F., Mynatt, B., &amp; Wilhoit, B. E. (2015)</td>
<td>Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability</td>
<td>Quantitative - Case Study (Faculty n=152 and Gen Ed Students n=499) Survey (in preparation for TPSID program)</td>
<td>In preparation for the postsecondary certificate program beginning on our campus, we also wanted to better understand the current attitude on campus about postsecondary education for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Gilson, C. B., Gushanas, C. M., Li, Y.-F., &amp; Foster, K. (2020)</td>
<td>Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities</td>
<td>Quantitative - Case Study (Faculty and Gen Ed Students n=1,867) Survey (in preparation for a new PSE program)</td>
<td>1. How do faculty and students define inclusion prior to the development of an inclusive PSE program? 2. How do faculty and students perceive the current level of inclusive opportunities? 3. How do faculty and students report their willingness to accept students with IDD? 4. What factors predict higher degrees of acceptance for faculty and students toward prospective students with IDD on their campus?</td>
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<td>Author &amp; Year</td>
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<td>Gilson, C. B., Whirley, M. L., &amp; Foster, K. (2019)</td>
<td>Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education</td>
<td>Qualitative - Focus Groups (x4) (Faculty n=8 and Gen Ed Students=20). Case Study (in preparation for a new PSE program)</td>
<td>In the present study, we involved university stakeholders to co-create a shared definition of inclusion, employing four distinctive aims. First, we sought to craft a comprehensive definition of inclusion in student life on campus. Second, we evaluated the extent to which students and faculty were willing to accept students with IDD on campus, along with the benefits and barriers presented by this possibility. Third, we invited participants to construct a shared vision of how they idealized characteristics of an inclusive PSE program. Finally, we identified recommendations for resources and training that might be helpful in supporting inclusion on campus. Using social constructionist inquiry, we sought to understand how these views were positioned in the current context and the unique tapestry of participant identities, backgrounds, and beliefs.</td>
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<td>Hall, C., McCabe, L., Carter, E., Lee, Ph.D., E., &amp; Bethune-Dix, L. (2021)</td>
<td>Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education</td>
<td>Qualitative - Focus Groups (x4) (Faculty n=23) Case Study (faculty teaching inclusive classes)</td>
<td>1. How do faculty describe their roles within these classrooms? 2. How do faculty describe the involvement of students with intellectual disability? 3. What did faculty find challenging about including students with intellectual disability? What strategies do faculty say supported the inclusion of students with intellectual disability in their classrooms?</td>
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<td>Jones, M. M., Harrison, B., Harp, B., &amp; Sheppard-Jones, K. (2016)</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Quantitative - Case Study (Faculty n=34) Survey (close ended &amp; four open-ended questions) (TPSID program since 2007)</td>
<td>1. To accomplish this, the investigators examined the perceptions of faculty members with experience in postsecondary inclusion, mining the benefits and challenges to faculty members and students enrolled in their courses, both with and without ID.</td>
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<tr>
<td>McCabe, L. E., Hall, C. G., Evon, B. L., &amp; Bethune-Dix, L. (2022)</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Qualitative - Focus Groups (x4) (Faculty n=23) Case Study (faculty teaching inclusive classes)</td>
<td>1) What motivates faculty to get involved in teaching a class that included students with intellectual disability? 2) How are faculty impacted as a result of teaching these classes? 3) How did faculty describe the impact on other classmates?</td>
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<td>Author &amp; Year</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Plotner, A. J., &amp; Marshall, K. J. (2015)</td>
<td>Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities</td>
<td>Quantitative (Administrators n=79)</td>
<td>1) The purpose of this study was to survey all existing non-dual enrollment programs in the United States that are identified as PSE programs for individuals with IDD, in order to gather information about the perceived barriers and supports encountered by the programs during their development and across time.</td>
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<td>Survey (representing 30 different states)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Taylor, A., Domin, D., Papay, C., &amp; Grigal, M. (2021)</td>
<td>Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education</td>
<td>Qualitative - Interviews (Faculty n=10)</td>
<td>1. What are the benefits and challenges of instructing students with ID in college courses, and do they differ from other instructional experiences?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(representing 7 colleges and universities across the US)</td>
<td>2) What do faculty want and need to provide the best instructional experiences to students with ID?</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Thoma, C. A. (2013)</td>
<td>Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability</td>
<td>Qualitative - Phenomenological Study</td>
<td>The purpose of this study was to investigate the similarities and differences between program components, procedures, activities, and experiences to document this relatively new development in the field.</td>
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<td>Interviews (Administrators n=9)</td>
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Appendix B: Think College Standards, Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education

