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AN EXPLORATION OF HOW DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES ARE EVALUATED IN SELECT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

AN EXPLORATION OF HOW DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES ARE EVALUATED IN
SELECT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

IN

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

BY

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Chicago, Illinois

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Community College Leadership Doctoral Program

Dissertation Notification of Completion

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In Select Community Colleges

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Final Approval Meeting: March 24, 2011

We certify this dissertation, submitted by the above named candidate, is fully adequate in scope and quality to satisfactorily meet the dissertation requirement for attaining the Doctor of Education degree in the Community College Leadership Doctoral Program.

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March 24, 2011

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March 24, 2011

DEDICATION

To my parents, Donald and Jacqueline Hawkins, who sacrificed and worked hard to provide me with the best education possible. It is because of you that I excelled in school and learned the value of education. Without your unwavering love, support, and belief in me, this would not have been possible. I love you both with all my heart.

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To Dr. Dennis Haynes, my dissertation chair, who patiently guided me through the dissertation writing process. I could not have done this without his wisdom, support, and encouragement throughout the writing process.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative multi-site study was to explore how disability support service programs are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges through the use of the CIPP (context, input, process, and product) program evaluation framework. Stufflebeam's (1969) CIPP model of program evaluation was adapted for this study. The study was undertaken to determine the following: (a) the fundamental elements of these programs; (b) why and in what ways the programs are implemented; (c) the evaluation process and impact on services; and (d) the influence of the knowledge base and skills of the director.

Based on the study findings, while all of the institutions were committed to the provision of legally mandated support services, the legislation should establish the floor—not the ceiling—for services. Moreover, disability support service directors come to their respective positions with a variety of skills and through diverse career paths. The study institutions do not appear to take full advantage of the opportunity to collect data; nor do they make full use of the data that is collected to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of services provided. Additionally, while it was apparent that the institutions in the study collected and utilized program related data to complete state required reports, other use of data was not clear.

Recommendations from the research were three-fold: (a) Development of a professional training track for disability service directors. (b) Development of effective training programs for faculty members and administrators. (c) Adoption of a program evaluation model for the Illinois community college system.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF APPENDICES.....	x
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background and Context of the Study.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Research Questions.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	4
Key Assumptions of the Study.....	4
Limitations.....	5
Delimitations.....	5
Definitions.....	5
Summary and Organization of the Study.....	7
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
Community Colleges and Learning Disabled Students.....	8
Historical Profile of Community Colleges.....	8
Illinois Community Colleges.....	13
Students with Disabilities in Illinois.....	14
Role of Disability Support Services in Community Colleges.....	16
Key Legal Decisions Related to the Provision of Services.....	21
Learning Disability Defined.....	26
Adults with Learning Disabilities.....	30
Universal Design for Learning Theory.....	34
Program Evaluation.....	36
Theoretical Framework.....	37
Summary.....	38
III. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	40
Purpose Statement.....	40
Research Design.....	44

Qualitative Research	44
Multi-site Case Study Method	45
Participant Selection	48
Data Collection Methods	49
Interviews	50
Questionnaires	51
Documents	51
Field Notes	52
Data Analysis Procedures	52
Theme Identification Techniques	54
Triangulation Process.....	55
Subjectivity: The Researcher as Instrument	56
Ethical Considerations: Protection of Human Subjects	56
Summary	57
IV. FINDINGS.....	58
Research Questions.....	59
Case Studies	62
Case One—Adams College (Suburban)	63
Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus	64
Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director.....	68
Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process	70
Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data.....	71
Case Two—Jefferson College (Suburban)	73
Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus	74
Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director.....	77
Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process	77
Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data.....	78
Case Three—Burr College (Urban)	79
Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus	80
Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director.....	82
Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process	83
Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data.....	83
Case Four—Clinton College (Urban)	84

Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus	85
Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director.....	88
Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process	90
Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data.....	90
Case Five—Gerry College (Rural)	91
Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus	92
Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director.....	95
Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process	97
Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data.....	97
Case Six—Tompkins College (Rural)	98
Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus	99
Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director...	104
Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process	106
Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data.....	106
Cross-Case Analysis	107
Within-Region Analysis.....	108
Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus	108
Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director...	115
Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process	116
Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data.....	117
Cross-Region Analysis.....	119
Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus	119
Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director...	120
Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process	121
Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data.....	121
Summary	124
V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	125
Discussion	125
Conclusions	130
Within-Region Analysis.....	130
Research Question 1	130
Research Question 2	132
Research Question 3	133

Research Question 4	134
Cross-Region Analysis.....	135
Research Question 1.....	135
Research Question 2	140
Research Question 3	137
Research Question 4	137
Implications	137
Provision of Services	138
Skills of Directors	138
Data Collection	139
Program Evaluation	139
Recommendations for Future Practice.....	139
Recommendations for Future Research	140
References.....	142

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.0 CIPP Framework/Research Questions.....	52
4.0 Institution Enrollment Data.....	71
4.1 Cross-Case Analysis—Within Regions/Suburban.....	118
4.2 Cross-Case Analysis—Within Regions/Urban.....	120
4.3 Cross-Case Analysis—Within Regions/Rural.....	122
4.4 Cross-Region Analysis.....	130

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Page
A. Driving Questions / Participant Interview Questions.....	158
B. Study Participant Demographic Questionnaire.....	160
C. Informed Participant Consent.....	162
D. Transcriptionist Confidentiality Consent Agreement.....	163

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Context of the Study

Cohen and Brawer (2003) suggest that since its founding, the United States has been dedicated to the belief that all individuals should have the opportunity to develop to their greatest potential. Postsecondary institutions that enhance individual growth and development should be created and supported. Community colleges were built on this foundational concept. The mission of community colleges is to provide accessible and affordable education to a diverse student population. The characteristics of accessibility and affordability uniquely position community colleges to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Community colleges are located in urban, suburban, and rural areas; they are less expensive than 4-year institutions (Dougherty, 1994).

One of the major challenges for community colleges is meeting the needs of students with disabilities. More specifically, both state and federal laws require that community colleges provide an educational milieu within which students with disabilities have equal access to higher education. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2009), 2-year colleges enroll the highest percentage of students with disabilities among all public postsecondary education providers. These colleges serve almost half of the undergraduate students in the United States, while providing open access to postsecondary education. The 1,195 community colleges in the United States enroll 11.5 million students. These students account for 46% of all U.S. undergraduates (AACC, 2009). Approximately 12.4% of public community college students report having a disability. Six out of 10 students with disabilities who enroll in

public postsecondary institutions attend 2-year colleges. These statistics indicate that more students with disabilities matriculate to community colleges than other institutions of higher learning.

