

Adherence and Accessibility in the Workplace: Directly Consulting with Disabled Workers and
Prospective Workers

A Senior Honors Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Graduation in the Honors College

By:

Serena Blackburn

Sociology Major

SUNY Brockport, State University of New York
June 14, 2021

Thesis Director: Dr. Amy Guptill, Professor, Sociology

*Educational use of this paper is permitted for the purpose of providing future
students a model example of an Honors senior thesis project.*

Introduction

Equitable access to and within one's chosen field of work heavily impacts one's level of productivity, satisfaction in the workplace, and longevity of one's time employed in this location. In that critical era when new college graduates are building a career, examining how those who expect to request accommodations experience workplace accessibility can help workers, policy makers, and researchers gain insight concerning the process of requesting accommodations and how disabled* workers and prospective workers can best be served to allow them to achieve their fullest potential in their chosen field.

When transitioning from being a student to working full-time, workplace accessibility begins before one is offered a position or formally enters the workplace. Even if changes made on one's behalf don't get too far within a place of work to make something more accessible; they often get more (read: any) acknowledgement than the presence of one who cannot get into the place of work to begin with and seeks out changes to be made to allow more equitable entry.¹

¹ When discussing ability status, there is varying usage of terminology; recently, some mainstream media sources have begun using the term "differently abled" to refer to disabled individuals and groups of people. However, in many articles and independent blog posts, disabled writers and creators have expressed disdain for this term, as some feel it does not appropriately acknowledge the disadvantage that disabled people inherently have in our society. Across the spectrum of humanity, everyone is differently abled. When referring to a person or group of people, using terminology that they identify with, are okay with others outside of the group of people using, and that is widely understood to hold meaning is important; thus, the terms disabled and abled/able-bodied are used throughout the text.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight concerning patterns of the experiences and outcomes of the studied population to inform best practices, services, policy, and further studies when looking to improve the conditions that the studied population enter during the time frame the study examines.

Background

The point of time in one's life when going from student to full-time worker, often seen as a "transitional point" can set the tone for one's career track and pursuits throughout one's life. That being said, there seems to be a lack of research studying this particular point in time for disabled workers and prospective workers that are looking to enter their intended field after finishing their titular degree. The manner in which accommodations or lack thereof that a person may have had access to when completing their titular degree as well as in past jobs can provide a frame of reference for how one might expect to seek accommodations in the future, and how the response that they receive can affect the short- and long-term quality of and satisfaction concerning the work one does.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA (1990), has documented many changes in the obligations of public accommodations to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services for people with disabilities within public services, public transportation, and other miscellaneous provisions. These standards, while serving to work towards equal opportunity for those with disabilities in the public sphere, are complex in practice and are not a "be-all-end-all" for public policy on accessibility-nor do they cover all the needs of disabled students, graduates, or workers. A place of work may adhere on paper to the standards of the ADA and simultaneously not provide the accommodations that one requires to make their duties accessible to them.

Often, when examining these compositions and processes, knowledge from disabled workers and prospective workers themselves is underprioritized in research, and feedback from able-bodied coworkers, architects, and consultants that may not explore the actual needs or feelings of disabled persons are prioritized. This can result in well-meaning but ultimately inaccurate information on how able-bodied colleagues understand the needs of disabled people rather than how disabled people themselves understand their needs. This, in turn, can lead to policies and/or changes being implemented in an institution that are intended to serve their disabled members but fall short of their goal or do not serve any need that disabled patrons have brought up.

When this occurs, the work of disabled patrons can be negatively impacted, then negatively impacting how their coworkers and supervisor view their capabilities, how their labor aligns with others' in their place of work, and their own personal satisfaction concerning the progress of their career. As one's work is negatively impacted and changes made to mitigate this are lacking or nonexistent from the point of view of the disabled worker, one can quickly become frustrated or dissatisfied with the efforts of those looking to make changes on their behalf, as from their perspective they are not being listened to and are suffering for it. Meanwhile, from the perspective of those who created and implemented policies or changes in an institution from potentially faulty information, the continued dissatisfaction of those who were meant to benefit from these changes may go entirely unnoticed or may be met with irritation, as the worker may appear to be "ungrateful" with the changes that, to those who created and/or implemented them, are satisfactory and to alter them would be to be giving those who are meant to benefit from them "more than their fair share" of accommodations. This disconnect in the fundamental understanding of the problem at hand often creates a barrier to

accessibility in the workplace that is not readily observable and thus not well understood, as a lack of observable resistance to making progress in the name of accessibility in the workplace can prompt those looking to understand the problem to think that there isn't one.