Think College at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston has developed Standards, Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education. Institutions of higher education can use these standards to create, expand, or enhance high quality, inclusive postsecondary education to support positive outcomes for individuals with IDD. Additionally, these standards can be used to as a framework to conduct and expand research on issues related to supporting students with ID in higher education. They are aligned with the definition of a comprehensive postsecondary and transition program for students with intellectual disabilities and reflect institutional and instructional practices that support a Universal Design for Learning framework as outlined in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

STANDARD 1: ACADEMIC ACCESS
To facilitate quality academic access for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

Quality Indicator 1.1: Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities, including:

1.1A: Enrollment in non-credit-bearing, non-degree courses (such as continuing education courses) attended by students without disabilities.
1.1B: Auditing or participating in college courses attended by students without disabilities for which the student does not receive academic credit.
1.1C: Enrollment in credit-bearing courses offered by the institution attended by students without disabilities, when aligned with the student’s postsecondary plans.
1.1D: Access to existing courses rather than separate courses designed only for students with intellectual disabilities.
1.1E: College course access that is not limited to a pre-determined list.
1.1F: Participation in courses that relate to their personal, academic, and career goals as established through person-centered planning.
1.1G: Collection of objective evaluation data on college course participation.
Quality Indicator 1.2: Address issues that may impact college course participation, including:

1.2A: College policies regarding placement tests, ability-to-benefit testing and prerequisites that negatively impact college course participation access.
1.2B: Access to and instruction in the use of needed public or personal transportation, such as public buses, taxis, paratransit, ridesharing with other students, and other naturally occurring transportation options.
1.2C: Access to college disability services for accommodations typically provided by that office.
1.2D: Access to and instruction in the use of needed technology.
1.2E: Access to educational coaches who receive ongoing training and supervision.
1.2F: Access to peer support such as mentors, tutors, and campus ambassadors.
1.2G: Faculty training on universal design for learning principles.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Provide students with the skills to access ongoing adult learning opportunities, including:

1.3A: Knowledge of the adult learning opportunities available in their community, such as college courses, community education, etc.
1.3B: Knowledge of resources available to assist them to access or fund adult learning opportunities in their community.

STANDARD 2: CAREER DEVELOPMENT
To facilitate career development leading to competitive employment for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

Quality Indicator 2.1: Provide students with the supports and experiences necessary to seek and sustain competitive employment, including:

2.1A: The provision of person-centered planning to identify career goals.
2.1B: Access to job coaches and developers who receive ongoing training and supervision.
2.1C: Participation in time-limited internships or work-based training in settings with people without disabilities.
2.1D: Opportunity to participate in academically focused service-learning experiences.
2.1E: Participation in paid work experiences related to personal choice and career goals, such as paid internships, work-study, service learning, or other paid work on or off campus.
2.1F: Connection with community rehabilitation and other adult service providers to sustain employment.
2.1G: Collection of objective evaluation data on student employment.