Illinois is the third-largest state community college system in the nation. Community colleges are the primary provider of postsecondary education in Illinois. Statewide, there are 48 community colleges within 39 community college districts. These institutions serve the diverse needs of Illinois' adult population. Illinois Community Colleges (ICCB, 2008) serve nearly 12,500 students with disabilities annually. This number represents the number of individuals who self-identified their disability status on official college records.

Three important pieces of legislation have increased the provision of educational opportunities for students with disabilities: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. IDEA is a grant statute; it attaches many specific conditions to the receipt of Federal IDEA funds. Section 504 and the ADA are antidiscrimination laws and further the goal of full participation in society for people with disabilities. These three pieces of legislation provided the impetus for institutions to evaluate the types of services that they provide to students and to ensure that they develop programs that meet federal guidelines (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

McCleary-Jones (2007), a professor at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, proposed that a comprehensive evaluation of services provided to learning disabled students is imperative; this evaluation would serve as a guide for the development of additional services in community colleges. A need for improvement of disability support services also

exists in Illinois community colleges. This research intends to explore how disability support services are evaluated and thereby address the gap that exists in the research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore how disability support services are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges through the use of the CIPP (**c**ontext, **i**nput, **p**rocess, and **p**roduct) program evaluation framework. Stufflebeam's (1969) CIPP model of program evaluation was adapted for this study. The four evaluation categories provided the framework through which the data was examined. The research questions in this study were addressed by using the multi-site case study method. Data for the study was organized around each of the four research questions. These four questions were aligned with Stufflebeam's four evaluation categories as well; these categories are noted in parentheses.

Research Questions

The major research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What are the fundamental elements of disability support service programs in select Illinois community colleges? Why and in what ways were the disability support service programs implemented? (**C**ontext Evaluation)
2. In what ways does the knowledge base and skills of the director influence the operation of the disability service programs? (**I**nput Evaluation)
3. What is the evaluation process used by these disability service programs? (**P**rocess Evaluation)

4. How do the findings re-craft the program? (Product Evaluation)

These driving questions not only guided the study; they elaborated and clarified the methodology for the research design.

Significance of the Study

A significant amount of literature exists concerning students with disabilities in postsecondary education. However, a preponderance of this data is in the form of surveys and quantitative studies. A paucity of research exists in the form of qualitative studies in relation to the exploration of how disability support services are evaluated.

This study, therefore, is significant because it adds to the body of literature regarding disability support services in community colleges. This study will impact both community colleges and the students with disabilities that they serve. Insights gleaned from this study will impact community colleges by better serving the enrolled students with disabilities.

Key Assumptions of the Study

This research study is based on three assumptions. First, the study participants would relate honest and accurate information during the interview process. Second, the geographical regions selected for the case study institutions would garner a broad overview of disability support services in Illinois community colleges. Third, despite the lack of uniformity in job titles, all of the study participants performed the same functions within their respective disability support programs.

Limitations

Three limitations were identified relative to this research study. First, the study was conducted during a 12-month time period. Second, the qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews only from disability service directors at 6 of the 48 community colleges and one multi-college center in Illinois. Therefore, the perspectives of these individuals may not reflect the perceptions of other community college disability support services directors. Third, the self-perceived knowledge base and skills related to the effective management of the disability support services office may be influenced by the participants' level of self-esteem.

Delimitations

The study was limited to six community colleges in Illinois. Community colleges selected had a disability support services office, a director with at least 1 year of experience, and were reasonably accessible to the researcher for fieldwork. The research included interviews of disability service directors to ascertain characteristics of components of programs for students with disabilities. The data for this study was based on interviews with disability service directors, observations, document review, field notes, and pre-interview questionnaires. The research was conducted and completed within the required doctoral program timeline.

Definitions

For the reader to clearly understand the nature of this study, the following terms are defined as they relate to program evaluation and disability support services.

1. CIPP Evaluation Model—a comprehensive framework first formulated by Daniel L. Stufflebeam in 1966. The model was designed for guiding evaluations of programs, products, institutions, and systems. The acronym CIPP stands for context evaluation,

- input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation. The planning model consists of four major steps: context evaluation (i.e., What needs to be done?); input evaluation (i.e., How it should be done?); process evaluation (i.e., Is it being done?); and product evaluation (i.e., Did it succeed?).
2. Disability—*Specific learning disability* means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language (spoken or written), which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations (IDEA, 2004).
 3. Disability Support Services Director—The individual who is responsible for ensuring that students with disabilities receive appropriate educational services designed to meet their individual needs.
 4. Disability Support Services—Departments established within postsecondary institutions to provide accommodations and support to students with disabilities. “At the postsecondary level, the recipient is required to provide students with appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services that are necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in a school’s program” (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).
 5. Program evaluation model—A tool used to help make programs work better for the people they are intended to serve (Stufflebeam, 1969).

Summary and Organization of the Study

This chapter introduced the purpose of the research study, which was to explore how disability support services are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges through the use of the CIPP (**c**ontext, **i**nput, **p**rocess, and **p**roduct) program evaluation framework. The study was undertaken to determine the following: (a) the fundamental elements of these programs; (b) why and in what ways the programs are implemented; (c) the evaluation process and impact on services; and (d) the influence of the knowledge base and skills of the director.

The purpose of Chapter Two is to review literature related to students with learning disabilities and disability support services in community colleges thus providing a foundation for the research study. In Chapter Three, an overview will be provided of the specific research strategies used to conduct this multi-site case study, including a rationale and description of qualitative research design and case study method. The CIPP program evaluation model adapted for the study will also be discussed. Since the focus of the study was to explore how disability support services are evaluated through the use of the CIPP (**c**ontext, **i**nput, **p**rocess, and **p**roduct) program evaluation framework, Chapter Four will present a case narrative for each of the six community colleges in the study. The findings will be provided through a within-region and cross-region analysis using Stufflebeam's (1969) program evaluation framework. The last section of Chapter Four will present a cross-case comparison of the six case studies through narratives and data summary tables. Chapter Five will present a summary of the study and a summary of the research findings. The chapter will also include a discussion, conclusions based on the four categories within the CIPP program evaluation framework, and implications for future practice. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature related to students with learning disabilities and disability support services in community colleges; such a review will provide a foundation for the research study. Related research in the field will be discussed to show how the current study addresses a gap in the previous work in the field. First, the relationship between community colleges and learning disabled students will be shown through a brief profile of the history and functions of community colleges overall and in Illinois. This profile will be followed by a discussion of the role of disability support services currently offered in the community college. Second, a description of key legal decisions related to the provision of services for learning disabled students will be provided. Third, learning disabilities will be defined and adults with learning disabilities will be discussed in light of prevalent adult learning theories including universal design for learning theory. Fourth, in an overview of the current context for the research, program evaluation related to support programs for students with disabilities in postsecondary education will be discussed. Fifth, the theoretical lens used in analyzing the study's data and findings, the CIPP program evaluation model, will be discussed. These areas will be followed by a chapter summary.