The most straightforward way to mitigate this disconnect and to implement change in the name of accessibility that are based on accurate information from the beginning of one's efforts to effectively provide accommodations that are understood by all in a workplace and appropriately serve those they are intended for is simple; center disabled workers in one's efforts to improve accessibility in the workplace for disabled workers, and work with able-bodied employees and supervisors concerning workplace culture and other potential barriers for disabled employees that they may contribute to.

Literature Review

Transitioning to Employment

After completing one's titular degree, transitioning into employment can look different depending on one's chosen field of work. This can be helped along with support from one's institution of education through providing accommodations throughout one's time at the institution if requested, as well as providing resources and opportunities for practice interviews, post-graduation internships, and other services concerning employment. However, while services for disabled students near graduation and the experiences of disabled employees who are established in the workplace are documented, there is relatively limited research on the "transitional point" between degree completion and entering the workforce. This point in time

can contain many barriers, and to appropriately mitigate these barriers to allow people to enter and flourish in their chosen field, they need to be studied and understood.

The transitioning of young adults with disabilities from school to work holds some parallels to the transition from school to tertiary education in terms of patterns of access to both institutions as well as best practices and public policy. Current policies concerning disability in the workplace as well as educational institutions have both strengths and weaknesses, as well as the current strategies in place within the world of education to ease both transitions. Studying the timelines of both reveal that access to tertiary education in and of itself has improved over recent time, but the transition to tertiary education as well as employment still is markedly more difficult for disabled young adults than their able-bodied peers. Access to employment after completing one's education, and the process of successfully completing one's education are also further complicated for disabled young adults (OECD). Improving disabled young adults' rates of success in transitioning to employment and completing their education to do so has been found to depend on not only the efforts to support these students while they are enrolled in school, but also actively following-up with these students in, "...an inclusive ethos able to mobilize the entire university community around the diversity of educational profiles and the success of every student." (OECD).

The worlds of academia and employment are markedly different, and moving between institutions with vastly different practices, cultures, and understandings concerning disability can make the process of moving difficult. Efforts to assist prospective workers in this transition are often well-intended, but not guided by evidence-based best practices, which implies that there is a need to "modernize" and build upon them, as well as more thoroughly investigate employment outcomes. (Madaus 2006). With this lack of best practices in mind, it appears that students who

do not receive guidance and support that is beneficial to them during this period in their lives may become “stuck in transition”, which affects their ability to attain meaningful employment, which is defined as employment at their educational qualifications and in an area of interest. Experiencing discrimination at a different level in the workplace than at university was also an issue, as many educated disabled workers report finding university to be a more inclusive and accommodating environment and were left with a drastic gap perceived between educational equity and employment equity, so found Maudaus (2006). Systemic, structural, and attitudinal disability discrimination exist to some degree in nearly every institution, but are dealt with differently, and some institutions are considered to be “ahead” of others in providing an inclusive environment.

Equal access to education and employment are generally considered rights, so supports for disabled students in universities have improved, resulting in an increase of disabled college graduates. Being able to access supports while completing one’s education is a worthwhile and important process, but the notable lack of supports when transitioning from college to employment causes many difficulties. Nolan and Gleeson (2017) find that to best understand the needs of disabled students and recent graduates when moving into the “working world”, directly consulting with the aforementioned population to gain an understanding of their perspectives and needs, and to inform career-related assistance resources of this information is found to have a positive impact. This information is relevant when it comes to assistance in entering the working world as well as refining one’s career path.