STANDARD 3: CAMPUS MEMBERSHIP:
To facilitate campus membership for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:
Quality Indicator 3.1: Provide access to and support for participation in existing social organizations, facilities, and technology, including:

3.1A: Campus programs, such as clubs and organizations, community service, religious life, student government, Greek system, co-curricular experiences, service learning, study abroad, student sports and entertainment events, recreational facilities and programs, etc.
3.1B: Residence life facilities and activities, including, when desired, the off-campus housing office.
3.1C: Technology for social communication, including email, texting, cell phone, Facebook, Twitter, Skype.
3.1D: Social activities facilitated by students without disabilities, who serve as natural supports.

STANDARD 4: SELF-DETERMINATION
To facilitate the development of self-determination in students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

Quality Indicator 4.1: Ensure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals that:

4.1A: Reflect student interests and desires as indicated by person-centered planning.
4.1B: Are reviewed regularly and modified as needed to reflect changes in student interests and preferences.
4.1C: Address accommodation and technology needs.
4.1D: Lead to outcomes desired by the student.
4.1E: Reflect family input when desired by the student.

Quality Indicator 4.2: Ensure the development and promotion of the self-determination skills of students with intellectual disabilities as evidenced by students:

4.2A: Monitoring their own progress toward their personal goals.
4.2B: Directing their choice of courses, activities, and employment experiences.
4.2C: Being involved in course registration, accommodation requests, and payment of tuition.
4.2D: Being involved in all aspects of employment, such as creating a resume, setting up job interviews, making follow-up phone calls, negotiating job changes, etc.
4.2E: Interacting directly with faculty and employers including the articulation of needed accommodations.
4.2F: Managing personal schedules that include courses, employment, and social activities.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Have a stated process for family involvement that reflects:

4.3A: Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for parents and students.
4.3B: A process for the provision of information to parents on resources, effective advocacy, and transition planning.
4.3C: Student control over how parents are involved with their experience.
4.3D: Adherence to the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

STANDARD 5: ALIGNMENT WITH COLLEGE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES
To facilitate alignment with college systems and practices for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

**Quality Indicator 5.1: As required in the HEOA, identify outcomes or offer an educational credential (e.g., degree or certificate) established by the institution for students enrolled in the program, including assurance that:**

5.1A: Outcomes established by the program for achievement of an educational credential are measurable.
5.1B: Program outcomes are publicly available (e.g., brochure, website, program application).
5.1C: Courses and internships are related to achieving and maintaining gainful employment.
5.1D: Outcomes/credentials established by the program also address engagement in college community life, service opportunities, etc.

**Quality Indicator 5.2: Provide access to academic advising that:**

5.2A: Uses person-centered planning in the development of a student’s course of study (curriculum structure).
5.2B: Reflects the institution’s policy for determining whether a student enrolled in the program is making satisfactory academic progress.
5.2C: Is aligned with the educational credential established by the institution for students enrolled in the program.

**Quality Indicator 5.3: Provide access to college campus resources, including:**

5.3A: Admissions, registration, and orientation.
5.3B: College identification cards.
5.3C: Health and counseling centers, athletic center, information technology, career services, dining services, Greek system, clubs, student organizations, student government, etc.
5.3D: Co-curricular activities including practicum and learning communities.
5.3E: Support for participating in existing on- and off-campus university-owned or university-affiliated housing.
5.3F: Orientation, training, and resources for parents of incoming students.
5.3G: Campus shuttle buses to different campuses and the community.

**Quality Indicator 5.4: Collaborate with faculty and staff, including:**

5.4A: Accessing existing professional development initiatives on campus (e.g.,
workshops on Universal Design for Learning principles).
5.4B: Offering expertise of the program staff and students to faculty, other college personnel, and students through trainings, course presentations, etc.

Quality Indicator 5.5: Adhere to the college’s schedules, policies and procedures, public relations, and communications as evidenced by:

5.5A: Review of the college’s code of conduct with students.
5.5B: Participation of students in courses and/or social events during afternoons, evenings, and weekends.
5.5C: Participation of students in graduation exercises and experiences.
5.5D: Observation of college vacations and holidays, not local education agencies (if dual enrollment) or that of outside agencies.
5.5E: Recognition of students with intellectual disabilities as a representative population in the IHE’s diversity plan.
5.5F: The presence of students with ID on campus reflects the college’s commitment to diversity and has a presence in college communications, strategic plan, mission statement, president’s messages, and system reviews.