Community Colleges and Learning Disabled Students

Historical Profile of Community Colleges

From the earliest days of the United States, Americans have embodied a belief that theirs is a land of opportunity. In contrast to the class-bound societies of Europe, America was viewed as a place for limitless opportunity (Brint & Karabel, 1989). Individual mobility was held in the highest esteem, and it was widely believed that people who applied themselves most diligently

would advance most rapidly (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). After the Civil War, the rise of massive corporations, the growth of industrial enterprises, and the emergence of monopolies made the image of the hardworking stock boy who rises to the top obsolete. It became clear that new pathways must be created for the American dream of individual mobility to survive. This problem necessitated the development of an educational system closely linked to the labor market to provide an alternative pathway to success. The ladders of opportunity created by the new educational system helped the United States maintain its reputation as the land of opportunities. The 2-year junior college or community college was born in 1901—just as the American educational system was being transformed to facilitate new pathways to success (Brint & Karabel, 1989).

Cohen and Brawer (2003) define a community college as any institution regionally accredited to award the associate or the associate in science as its highest degree. The main purpose for these institutions was to allow universities to be responsible for the higher-order scholarship, whereas the lower schools would provide students with general and vocational education. Cohen and Brawer (2003) further suggest that since its founding, the United States has been dedicated to the belief that all individuals should have the opportunity to develop to their greatest potential. Therefore, institutions that enhance individual growth and development should be created and supported. The mission of community colleges is to provide education to a diverse student population that is accessible and affordable. The open admission policies of community colleges allow accessibility to students with disabilities who generally exhibit lower levels of academic preparation than other students (Wolanin & Steele, 2004). Community colleges generally have a reputation for using highly effective teaching strategies and support

services to educate very diverse populations. In addition, community colleges offer a very broad selection of academic and occupational courses. These elements increase the attractiveness of community colleges for students with disabilities (Wolanin & Steele, 2004). The characteristics of accessibility and affordability uniquely position community colleges to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2009), community colleges are an essential part of the postsecondary education delivery system. Among all of public postsecondary education, 2-year colleges enroll the highest percentage of students with disabilities. They serve almost half of the undergraduate students in the United States to provide open access to postsecondary education; prepare students for transfer to 4-year institutions; provide workforce development and skills training; and offer noncredit programs ranging from English as a second language to skills retraining to community enrichment programs or cultural activities. Community colleges play a vital role in educating students with disabilities and are a crucial link to better employment. The nation's 1,195 community colleges enroll 11.5 million students—accounting for 46% of all U.S. undergraduates (AACC, 2009). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 12.4% of public community college students report having a disability. In fact, 6 out of 10 students with disabilities who enroll in public postsecondary institutions attend 2-year colleges. These statistics indicate that more students with disabilities matriculate to community colleges than other institutions of higher learning.

Cohen and Brawer (2003) discuss the unique needs of students with physical and learning disabilities; such students have difficulty gaining employment, establishing careers, and

remaining self-sufficient. They state that most community colleges provide access for mobility-impaired students; more than 80% provide assistance for visually or hearing impaired students. However, students with disabilities are twice as likely to drop out of school as are students with no physical or learning disabilities.

A study entitled, “After High School: A First Look at the Postsecondary Experiences of Youth with Disabilities (NLTS2),” was conducted by research group SRI International for the Education Department’s Office of Special Education Programs. The research was undertaken to generate information on the challenges, experiences, and achievements of youths with disabilities in multiple domains during their secondary school years and in the transition into young adulthood. NLTS2 involved a nationally representative sample of more than 11,000 youth who were ages 13–16 and receiving special education services in grade 7 or above as of December 1, 2000 (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005).

The NLTS2 research revealed valuable information regarding the participation of youths with disabilities in postsecondary education. The study looked at a group of students with disabilities who were in high school in 2001 and had finished or left high school 2 years later. The study found that disabled students over all are less than half as likely as their peers to have attended college in the 2 years after high school; however, the college-going rate varies greatly by type of disability. Students with hearing or visual impairments are as likely as nondisabled students to have done some postsecondary work.

The study also reported the following:

- Approximately 3 in 10 youth with disabilities have taken postsecondary education classes since leaving high school.
- More youth with disabilities are enrolled in 2-year or community colleges than in other types of postsecondary schools.
- Nine percent of youths with disabilities had attended a 4-year college. Youth in the general population are more than four and one half times as likely as youths with disabilities to be currently taking courses in 4-year colleges.
- Approximately 5% of youth with disabilities attend postsecondary vocational, business, or technical schools.
- Students with disabilities were less likely than their peers to be expected to go to college. Sixty-one percent of parents of young people with disabilities expected them to get a postsecondary education, compared to 92% of those in the general population.

About two-thirds of postsecondary students with disabilities received no accommodations from their colleges, primarily because their schools were unaware of their disabilities. About half of postsecondary students with disabilities said they do not consider themselves to have a disability; another 7% acknowledged having a disability but had not told their colleges about it (Wagner et al., 2005).

Illinois Community Colleges

Illinois has a unique position in the history of the community college in the United States. Joliet Junior College, which was established in 1901, was the first junior college in the nation. Illinois is currently the third-largest community college system in the nation. Illinois adopted its first junior college legislation in 1931, which allowed the Board of Education of Chicago to manage one junior college offering 2 years of college work beyond high school (Lach, 1999). Other legislation regarding the establishment and maintenance of junior colleges followed in 1937 and 1943. State funding for junior colleges was established in 1955. Currently there are 39 public community college districts made up of 48 colleges. Thirty-eight of the districts have a single college while one district has a multi-community college center (ICCB, 2008). During fiscal year 2007, Illinois community colleges served approximately 13,152 students with disabilities. In the latest census estimates, 10.0% of all Illinoisans between the ages of 16 and 64 years of age have a disability (ICCB, 2009).