When looking to support disabled graduates when transitioning into employment, Adelman and Vogel (1990) found that the role that currently existing structures can play is relevant. Programs intended to support disabled students while in school can also serve to

prepare and actively provide supports for the same students after they graduate and are looking to begin their careers. When examining the educational attainment and employment patterns of disabled graduates, most feel that their disabilities affected the work that they do, and that they developed major compensatory strategies independently such as working for extra time, monitoring their work for errors in a strenuously careful manner, and electing to ask for assistance when they felt it was necessary. Service at the college level to help personally prepare disabled students for their target work as well as programs and policies that exist to serve recent graduates within the time period between graduation and employment attainment can serve to improve disabled graduates' employment attainment as well as creating less work for disabled workers, as in theory less effort would have to be spent personally compensating for the disadvantages one faces with more effective and consistent supports and tactics in place (Adelman & Vogel 1990).

Studying the diverse attitudes about and experiences with disability and accessibility that disabled students (or former students) seeking employment that are approaching graduation or have recently graduated hold are major parts of understanding their lived experiences and can inform on how best to provide support. Feeling pride for one's accomplishments despite the pain they have experienced, feeling that one was denied accommodations they could have benefitted from as well as concerns about one's own skill set, marketability, and credentials are all noted as points discussed by those with varying disabilities. It is also relevant to note that among those whose disabilities are considered to be relatively similar, their personal framing and preferences can vary greatly (Kim & Williams 2011).

Anticipating Accommodations

For people who have had accommodations in college and wish to carry on and/or alter these accommodations when entering their place of work and people who haven't had accommodations in the past for a number of reasons but expect to request them when entering their place of work, one's previous experience (or lack of) with requesting and utilizing accommodations, preconceived notions on how the process of requesting accommodations may go, the role accommodations will play in one's work, and the existing workplace culture around accommodations and disability all can impact the way that one goes about obtaining and utilizing accommodations provided to them in their work.

Within the current socioeconomic structure, being a part of the working world is understood to be a key part of fully participating in society as a member of the general public. Allowing all members of the general public equal opportunities to participate in this aspect of social life and access to power is an integral part of feeling included within their communities and, on a smaller scale, within their workforce. Through open-ended interviews conducted by Gillies (2012), many disabled college graduates report that they have had trouble obtaining the jobs they desire upon graduation, or upon entering the workforce feeling excluded, limiting their ability to fulfill their own goals and experiencing ableist ideas from others that feel that their disability is a "burden" on themselves and on society due to barriers in the workforce. These experiences can make requesting accommodations a more daunting prospect for individual disabled workers for fear of being looked down upon. The exclusion can also create or strengthen existing barriers when looking to request accommodations, such as being treated as lesser by one's supervisor and coworkers for doing so, as well as a lack of proper adherence and implementation of said accommodations, making them largely useless for those requesting them. The process of seeking fulfilling employment, experiencing discrimination, concerns about

disclosing a disability, and how this period in their lives affected the building of their identity all speak to the current condition of the employment market, which does not adequately serve disabled people or meet the standards of the critical disability movement (Gillies 2012).

Workplace accommodations can play various roles in one's experience concerning productivity and fulfillment in the workplace, as well as access to a workplace. Barriers to one's employment such as a lack of transportation (often not considered to be a responsibility of the employer, depending on one's field) or an inaccessible workplace that bars one from seeking employment at a location could be addressed with workplace accommodations such as infrastructure changes and implementation of accessible technology, as well as public assistance programs such as public transportation. Once employment is secured, accommodations such as flexibility in one's work schedule, access to a personal care attendant or personal assistant, and again help accessing transportation have a positive association with employment trends (Anand and Sevak 2017). Those who did not receive workplace accommodations in their most recent job or perceive workplace accessibility as an employment barrier are more likely to have poor health and lower levels of educational attainment, which can reflect differences in need or employer willingness to provide accommodations (Anand & Sevak 2017).

When looking to request accommodations within the workplace, the decision concerning disclosing one's disability to one's employer is hugely personal, with effects that can permeate several aspects of one's employment experience. Disclosing one's disability is often advised if not outright necessary to ensure that one receives the appropriate accommodations, as well as being included in the ways that work best for them in the workplace. Conversely, disclosing one's disability also carries some potentially negative consequences, such as less being expected by one's supervisor, poor treatment from one's supervisor as well as one's coworkers, and being

more likely to have employment terminated than one's able-bodied peers (Schrader, et. al.). It is essential for employers to consciously create a space that encourages but does not demand disclosure and mitigates any negative consequences that one may experience if they choose to disclose their disability. Other's perception of one's disability, or "disability visibility", the acceptance of one by their coworkers including their disability as a part of who they are, and the timing of one's potential disclosure all factor into the likelihood of one disclosing their disability in the workplace. Keeping the reasons one may or may not choose to disclose in mind while recognizing that it is a personal choice contributes to creating that aforementioned environment as a supervisor and to some extent as an able-bodied coworker and is an important aspect of workplace accessibility (Schrader, et. al.) Previous experiences with requesting accommodations at a college and the subsequent consequences of such, or lack of experience doing so can also influence one's feelings towards disability disclosure in the workplace when the opportunity is presented.

