

Chapter 4

Exploring the Influence of Self-Efficacy Perception in Transfer Students With Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

This research explored the perception of self-efficacy in transfer students with disabilities (SWDs) after an individualized, one-on-one orientation with the Office of Student Disability Services at Port City University. Using a phenomenological approach and purposeful sampling, the study obtained data through semi-structured interviews with transfer SWD registered with the Office of Student Disability Services. This study utilized seven participants' responses concerning their experience with the individualized orientation as related to their perception of self-efficacy. Data were analyzed using an interpretative phenomenological analysis. Interview transcripts were then reduced into themes that highlighted the individualized orientation essence. The findings from the research showed that the factors related to the individualized orientation with the most influence on participants' self-efficacy were preparation for success and support of accommodations. The findings, considerations for future research, and limitations were discussed.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-5039-0.ch004

INTRODUCTION

Upon completing secondary education, approximately 25% of students with disabilities (SWDs) pursue higher education (Heyer, 2017). SWD enrollment at the postsecondary level has steadily increased over the past decade. As such, SWDs' desire to succeed in postsecondary education has garnered the attention of scholars. Because SWDs often begin their collegiate tenure at 2-year institutions (Heyer, 2017), they are frequent transfers. One of the common myths concerning transfer SWDs is that transfer student supports are not necessary due to students having prior collegiate experience (Harrick & Fullington, 2019; Jacobson et al., 2017). A majority (60%) of transfer students complete their degrees, with the others requiring school support to be successful (Marling, 2013). Transfer orientation is effective in easing the transition from 2-year to 4-year programs (Harrick & Fullington, 2019; Jacobson et al., 2017; Marling, 2013) and decreasing the impact of 'transfer shock,' defined as severely poor performance within the new institutional program upon transfer (Hills, 1965).

Researchers have since expanded the definition of transfer shock to reflect the influence of transition periods from one campus to the next and the student's social adjustment to new campus culture and norms (Ivins et al., 2016; Lakin & Elliott, 2016). Despite significant discourse surrounding the influence of support for SWDs and transfer students, there is little research exploring the effect of an individualized, one-on-one orientation session on transfer SWDs. Research is needed to obtain transfer SWDs' voices and perspectives, as higher education institutions have not addressed this group's challenges (Harrick & Fullington, 2019; Jacobson et al., 2017). Thus, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to:

1. Explore the perceived influence of an individualized university orientation on the self-efficacy (confidence) in transfer SWDs at a public 4-year institution in the U.S. Southeast.
2. What support practices within the individualized orientation did transfer SWDs view as helpful to developing self-efficacy?

BACKGROUND

Several federal policies, such as the Americans with Disability Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, have been developed to support SWDs in their postsecondary education pursuits. Motivation, concentration, and social interaction are fundamental aspects to higher education and employment where SWDs often struggle to find success (Button et al., 2018; Nasir & Efendi, 2019). Students at

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