In 1965, the Illinois General Assembly established the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) to create a system of public community colleges that would serve the needs of its residents. According to the Illinois Community College Board, Illinois community colleges share a common mission and yet remain unique. Each college is unique in how it responds to the communities that it serves. Colleges meet both local and statewide needs for education and workforce development through high-quality, affordable, accessible, and cost-effective programs and services (ICCB, 2008). The Illinois community college system was one of the first in the nation to offer students educational guarantees and one of the first to develop a uniform financial reporting system (ICCB, 2008).

Students with Disabilities in Illinois

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB, 2006) funds Adult Education and Family Literacy programs to promote the success of students with learning disabilities in adult education programs in Illinois and to ensure that adult programs throughout Illinois offer appropriate services to all students. ICCB has designated learning disabilities as a priority for adult education leadership efforts in Illinois for three primary reasons: prevalence, legislation and laws, and quality services. This initiative involves the development of learning plans that focus on student strengths and adaptations and modifications for weaknesses.

Illinois Community Colleges are faced with numerous challenges as they strive to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. According to the ICCB (2009), funding gaps are impacting community college programs and services for underrepresented groups. Individuals with disabilities are part of the communities the colleges serve; providing needed services to individuals with the ability to benefit is a foundational aspect of the Illinois Community College System's mission. Decreased funding, combined with legislative mandates, intensifies the challenges colleges face to serve students with disabilities. At the same time as that funding has declined, the number of students with disabilities to be served has risen from 12,337 in fiscal year 2006 to 13,152 in fiscal year 2007 (ICCB, 2009). Illinois community colleges remain dedicated to providing needed services to eligible students with disabilities.

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB, 2007) has rationale and guidelines in place for college annual program reviews. These guidelines provide the evaluation and review of student and academic services because these services contribute to academic programs and achieving the college's mission. Community colleges are advised to include all of their student

and academic services in their quality evaluation and continuous improvement processes. These services should be reviewed to ensure that they are meeting the needs of all students including non-traditional students, those who enroll in distance learning courses, and students with disabilities. The ICCB program review system requires each college to evaluate every facet of its student and academic services at least once during each 5-year cycle.

The program review system requires that each college submit a brief summary of the review of the student and academic support services that the college completed during the year. The summary should provide a description of improvements made since the last review or reasons for other program decisions and a proposed action plan and timeline for future improvements. If applicable, the summary should also contain a brief description of program issues that cannot be addressed at the local level. A key addition to the program review process is identifying and sharing best practices and exemplary innovations to allow colleges to benefit from the experiences of others as they strive for quality in student and academic services (ICCB, 2007).

The Illinois Community College Board underrepresented groups report (ICCB, 2009) includes a section that details promising practices for promoting academic achievement among community college students. The section summarizes initiatives in Illinois community colleges aimed at enhancing student success in underrepresented groups including students with disabilities. The report highlights two colleges that have programs for students with disabilities. The first program is the Supported College Transition (SCT)/ College for Life (CFL) program at Lewis and Clark Community College located in the small suburb of Godfrey, Illinois; this program has been in place since 1991. The program has been viewed as a model for other

institutions; in November 2007, the program was the featured cover story in the newsletter entitled *Disability Compliance for Higher Education*. Its purpose is to help individuals with severe disabilities achieve independence and academic or employment success through certificate and associate degree programs. The students are co-enrolled in an associate's degree program and a life skills course. Students must also complete a self-advocacy class. The program allows for flexible scheduling; students may repeat courses as needed. The second highlighted program was developed at Waubensee Community College in the suburb of Sugar Grove, Illinois as a fall 2007 voluntary orientation program for incoming freshmen with disabilities to increase academic success and develop self-advocacy skills. The program titled First Move helps students to develop self-advocacy skills and address issues such as goal setting, motivation, and time-management skills through a series of workshops. First Move written evaluations indicated that, as a result of the program, students understood more about college processes, procedures, and protocols; campus resources; and available educational technology.

Role of Disability Support Services in Community Colleges

Disability Support Service departments exist to expedite the provision of accommodations to students with disabilities. According to Lynn Barnett, associate professor at the University of Illinois, and Yong Li, Divisional Disability Coordinator at the University of Sterling in Scotland (1997), learning disabilities constitute the largest single category of disability in community colleges, followed by orthopedic/mobility disabilities and chronic illnesses/other disabilities. Students in all other categories of disabilities are evenly divided with speech and language disorders comprising the smallest group. Males and females appear to

request disability support services in equal numbers. The ethnic composition of disability support service students resembled that of the general population (Barnett & Li, 1997).

The National Learning Disabilities Postsecondary Data Bank: An Overview (Vogel, 1998) revealed that 43% of postsecondary institutions used the centralized model with Disabled Student Services as the sole provider of support services; 37% utilized the decentralized model where services are provided by Disability Support Services with other campus support centers. Services and accommodations generally provided by disability support services involve adaptive equipment technology, registration assistance, note takers/readers/scribes, career and personal counseling, alternative exam formats, extended test time, interpreters, taped texts, learning center lab, and tutoring (Barnett & Li, 1997). Some colleges included services that reached beyond the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. These services included day care centers, large adaptive physical education programs, mentoring, job shadowing programs, and international student exchange programs. Additionally, a number of colleges had disability support service student clubs, high-tech centers, and cooperative education centers (Barnett & Li, 1997).

Vogel (1998) evidences six factors that have contributed to the increase in both the number of college students with learning disabilities and the number of postsecondary institutions offering the following services: (a) an increase in aspirations, expectations, and preparation of students with LD for education beyond high school; (b) passage of the implementing regulations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 that provide equal access to reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities; (c) the willingness of some small, private independent

colleges of higher education to accept students with LD who did not meet the admissions criteria but seemed likely to succeed; (d) increasing awareness of postsecondary institutions of the need to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and provide support services to meet the needs of students with LD who disclose their disability and provide documentation; (e) acquiring greater self-understanding and self-advocacy skills by young adults with LD, which results from more effective transition planning; and (f) an increase in the number and quality of postsecondary college directories .

A Disability Support Services Directory was compiled by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 1997) in an effort to update information collected in 1992 about services for community college students with disabilities. Previous editions were produced by AACC in 1992 and by AACC and the American Council on Education in 1988. Nearly 80% (79.4%) of all campuses responding to the survey reported having a Disability Support Service Office. Up from 70% in 1992, this appears to be an indication of heightened awareness of DSS needs. Of the 570 institutions that reported disability by category, LD constituted the largest single category served by a Disability Support Services office. As in 1992, a variety of professionals are listed as contacts for DSS information. In institutions without a separate DSS office, deans of student services most frequently assume responsibility for disability support services (McCleary-Jones, 2007).