Looking to request accommodations in one's place of work is a nuanced topic; the needs of workers who are looking to advance in their fields and anticipate requesting accommodations due to the effects of their labor or workplace along with or as opposed to a disability unrelated to one's work as well as those who had to leave work for an extended period of time due to the onset of an illness or condition and return with a disability are concerns deeply rooted in workplace policy and culture around accessibility, "...workplace factors not only correlate with injury rates, but also with disability duration for those workers who become ill, injured, or physically or mentally impaired" (Kristman, et. al.) Employers have a fundamental responsibility to provide the appropriate assistance to workers who enter employment with a disability as well as those who require accommodations for a set period of time or for the rest of their employment

who are ill, injured, or otherwise develop a condition that requires accommodations on the job as a longstanding principle of business policy and best practice guidelines. This priority has resulted in notable interest in proactive policies concerning returning to work as well as disability management (Kristman et. al). Making efforts to lessen psychosocial stressors in the workplace that may be debilitating to workers' mental states, improving upon and adding infrastructure to mitigate issues such as chronic back pain and joint problems as well as inaccessibility for those with impairments such as low vision and ambulatory limitations, and working against workplace aggression and judgement towards those who are already disabled as well as towards those who may develop debilitating mental processes due to repeated exposure to aggressive behaviors are all shown to be proactive responses concerning the health of workers, their need for accommodations in the workplace, and their longevity in their current place of employment.

Methods

Open-ended qualitative interviews were conducted one-on-one with each respondent to provide in-depth, personal accounts of the participants' experiences which will enable the researcher to look for overarching themes and issues that were included in the participants' accounts, pointing towards larger issues in the "transitional point" discussed and the working world. The inclusion criteria for interviewees stipulated that they hold or anticipate earning a bachelor's degree, whether they are 18 years old or older, and whether they anticipate requesting workplace accommodations. During the recruitment process, seeking participants virtually as well as conducting interviews online or with otherwise virtual platforms was deemed to be the

most conducive option, as meeting in-person was not advisable due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When choosing respondents from within this designated group, to give a greater breadth of people the chance to be interviewed, a post was made to the SUNY Brockport Sociology Department Facebook page, where research was taking place, as well as to the researcher's personal social media accounts on Facebook. Individuals that expressed interest in the project and were a part of the target population were contacted and communicated with, and interview times were set up. Three interviews were completed.

The interviews focused on two main themes: Education and career. Within the education portion, several topics were discussed, such as how the accessibility-related needs of participants were met in their educational institutions, their experiences with individuals such as professors and with the college as a whole, their living space during college, and how this worked with their academic work and other focuses in their life during this period of time. Career included prompts on the accommodations one has in place or anticipates requesting when entering their place of work, what motivated participants to pursue their current or ideal field of work, their personal goals within this field, and any specific locations their field of work primarily takes place in that they know of. After interviews were conducted and recorded, the audio recordings were transcribed via textual notes to be looked over for analysis. Text-based transcripts allowed the researcher to search and code for common themes within the interviews and to formulate a cohesive representation of similar understandings that the respondents may hold. Analyzing the interviews revealed common conditions in the community that shaped the respondents' perspectives and experiences.