STANDARD 6: COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION
To facilitate collaboration and coordination, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

Quality Indicator 6.1: Establish connections and relationships with key college/university departments, as evidenced by:

6.1A: Students with ID effectively using campus resources, such as disability services, financial aid services, course registration, academic advising, health services, and career services.
6.1B: Program staff effectively using college infrastructure, such as IT support, maintenance, etc.
6.1C: Program staff being aware of the governance and administrative structures of the college or university that may impact the program.
6.1D: Program staff participating in faculty/staff governance or committees as part of their contribution to the college.

Quality Indicator 6.2: Have a designated person to coordinate program-specific services of the comprehensive postsecondary education program, including:

6.2A: Scheduling and implementing interagency team meetings.
6.2B: Conducting person-centered planning and ensuring that the results of those meetings are infused into the students’ daily activities.
6.2C: Ensuring that data collection and program evaluation activities occur.
6.2D: Providing outreach to families.
6.2E: Providing training and supervision for educational coaches, job coaches, and job developers.
STANDARD 7: SUSTAINABILITY
To facilitate sustainability, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

Quality Indicator 7.1: Use diverse sources of funding, including:

7.1A: Maintaining a relationship to the campus financial aid office.
7.1B: Ensuring that eligible students and families apply for financial aid.
7.1C: Providing information to students on sources of funds for tuition and other costs, such as National Service grants, work-study, use of Medicaid waiver funds, vocational rehabilitation, etc.
7.1D: Using state funds, IDEA funds, developmental services agency funds, family funds, private funds, and federal grant funds to provide core funding for the program.

Quality Indicator 7.2: Have a planning and advisory team which:

7.2A: Includes representatives from the college, including administrators (deans, provosts, department chair), disability services, and faculty, as well as disability-specific agencies, relevant community agencies, local business leaders, workforce development providers, families, and students.
7.2B: Supports collaboration between the college and the program and with outside entities.
7.2C: Addresses program policies and practices (costs, access, partnerships) and student outcomes (data review) to ensure sustainability.
7.2D: Communicates regularly.

STANDARD 8: ONGOING EVALUATION
To facilitate quality postsecondary education services for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary program should:

Quality Indicator 8.1: Conduct evaluation of services and outcomes on a regular basis, including:

8.1A: Collection of data from key stakeholders, such as students with and without disabilities, parents, faculty, disability services, and other college staff.
8.1B: Collection of student satisfaction data.
8.1C: Collection of student exit data.
8.1D: Collection of student follow-up data.
8.1E: Review of all data compiled by the advisory team and other stakeholders.
8.1F: Implementation of program changes as a result of data review.
Appendix C: Recruitment Email

Dear Faculty or Administrator,

I am contacting you to discuss a research project that I hope you and your staff in the Department of Disability Support Services will be interested in and willing to support.

Through this study, I aim to serve community college faculty, administrators, and staff in their program development and implementation efforts as they create and evaluate inclusive postsecondary educational opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) on their campus. The purpose of this exploration is to better understand how faculty and administrators affiliated with such programs understand their work, including the challenges and opportunities of this work. This study aims to inform the field as to how these programs might be created and run in order to develop a campus culture that fosters a sense of belonging for students with IDD.

I anticipate gathering data primarily through conducting interviews with faculty, administrators, and staff who agree to participate in the study. Interested participants who volunteer will be given a consent form to be signed and returned to the primary researcher at the beginning of the interview process.

I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this project further, answer any questions or concerns you might have, and explore the potential for conducting this study.