Two recurring themes appeared in the review of the literature regarding disability support services. First, according to an American Association of Community Colleges survey (1997) many community colleges did not have information about what happened to their disability service students (DSS) once they left the institution. Most community colleges kept track of the

students only while they were enrolled. This finding directly related to the overall lack of tracking mechanisms noted by Barnett and Li (1997). Second, McCleary-Jones (2007) proposes that a comprehensive evaluation of services provided to learning disabled students is imperative and that this evaluation would serve as a guide for the development of additional services. The community colleges should conduct surveys to determine student satisfaction with disability support services, and for evaluating the effectiveness of services (McCleary-Jones, 2007). Canto, Proctor, and Prevatt (2005) further stress the importance of the evaluation of service effectiveness. They assert that although colleges and universities expend money and time assessing and servicing students with learning disabilities; moreover, very few colleges evaluate the effectiveness of their practice. Factors that may be included in this evaluation include recruitment, retention rate, progress monitoring, effectiveness of accommodations, graduation rate, GPA of graduates, consumer satisfaction, and results of follow-up of graduates (Mull & Alper, 2001). While it is imperative that institutions be prepared to assist students with learning disabilities, it is equally important to determine whether students with learning disabilities take advantage of special services, and whether these services have a positive effect on academic progress. This research intends to address the gap that exists in the research concerning how disability support services are evaluated.

Several studies have been conducted to investigate current practices regarding students with disabilities. One such study by Berry, Mellard, and Petersen (2002) utilized interviews and questionnaires to investigate practices regarding students with disabilities and how to best improve the recruitment, retention, and completion of LD students in the postsecondary setting. The study spanned 1 year and involved nine community and technical colleges in Kansas,

Minnesota, and California. The data revealed that college support services are helpful only if students are aware of these services and access them. Many students reported that they were reluctant to disclose their disability because they feared the same negative experience they suffered in high school. Consequently, many students did not disclose their disability until they were experiencing academic difficulty. Students at most colleges stated that services for disabled students were crucial to their academic success.

A related report from the Institute for Higher Education Policy (Wolanin & Steele, 2004) examined the dilemmas facing policymakers in dealing with students with disabilities. As students with disabilities move toward equal opportunities in elementary and secondary education, policymakers have placed greater emphasis on equal access to postsecondary opportunities. The report focused on the special barriers to equal educational opportunity that students with disabilities in higher education encounter as they transition to higher education. The report also sought to elucidate the educational pipeline and postsecondary experiences for students with disabilities. It included a discussion of current law and also offered suggestions regarding how the law and practice can be changed to enhance the opportunities of students with disabilities.

The report included some key findings and recommendations for education policymakers and students regarding services for disabled students in higher education:

- Faculty attitudes and the academic culture are the major barriers to successfully implement accommodations for students with disabilities. Many faculty members have perceived the necessity of providing academic adjustments to students with disabilities as

undermining their academic authority and compromising academic standards and values. Additionally, the staff of the disability services office may have difficulty advocating effectively on behalf of students with disabilities to the academic staff. Therefore, in-service training and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff should be strengthened and expanded.

- In the transition process, students with disabilities and their parents should be apprised in clear and unambiguous terms of the differences in the rights and responsibilities of students and schools in K–12 versus higher education. Opportunities for higher education for students with disabilities would be enhanced if the students had an updated assessment and documentation of their disability *before* they left secondary school.
- College presidents and other academic administrators should provide more aggressive and clear advocacy on behalf of educational opportunities for students with disabilities.
- A student with a disability must be proactive and take the initiative to take advantage of disability support services to receive accommodations in the admissions process and the academic program. Institutions must also have procedures in place for correcting or adjusting the accommodations that are provided for students.

Key Legal Decisions Related to the Provision of Services

Three important pieces of legislation have influenced the provision of educational opportunities for students with disabilities: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Federal laws prohibit discrimination against students with

disabilities and seek to provide them with appropriate services and supports. These legal decisions also provide guidance to educational institutions regarding programming.

IDEA is a grant statute and therefore attaches many specific conditions to distributing Federal IDEA funds. Section 504 and the ADA are antidiscrimination laws and do not provide funding. This legislation has led educational institutions to evaluate the types of services that they provide to students and to ensure that they develop programs that meet federal guidelines (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). McCleary-Jones (2007) speculates that a trend for the future involves many students who attend the community college self-identifying as being learning disabled and requesting accommodation. As a result, faculty, staff, and administrators in the community college will need to be familiar with legislation that impacts the rights and availability of services for LD students.

In November of 2004, Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). IDEA was the first national special education law applying to all public schools in the United States. Its purpose is to grant federal funds and provide an educational mandate for children with disabilities. The legislation was originally passed in 1975 as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. IDEA ensured a free appropriate education for any student with a disability between the ages of 3 and 21, regardless of the nature and severity of the disability. Special education and related services must be provided at public expense in the least restrictive environment based on the student's individual needs. Public schools are required to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each qualifying child with a disability. The IEP is a written document tailored to a student's unique needs and disabilities that is designed by a team consisting of a special education teacher, the student's

parents, specialists, and the student's regular education teacher. Although this legislation has been reauthorized many times, the spirit of the law remains intact (Madaus & Shaw, 2006; Townsend, 2007).

The 1990 reauthorization brought significant changes to terminology. The term *disability* replaced the term *handicapped*; the law stipulated the use of *student with learning disabilities* rather than *learning disabled student*. These changes represent a student-first focus. The term *children* was replaced with *individuals*; schools were required to provide transition plans for adolescents with disabilities (McNamara, 2007).

The reauthorized law assures significant changes to the delivery of special education services in the elementary and secondary educational system throughout the United States. Although postsecondary institutions are not subject to the regulations of IDEA, some of the changes will impact the information given by students to access postsecondary services. According to Madaus and Shaw (2006), the areas of the mandate that will most likely impact present practice at the postsecondary level will be in the areas of reevaluation of disabilities, the summary of performance requirement, transition planning, and criteria for the diagnosis of a learning disability.

Two key components of IDEA have direct implications for postsecondary education. First, the law mandates the establishment of an Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities (ICLD) to review and assess federal research priorities, activities, and findings regarding learning disabilities. According to McNamara (2007), professor of special education at Dowling College in New York, the mandate further required the ICLD to provide reports to Congress on such issues as the number of persons affected by learning disabilities and demographic data

related to these persons; a description of the current research findings on the cause, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of learning disabilities; recommendations for legislative actions to increase the effectiveness of research on learning disabilities; and suggestions to improve the dissemination of information on their diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. Each segment of the education system affects the other; therefore, the findings of the ICLD would greatly benefit postsecondary educators as they strive to improve our delivery of service to our learning disabled students. For legislation to positively affect the provision of services for students with disabilities, the services must be implemented in a well-delineated program plan.