Findings

Pursuing Balance

While analyzing the insight given within each interview, a few key points began to emerge that were mentioned in multiple respondents' responses to the questions. There are some areas of neglect concerning accommodations within both higher education and employment, "It exists in name, but in terms of getting what you need-not what you want, just what you need-it can be really difficult" (A respondent on the presence of an on-campus office geared towards accessibility services). What one found to be inaccessible to them in university is, at times, noted to be also inaccessible in their employment-or, what is inaccessible in their university is present as a barrier to employment attainment as a continuing issue in different institutions. A drop in support services available after finishing one's undergraduate degree was noted-often, there are programs and practices in place at institutions of education as well as outside of one's college from organizations looking to support young adults to offer those in the process of completing their studies support, but once one graduates, services they may have found useful or depended on during this period are no longer available to them due to having graduated, "aged out" or otherwise no longer meeting the qualifications to receive them. This can be disorienting and otherwise detrimental to those recent graduates who are accustomed to or better suited to the accommodations available in and overall culture of higher education.

Non-linear or otherwise nontraditional career paths are common for many workers in the contemporary working world, but especially salient for disabled workers. One's goals concerning employment may change during one's journey after higher education; entering a field different than what one prepared for in their education, changing positions in one's place of employment, or leaving one's employment that served as the original goal after completing one's

higher education were all mentioned by recipients when discussing employment, “[Initial field of work] took a lot out of me, it was very-especially the job I took right out of college-um, probably not the best population for a young person just out of college to work with...I was very jaded, and I was very-didn't know how to professionally handle myself...[current place of work] is not glamorous, but what I've been through mentally and physically in the last few years, it's honestly the best course of action for me” (A respondent on transitioning to another job with an entirely different focus as part of their career path). Finding fulfillment in an area different than one originally planned can be beneficial in many ways; one recipient mentioned feelings of mental fatigue and feeling poorly balanced at his work post-higher education and leaving to work in a position that involved more manual labor than intellectual labor. Work that involves nearly exclusively one aspect of labor can wear one out and alternating between manual labor and intellectual labor can be better for one's mental state and physical well-being overall.

Standards concerning accommodations within universities extend to on-campus dormitories, which has been said to make on-campus respondents' implementing accommodations for their needs in and out of the classroom simpler. Once one completes their education and pursues a living space that is independent from their primary responsibility, which is often employment, pursuing accommodations in both their place of work and residence can prove to be a challenging undertaking. Slow responses to one's requests by one's supervisor via delayed emails or postponed meetings, time constraints concerning when one needs accommodations to be implemented to work, and reluctance to make changes on either front in one's life can be detrimental to one's overall condition, as being presented with barriers at work can make life outside of work harder and living in a location with barriers can make one's work harder. This can force those that face this imbalance to leave both their living space and

employment because living without accessible conditions is unsustainable and often harmful, and the two often are “linked” to one another-I.e., the need to leave one’s home requires getting a new job where one lives, and the need to leave one’s job causes one to lose their housing and move as a result.

Overall, unbalance concerning a lack of appropriate accommodations at any point in one’s life can lead to detrimental effects on one’s overall physical and mental state and force one into giving up employment, housing, or other aspects of their lives in order to find balance. This can lead to long-term employment and housing insecurity and make the period between finishing one’s education and obtaining employment in one’s intended field especially difficult to navigate due to potential instability in housing and finances. Pursuing the consistent prioritization of appropriate accommodations across initiations can serve to balance the environments one occupies, and combat the issues caused by unbalanced standards.

Stagnant Supervisors

Encounters with supervisors, professors, and others that are firmly established or otherwise “stuck in their ways” were cited as a particularly complex barrier; they are often unwilling to make changes to their coursework, work environment, or other structures that are not accessible to their disabled patrons even when explicitly informed that something they have some degree of control over is inaccessible. Personal commitment or attachment to their methods are sometimes expressed by these figures, who wish to preserve methods that they feel are effective or hold some significance to a person or practice. The feeling that something will be

unacceptably altered if accommodations are put in place puts disabled patrons at a disadvantage, as one's personal preference is prioritized over their needs and their input concerning accommodations is often not considered. These issues can result in multiple disabled patrons at an institution being put at a disadvantage, and in some cases ultimately being forced out of their position, "They basically kicked me out of the [class]-and at [institution] you need a 4-credit [class] to graduate-what [the instructor] told me was that I could pay an additional [amount of money] and take the virtual [class] or to not take the [class]-those are the only two options..." (A respondent on being removed from a class due to costs that accessible equipment would have to the institution).