If this might be possible, please contact me at steldred@chapman.edu or by phone at XXX-XXX-XXXX, and we can arrange a time to meet.

Thank you very much for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Stacy Eldred
Chapman University
Attallah College of Educational Studies
Disability Studies
steldred@chapman.edu
Appendix D: Consent Form

Title of Study

‘Inclusive’ Postsecondary Education: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Community College Faculty and Administrators’ Understanding of Their Work Providing Educational Opportunities for Students With IDD

Members of the Research Team

Lead Researcher: Whitney McIntyre Miller, Ph.D.  
wmcintyr@chapman.edu  
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

Student Researcher: Stacy Eldred  
steldred@chapman.edu  
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

Key Information

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. A member of the research team will explain the study to you and will answer any questions you might have. You should take your time deciding whether you want to participate. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

If you agree to participate in this study, this research will involve:

- Males and females over the age of 18
- Procedures will include an audio interview using Zoom Cloud Meeting app or in person
- There is 1-2 audio interviews
- The interviews will take 60-90 minutes
- There are not risks associated with this study that exceed what would typically be encountered in daily life
- You will not be paid for your participation
- You may keep a copy of this consent form.

Invitation

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a faculty or administrator at a California Community College working with students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

The intention of providing educational opportunities is for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be given the same equitable and accessible opportunities for success as neuro-typically
developing students. However, students with IDD continue to be excluded from post-secondary education despite continued efforts toward their inclusion (Uditsky & Hughson, 2012). For this reason, this study will add to existing literature on supporting inclusive higher education as a fundamental human right for students with IDD. Community colleges around the United States, particularly in California, are establishing programs that specifically provide educational opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This study aims to understand how faculty, administrators, and staff affiliated with such programs understand their work, including the challenges and opportunities of this work. This study will inform the field as to how these programs might be created and run in order to develop a campus culture that fosters a sense of belonging for students with IDD.

**What will be done during this research study?**

In a 60-90 minute audio interview, you will be asked a series of questions related to your experience working with programs that provide educational opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. One of the researchers from the study will conduct the interview. If you give the researcher permission, the interview will be recorded.

**How will my data be used?**

Your data will be used for a student’s dissertation, journal articles, and academic conferences. Any personal information that could identify you will be removed before the data is shared.

**What are the possible risks of being in this research study?**

There are no known risks to you for being in this research study. As the researcher is recording the interviews, there is a possible risk that confidentiality might be lost through hackers, data breaches, etc. Confidential data that is stored as Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel files on a secure cloud, even one that is owned by the researcher, is always at risk of a data breach. An unauthorized individual may obtain access to the secure site through illicit means, which places participants at risk of having their identifiable responses exposed. The researcher will use the following strategies to minimize and mitigate the potential breach of confidentiality risks: All Zoom interviews will be protected by a passcode that only the participants can access. The researcher will establish a waiting room for the Zoom meetings to control who could join the interviews. All in-person interviews will be conducted in a quiet setting. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher will ensure that the door is closed and that the participants could not be overheard by others. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher will ask each participant to select her own pseudonym or be assigned one. The research will assign a pseudonym to organizations or individuals, that the participants might mention during the interviews. All information related to interviews will be stored on the researcher’s password protected personal computer. The researcher will use Chapman University's cloud server to store the study data. To protect the participants' identities, no identifying information will be used in publications and/or presentations. The researcher will give the participants the option to either select their pseudonym or to be assigned one. The data will be destroyed three years after the dissertation study is completed.

**What are the possible benefits to you?**

This study aims to serve community college faculty, administrators, and staff in their program development and implementation efforts as they create and evaluate inclusive postsecondary educational opportunities for students with IDD on their campus.
**What are the possible benefits to other people?**

This study aims to contribute to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging literature for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in postsecondary education.

**What are the alternative to being in this research study?**

There are no alternatives to being in this research study. You can choose not to participate.

**What will participating in this research study cost you?**

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

**Will you be compensated for being in this research study?**

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research study.