Second, as a student prepares to exit from secondary school, IDEA 2004 mandates the provision of a Summary of Performance (SOP). The legislation states that a public agency must provide a student with a summary of their academic achievement and functional performance. The summary should include recommendations on how to assist the students in meeting their postsecondary goals. Unfortunately, the states vary greatly regarding the scope of information that should be provided in the summaries. If a consensus could be reached to provide comprehensive disability documentation, this tool could be utilized to facilitate successful outcomes in postsecondary education (Madaus & Shaw, 2006).

In contrast to the entitlement legislation of the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL.93-112) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) are civil rights laws. These laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and apply to eligible individuals with disabilities from birth to death. ADA protects the rights of individuals in various settings outside of education.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals (qualified students) with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Disability is defined in broader terms than IDEA. For protection under Section 504, a student must be determined to (a) have a physical or mental impairment that limits one or major life activities; (b) have a record of such impairment; or (c) be regarded as having such impairment. Section 504 provides: “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

The nature of the services to which a student is entitled under Section 504 differs by educational level. This information is essential as institutions seek to meet the needs of community college students and remain in compliance with the law (McNamara, 2007). Public elementary and secondary institutions are required to provide a free appropriate public education to qualified students with disabilities. This education consists of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met. The school is required to develop an Accommodation Plan that may include extended time, a note taker, and/or a separate setting for testing (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

At the postsecondary level, the institution must provide students with suitable academic adjustments and aids and services that are necessary to allow an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in a school’s program. Institutions are not required to make

adjustments or provide aids or services that would fundamentally alter the program (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Section 504 allows postsecondary institutions to require students who are requesting services to submit documentation that verifies the nature and extent of the disability; however, the regulations provide no guidance regarding what constitutes acceptable documentation (Madaus & Shaw, 2006). In addition, institutions of higher education may not impose rules that have the effect of limiting the participation of students with disabilities (e.g., prohibiting tape recording in the classroom) (Section 104.44(b)).

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) was signed into law by President George H. W. Bush. This law provides civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities and guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, state and local government services, transportation, places of public accommodation, and telephone services offered to the general public. In enacting the ADA, Congress recognized that physical and mental disabilities in no way diminish a person's right to participate fully in all aspects of society; people with physical or mental disabilities are frequently precluded from doing so because of prejudice, antiquated attitudes, or the failure to remove societal and institutional barriers. The rationale for this law was born out of the desire of diverse disabled individuals to work together towards the common goal of full participation in American society. This same desire for full participation led to the passage of the two previously mentioned legislations – the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Alexander, 2007). Legislation alone cannot positively affect the provision of services for students with disabilities. The services must be implemented in well-delineated program plans.

Learning Disability Defined

For many years, educators and researchers have attempted to develop a universally accepted definition of learning disability. Even today, there is no clear consensus on a definition of the term. It is likely that this lack of consensus has adversely influenced the development and identification of appropriate and effective support systems for learning disabled elementary, secondary, and postsecondary students.

Samuel Kirk is often referred to as “the father of learning disabilities.” In 1963, he told listeners at a conference of his dissatisfaction with the then widely used terms of *brain injury* and *cerebral dysfunctions*. These terms were used for children who did not have noticeable intellectual deficits, but who were unable to learn by ordinary methods in school. There is no single set of characteristics that any professional claims fit all learning disabled (LD) students. Kirk introduced the term *learning disabilities* to represent what he believed to be the best characterization of these children and their problems (Franklin, 1987; McNamara, 2007). Kirk felt that learning disability reflected an unanticipated learning problem in a seemingly capable student and further noted that learning disability represented a discrepancy between achievement and apparent capacity to learn (Lyon et al., 2001).

The term learning disability (LD) gained rapid acceptance in the 1960s and 1970s because it addressed a critical need of concerned parents and professionals. The concepts represented by LD also made educational sense. Previously, children whose failure to learn could not be explained by mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or other impairments were not served through special education. Their learning characteristics did not correspond to existing categories of special education. Thus, the educational system failed to meet the needs of these children; through parental and professional advocacy efforts, special education services

were made available. The term was also accepted because it did not stigmatize students and reflected optimism (Lyon et al., 2001).

The current, widely accepted, definition of learning disability is used to identify primary, secondary, and postsecondary students. This commonly used definition was included in Public Law 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, and is included in the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA. It reads as follows:

Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and development aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, or mental retardation, or emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (IDEA, 2004.P.L. 108-446)

Intellectual functioning is a significant factor in defining and diagnosing specific learning disabilities. Students with learning disabilities must demonstrate at least average intellectual ability; however, there are difficulties in determining the intellectual capacity of students, especially those with diverse and linguistic backgrounds. The diagnosis of specific learning disabilities is frequently performed by excluding other possibilities (McNamara, 2007).

Conversely, Kavale, Spaulding, and Beam (2009) dispute the validity of the IDEA definition. They contend that this definition attained its consensus status because of the significant influence of the federal government through legislation and funding and has remained

static for 40 years. The authors believe that as a result of theoretical advances, the need exists for a definition that better reflects the nature of specific learning disabilities. In other words, the legal definition of specific learning disabilities should be amended as the field gains greater knowledge of its construct.

Townsend (2007) proposes that individuals with high academic potential who have a learning disability present a difficult question as to how disability should be defined. Within the context of ADA, this question has arisen in cases involving requests for accommodations on professional licensing exams. Recent Supreme Court cases have narrowed the definition of disability under ADA to allow the legislation to help those that it was originally meant to help.

Adults with Learning Disabilities

Data on the prevalence of learning disabilities (LD) in adults are provided by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and the American Council on Education (ACE). The NCES and ACE report national statistics about the incidence of self-reported learning disabilities (SRLD) in a national representative sample. The NCES reports on full-time freshmen with SRLD, as well as graduate school students (U.S. Department of Education, 1995; Vogel, 1998). The research showed an increase in the percentage of students with self-reported disabilities from 1.6% in 1985 to 3% in 1994. When the prevalence was examined according to the type of institution, the data reported a much higher rate of students with SRLD in 2-year colleges than those attending public or private institutions.