An adherence or commitment to structures or methods in place at an institution is more often held by those who have a history there. A respondent recounted working with a professor who was known for this mindset and learning that multiple students had complained to other members of their department as this professor neglected to make their content accessible. They were met with an explanation that the institution had "talked to" this professor and repeatedly sent them to faculty-oriented trainings on the subjects that students had brought up issues with. When these proved ineffective, students were simply told that due to this professor's tenure and long history at the school, their behavior or employment changing was unlikely. This resulted in a lower quality of education for the respondent and other students whose needs were being met, with no helpful input from administrators or others at the institution on the students' behalf.

The potential difficulties involved in implementing accommodations are legitimate but should not dissuade those responsible from making a conscious effort to do so. Derailing, excuses, and outright refusal to make one's responsibilities accessible to them have been cited as a reality of advocating for oneself by multiple respondents, stating that long-term action towards

obtaining the appropriate accommodations led them to the conclusion that in some cases making things accessible is an active choice that those in control refuse to do, in some cases purely due to their own feelings or preferences rather than any limitations that may be affecting their capabilities. This has been said to be frustrating to those whose needs are not being met, as changes that could improve their work and personal fulfillment are left undone for reasons that have no material or legal justification and are often an issue because of power imbalances within institutions, or an unwillingness to challenge those who will not make accommodations for the aforementioned reasons. Recognizing this phenomenon as a reality of advocating for reasonable accommodations has been said to be a part of preparing to work to obtain one's accommodations, which can include challenging the refusal of one's requested accommodations as well as contacting others within or outside of the institution one occupies.

The refusal of accommodations has a number of adverse effects on disabled people. Most notably, the disadvantage one is at when presented with responsibilities when their needs are not being met can result in stress, a lack of personal fulfillment, and in some cases a need to leave one's school or work environment because they are unable to work under the conditions they are presented with. Previous negative experiences concerning requesting accommodations can impact one's comfort level with pursuing accommodations in a future educational or work environment, which can result in one finishing their education (with or without the appropriate accommodations in place) and feeling unable to disclose their needs to employers, worsening their chances of obtaining and/or maintaining a job as well as resulting in long-term anxiety and discomfort around their needs being met "If asking has only ever got me treated bad, yelled at, you know-why would I keep doing it?" (A respondent on their experience with negative responses to requesting accommodations). This can lead to long-term employment insecurity

which can affect one's future in their intended field as well as aspects of their lives such as housing and medical care due to financial constraints. The normalization of those in positions of authority viewing accommodations as an inconvenience to be avoided in several institutions including education and employment is a detriment to disabled people in nearly every stage of their lives and combatting this idea and its manifestation when pursuing accessibility should serve to disrupt this pattern.

Conclusions

What an accessible workplace may consist of could be drastically different based on one's needs as well as their line of work. Some features that were mentioned consistently and could apply across work environments include trained disabled consultants performing comprehensive audits or inspections of one's workplace and policies and following up with suggestions concerning accessibility and other areas of improvement. To be effective, the information and suggestions gleaned from these inspections must be seriously considered and implemented by authority figures, as simply having errors indicated does not fix them. Clarification on written/recorded aspects of disability policy in the workplace such as specifying ambiguous terms used in policy such as "reasonable" accommodations to ensure that regulations are being appropriately followed and potential ambiguity in terminology is not being used as a method of neglect in this area is also a recurring concern. Offering routes for self-determination, or "balance" in one's space through multiple forms of labor, forging fulfilling connections through networking, and the opportunity to participate in workshops, classes, and other methods of training that may serve solely as a source of education, but may allow one to pursue credentials that would enable them mobility in their field, upward or to a different position that

may suit their needs after time spent previously working in an area of singularly concentrated labor.

In the face of barriers, maintaining one's energy can be a continuous effort. Finding community with other disabled people via in-person or online support groups as well as one's interabled friends and family is a source of solace, support, and respect that are said to make many aspects of one's life more positive. Rejecting the idea that traditional, capitalism-fueled ideas of productivity is a defining aspect of one's worth when it is impossible for many disabled people to achieve is also a school of thought that is discussed when reframing one's ideas around what their motivations are. Adhering to "acceptable" levels of work, independence, and other parts of functioning are not one's only option for fulfillment, and sometimes are not an option at all. Concerning barriers in one's current workplace, prioritizing one's own wellbeing over the feelings of others and the longevity of a system in place is often necessary to pursue change long-term, and coming to the conclusion that accommodations are not "selfish" is often the first metaphorical step in this process.