**What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?**

Your welfare is the major concern of every researcher. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the beginning of this consent form.

**How will information about you be protected?**

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. The data will be stored electronically through a secure server, including your identifiable information, and will only be seen by the research team during the study and for three years after the study is complete.

**Who will have access to your study data?**

The only people who will have access to your research records are the members of the research team, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. Information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as group or summarized data and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

**What are your rights as a research subject?**

You may ask any questions about this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in the study or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s) listed at the beginning of this form.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research, contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (714) 628-2833 or irb@chapman.edu.

**What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?**

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study (i.e., “withdraw”) at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with Chapman University. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.
**Documentation of informed consent**

You are voluntarily deciding whether to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered, and (4) you have decided to be in the research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep. You may print or save this consent form if you would like a copy to keep.

____________________________________
Printed Name of Participant or Legal Guardian

____________________________________
Signature of Participant or Legal Guardian

Date

**AUDIO RECORDING:**

I have received an adequate description of the purpose and procedures for audio recording sessions during the course of the proposed research. I give my consent to allow myself to be audio recorded during participation in this study, and for those records to be reviewed by persons involved in the study, as well as for other professional purposes as described to me.

_____ **Yes,** I agree to allow the research team to **audio record** my interview(s).

_____ **No,** I do not wish to have my interview(s) **audio recorded**.

Signature of Participant or Legal Guardian

Date
VIDEO RECORDING:

I have received an adequate description of the purpose and procedures for video recording sessions during the course of the proposed research. I give my consent to allow myself to be video recorded during participation in this study, and for those records to be reviewed by persons involved in the study, as well as for other professional purposes as described to me.

_____ Yes, I agree to allow the research team to video record my participation.

_____ No, I do not wish to have my participation video recorded.

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**Investigator certification**

My signature certifies that all elements of informed consent described on this consent form have been explained fully to the participant. In my judgment, the participant possesses the capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research and is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent to participate.

_________________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date
Appendix E: Interview Questions

1) What is your role in supporting students with disabilities at your college?
2) What, if any, was your experience with people with disabilities before getting into education?
3) Growing up, did you have any exposure or experience with people with disabilities?
   a) Family member? Volunteer experience?
4) Can you describe your education and/or training experience related to students with disabilities?
   a) Any other education or training that relates to supporting students with disabilities?
5) Can you describe your employment in education or other employment experience as it relates to supporting students with disabilities?
   a) Any other employment experience that relates to supporting individuals with disabilities?
6) Tell me a bit about your decision to become a faculty/administrator working with students with disabilities.
7) Can you describe what disability means to you?
   a) What do you believe it means to be disabled?
8) In your experience, you may or may not have heard of the term inclusion. When I say inclusion, what does that mean to you?
   a) Could you tell me more about that?
   b) Do you agree that there is a shared definition of what constitutes inclusion? Why or why not?
9) How would you describe what inclusion looks like for students with disabilities in college? What does inclusion mean for college students with disabilities?
   a) Do you agree that there is a shared definition of what constitutes inclusion in higher education? Why or why not?
10) What is currently being implemented at your college to facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities?
    a) Could you tell me more about any examples or specific practices used by your college to facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities?
11) What are your college’s strengths in facilitating the inclusion of students with disabilities?
12) In what ways, if any, do you encounter staff (faculty, admin, staff, etc.) that are resistant to your efforts to include students with IDD at your college?
13) In light of the emphasis from the state Chancellors office on accessibility, what has your campus done? Can you give some examples?
14) What improvements would you recommend to your college in facilitating the inclusion of students with disabilities?
15) What else would you like to share regarding your experiences with students with disabilities at your college?
16) What is your age?
17) How do you identify your gender?
18) How do you identify your race/ethnicity?
19) What has been your biggest takeaway from this conversation about inclusion?
Appendix F: Coding Process Evidence