A related study that was not based on self-reporting was conducted to determine the incidence of students with documented learning disabilities enrolled in various types of postsecondary institutions. The sample included randomly selected undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools from the most highly selective to open admissions institutions. The study findings related that on average, 2.6% of the students had documented learning disabilities; however, the percent of students with learning disabilities varied from .5% in the most highly selective institutions to 10% in open admissions colleges. It is clear that the prevalence rates vary greatly by institution type and the degrees offered (Vogel, 1998). This study also supports the reports of higher incidences of learning disabled students in community colleges.

The Learning Disabilities Association of America (2004) discusses the rise in the prevalence of learning disabilities among students in American schools. Several explanations are offered for this rise: diagnostics are better able to detect learning disabilities and

environmental hazards pose increasing levels of risk during fetal development. Moreover, poor instructional methods have left disadvantaged children behind and struggling with learning difficulties that may be misdiagnosed as learning disabilities. Whatever the reason for the rise, it is clear that the higher education system must be prepared to provide effective services for these students as they become adults.

Clark (2006) states that disability issues have been represented within adult education literature in three ways. First, disability issues are addressed within the learning context as a simple matter of diversity. The author suggests that this approach marginalizes the unique needs of learning disabled students in the educational environment. Second, the literature does not properly address the complex social and lived realities that adult learners with disabilities face outside of the learning context. Third, representation of disabilities within the adult educational context is seen as a self-directed learning paradigm without any emphasis on the problems of coping in society with a disability. Clark (2006) further states that although a plethora of theories are related to adult education, the need exists for the exploration or development of a theoretical framework that explains unique needs of disabled learners in the adult educational context. Although many adult learning and development theories have been explored, the following section will describe three theories that have implications towards addressing the needs of disabled students.

Adult development theories provide a framework for understanding how adult learners differ from younger learners and can provide valuable insight into effectively meeting the needs of adult learners with disabilities. According to Merriam (2001), the question of how adults learn has permeated the minds of scholars since the origin of the adult education field in the

1920s. Early research on adult learning focused mainly on whether or not adults could learn.

Later, it was thought that to be a profession or a discipline adult education had to develop its own knowledge base, and that knowledge base had to be distinct and unique (Merriam, 2001).

Presently, a variety of theories and models seek to explain how adults learn. Early on, research was behavioristic in design. Explanations about how adults learn were garnered from research that placed adults under the same conditions as children. Eventually, the question was no longer whether adults *could* learn; instead, a focus on the uniqueness of adult learning emerged. What differentiates adult learning from the learning that occurred as children? Andragogy is one of the theories that emerged in response to this question (Merriam, 2001).

The andragogical theory of adult learning emerged from Malcolm Knowles' (1990) attempt to formulate a theory that considered what was known from experience and research about the characteristics of adult learners. Knowles defined andragogy as the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980). This theory was proposed to differentiate adult learning from the learning of children but allowed for the assumptions of andragogy to be applied to children and adults, depending on the situation (Knowles, 1990). According to Merriam (2001), five basic assumptions underlie the theory of andragogy. These assumptions describe the adult learner as one who (a) has an independent self concept and can direct his or her own learning; (b) has a wealth of life experiences that are a rich resource for learning; (c) has learning needs closely related to changing social roles; (d) is problem-centered and is interested in immediate application of knowledge; and (e) is intrinsically motivated to learn. Brain-based research has documented that "when storing new sensory input, the brain 'looks for' connections to earlier information. These connections are our 'learnings'; with no meaningful links to prior

experience, little if anything is retained” (Merriam, 2008, p. 97). Knowles contends that these assumptions suggest that adults enter into education with a problem-centered orientation to learning and proposed a program planning model for designing, implementing, and evaluating educational experiences for adults (Knowles, 1990; Merriam, 2001). Therefore, a problem-centered curriculum within a discipline would be organized around a different sequential set of problems each year with the sequence of learning moving from field experience to theory and principles to foundational knowledge to skill practice to field application (Knowles, 1990). The validity of andragogy as a theory of adult learning continues to be widely discussed and debated.

Strategic Content Learning (SCL) is a theoretically grounded instructional model that is of particular interest to this study because it has been shown to promote self-regulated learning in secondary and postsecondary students with learning disabilities, particularly in one-on-one and small group settings (Butler, 2002). The model provides practical guidelines for individualizing instruction within varying instructional settings; ultimately, it can provide students with the ability to construct knowledge and skills that will transfer to subsequent learning situations. Self-regulated learners are defined as those who must first learn to analyze task demands. According to Butler (2002), this task analysis is critical to effective self-regulation because it sets the context for further learning; students draw on prior knowledge and experience to make strategy decisions. After the self-regulated learners adapt or select strategies to meet an objective, they must monitor outcomes associated with the chosen strategy. Effective learners self-evaluate by comparing progress and using feedback strategically to identify challenges and problems. Therefore, to promote student self-regulation the instructor’s role is to help students to engage flexibly and adaptively in a cycle of cognitive activities. Furthermore, key

instructional targets include promoting students' construction of (a) metacognitive knowledge about academic work; (b) strategies for analyzing tasks; (c) metacognitive knowledge about task-specific strategies; (d) skills for implementing strategies; and (e) strategies for self-monitoring and strategic use of feedback. A key component of the model is that the instructors and students work collaboratively on strategies to facilitate self-regulation (Butler, 2002).

Universal Design for Learning Theory

Universal Design for Instruction is a model that provides a comprehensive approach to effective instruction for students with learning disabilities and a broad range of diverse learners. The term *universal design* (UD) was coined in the early 1970s by Ronald Mace, the founder of the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University (NCSU). The NCSU has defined UD as the design of products and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible. UD entails awareness of human diversity, anticipation of a variety of needs, and an intentional approach to designing an inclusive environment (Scott & McGuire, 2003).

Universal design's basic principles of adaptability, diversity, and choice can provide solutions to the unique design challenges presented by educational settings. Its encompassing approach can help foster a positive environment for learning. There are four commonly held goals in the universal design movement:

1. *Accommodate human movement characteristics.* Universal design addresses three aspects of human movement: body space, reach range, and effort. Body space represents the space needed to move through an environment. Reach range represents the distance users can reach to retrieve an object. These ranges are

used to determine where items should be placed to be accessible. Effort represents the physical exertion required to perform a function.

2. *Ensure safety.* Facilities are designed to accommodate the way people work and move through their environments and obstructions and hazards are minimized.
3. *Provide adaptability.* Facilities must be planned with both present and future need in mind to accommodate constant changes. Every aspect of a facility should be designed for maximum flexibility and use by the broadest spectrum of people.
4. *Be cost effective.* Affordability and cost-effectiveness are valued in universal design. Expenses are reduced when designs accommodate the easy rearrangement, addition, or removal of structural elements rather than requiring renovation. Also, the selection of products based on general requirements of human movement eliminates the need to purchase costly specialized equipment (Bar & Galluzzo, 1999).