Remaining Inquiries

As is mentioned in the literature review, those with disabilities that are considered to be "similar" may have vastly different experiences and should not be equated. Expanding on the existing study with additions to the literature review and further interviews is also something to consider, as the observed patterns could change as more people's experiences are factored in, and the overall tone of the literature review could also be altered by adding more content with varying conclusions. When considering the immense variety of experiences when examining aspects of disability, the question of determining best practices by framing this study to interview respondents who fall under the same "category" of disability, I.e., vision loss, and repeating this

model with several different groups of respondents as a possible way to understand potential differences in providing support to those with different needs by observing patterns within a “category” and comparing and contrasting them to others. This being considered, attempting to divide people based on their needs and disability status is a complex issue that can become harmful, and may lead to confusion on how one refers to themselves and exclusion, which is something that many disabled people face and should not be replicated within a study looking to prioritize the well-being of disabled people.

The continued effects of weathering the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted the entire population, and disabled people disproportionately so. The consequences of the pandemic on the job market for recent graduates, the stability of employment for those established, and the adverse effects that illness can have on one’s education and employment as well as the in-between period when one still needs supports in place is notable and should be considered in the context of this study in 2021. A large portion of workers made the change to largely working virtually in this timeframe, which poses the question of whether working from home is positioned to expand as the virus poses a different risk level in the future. Working from one’s home environment can be hugely impactful for disabled workers, as they would not need to secure transportation to a different location, could have a more optimal setup to work comfortably from their living quarters, and could access things like medical equipment set up in one’s home, home health aides, and other home-based resources throughout the day that may positively impact their health and comfort. The changed perspective towards telecommuting and what it could offer disabled students and workers in terms of previously inaccessible opportunities is notable and is a continuing point of inquiry going into the future.

Considering the largely “uncharted territory” of the period between education and employment that may be difficult for budding disabled professionals to navigate, how do the experiences of those at this point inform best practices when looking to offer services or resources to this population? Creating a consistent support system available after one finishes their education and potentially through one’s employment if the supports are applicable, making balance in one’s life through self-determination possible, and facing the reality of intentional resistance to accommodations when working towards best practices are all noteworthy responses.

Bibliography

Adelman, P. B. and Vogel, S. A. "College Graduates with Learning Disabilities -

Employment Attainment and Career Patterns. Volume 13, Issue 3. August 1, 1990.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.2307/1510698>.

Anand, P. and Sevak, P. "The Role of Workplace Accommodations in the

Employment of People with Disabilities." October 26, 2017.

<https://izajolp.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40173-017-0090-4>.

Gillies, J. "University Graduates with a Disability: The Transition to the

Workforce." <https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3281/3115>.

Kim, M. M., and Williams, B. C. . Lived employment experiences of college students and

graduates with physical disabilities in the United States. April 27, 2011.

[https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09687599.2012.673081?
scroll=top&needAccess=true](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09687599.2012.673081?scroll=top&needAccess=true)

Kristman, V. L., Shaw, W. S., Boot, C. R., Delclos, G. L., Sullivan, M. J., and Ehrhart, M. G.

Researching Complex and Multi-Level Workplace Factors Affecting Disability and
Prolonged Sickness Absence. August 22, 2016.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10926-016-9660-3>

Madaus, J. W. "EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES." Volume 29, Winter 2006.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ754270.pdf>.

Nolan, C. and Gleeson, C. I. "The Transition to Employment: The

Perspectives of Students and Graduates with Disabilities." October 03, 2017.

<https://www.sjdr.se/articles/10.1080/15017419.2016.1240102/>.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Inclusion of Students with

Disabilities in Tertiary Education and Employment. May 16, 2011. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/inclusion-of-students-with-disabilities-in-tertiary-education-and-employment_9789264097650-en

Schrader, S. V. and Malzer, V. and Bruyere., S. "Perspectives on Disability

Disclosure: The Importance of Employer Practices and Workplace Climate."

Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal. July 20, 2013.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10672-013-9227-9>.