There is a clear analogy of universal design's basic principles and instruction in higher education. This application of UD principles is of specific interest to this study. Community colleges can anticipate the diversity of students in the classroom and build in approaches to learning and assessment that include a broad range of learning needs. Applying the principles of UD to college instruction may provide tools for addressing disability access and other student needs in a proactive way that also promotes learning for a broad range of students (Scott & McGuire, 2003). Rose, Meyer, and Hitchcock (2006) explain that learning is supported and facilitated by the interaction between the learner and the curriculum. They contend that when that support and facilitation is missing, learning disabilities arise. If the curriculum can be

flexibly designed, it can meet more learners where they need to be. The curriculum can also challenge and support the various needs, skills, and interests contained in a diverse classroom. In summary, the principles of UD provide a framework for thinking about inclusive instructional strategies. The UDI model shifts the primary responsibility for providing equal educational access from retrofitted accommodations to the proactive consideration and use of inclusive teaching strategies identified by college faculty (Rose et al., 2006, p. 10).

Program Evaluation

As this study seeks to explore how disability support services programs are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges, a discussion regarding program evaluation is necessary. Varying definitions of program evaluation can be found in literature. Ralph Tyler (1949), educator at the Ohio State University, defined program evaluation as “any and all of the efforts to compare the reality of an educational situation with the conception that has guided the planning and execution” (p. 77). Professor Robert Stake (1973) of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign advocated the responsive evaluation approach. Responsive evaluation is based on what people naturally do to evaluate, observe, and react. According to Stake (1973), an educational evaluation is responsive if it orients more to program activities than to program intents. Daniel Stufflebeam (1969), sociologist at Western Michigan University, proposed that evaluation be defined as a process of providing useful information for decision making. The resulting data can be used to clarify problems, inform solutions, and document successes (Parker, Shaw, & McGuire, 2003).

Just as definitions of program evaluation differ, the processes of carrying out evaluations differ according to the theoretical view guiding the evaluation. Although there seems to be a

lack of consensus regarding the process to conduct an evaluation, there is general agreement in the field that evaluations should include at least three elements: (a) interaction between evaluators and the audiences in the beginning stages of the evaluation; (b) identifying the evaluation need, and (c) communicating findings at the end of the process (Brinkerhoff, Brethower, Hluchyj, & Nowakowski, 1983).

Vogel (1998) noted an increase in both the number of college students with learning disabilities and the number of postsecondary institutions offering services. As a result of these increases, service providers face more accountability in the provision of effective accommodations and services for students with disabilities. In a literature review of 26 research articles published between 1985 and 2000 regarding postsecondary programming for students with disabilities, Mull et al. (2001) found that only 31% of the articles addressed program evaluation. According to Parker, Shaw, and McGuire (2003), disability support service providers should determine for themselves what type of evaluation process would best meet their needs and clarify the purpose(s) of the evaluation. They further suggest that an individualized approach to planning allows disability support service providers to identify the goals and issues that are unique to their program's mission.

Theoretical Framework

The CIPP Evaluation Model is a comprehensive framework formulated by Daniel L. Stufflebeam in 1966 at the Ohio State University Evaluation Center. The Evaluation Center was created in 1965 to assist educational agencies in the improvement of their evaluation programs. This model was designed for guiding evaluations of programs, products, institutions, and systems. A basic system includes input, process, and output. Stufflebeam (2000), sociologist at

Western Michigan University, added context, included input and process, and relabeled output with the term product to the model after extensive field research. Therefore, the acronym CIPP stands for **c**ontext evaluation, **i**nput evaluation, **p**rocess evaluation, and **p**roduct evaluation. The planning model consists of four major steps: context evaluation (What needs to be done?); input evaluation (How it should be done?); process evaluation (Is it being done?); and product evaluation (Did it succeed?).

These components can be viewed as separate forms of evaluation, but they can also be viewed as steps or stages in a comprehensive programmatic evaluation. The CIPP approach (Stufflebeam, 1969) is based on the view that the most important purpose of evaluation is not to prove but to improve. The CIPP Model is useful in allowing the users to focus important evaluation questions and issues and to think about different types or stages of evaluation. According to Stufflebeam (1969), “the use of the CIPP model is intended to promote growth and to help the responsible leadership and staff of an institution systematically to obtain and use feedback so as to excel in meeting important needs, or, at least, to do the best they can with the available resources” (p. 118).

Summary

The purpose of this research study is to explore how disability support services are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the contexts of community colleges and issues related to learning disabled students. This was described through a brief historical profile of community colleges and a discussion of the current role of disability support services in the community college. A description of key legal decisions related to the provision of services for learning disabled students was also provided. Learning

disability within the context of higher education was defined to clarify how this term is used for the purposes of this study. In an overview of the current context for the research, the prevalence of learning disabilities in higher education and related adult learning theories were discussed. Additionally, program evaluation related to support programs for students with disabilities in postsecondary education was discussed. Finally, the theoretical lens used in analyzing the study's data and findings, the CIPP program evaluation model was explained. As this review of the literature has shown, there has been much discussion and research related to postsecondary support programs available to serve students with learning disabilities. There are recommendations for accommodations for these students, but there is little evidence as to whether these services have been effective. A need to improve disability services exists in Illinois community colleges. This research intends to explore how disability support services are evaluated and thereby address the gap that exists in the research.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Chapter Three outlines the specific research strategies used to conduct this multi-site case study, including a description of the CIPP program evaluation framework, qualitative research design, case study method, participants, data collection procedures, document review and analysis, overview of the case studies, data analysis procedures, the researcher as an instrument, ethical considerations, and a chapter summary.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study was to explore how disability support services are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges through the use of the CIPP (context, input, process, and product) program evaluation framework. Stufflebeam's (1969) CIPP model of program evaluation was adapted for this study. The four evaluation categories provided the framework through which the data was examined. The research questions in this study were addressed by using the multi-site case study method. Data for the study was organized around each of the four research questions. These four questions were aligned with Stufflebeam's four evaluation categories as well and are noted in parentheses.

Research Questions

The major research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What are the fundamental elements of disability support service programs in select Illinois community colleges? Why and in what ways were the disability support service programs implemented? (Context Evaluation)

2. In what ways does the knowledge base and skills of the director influence the operation of the disability service programs? (**I**nput Evaluation)
3. What evaluation process do these disability service programs use? (**P**rocess Evaluation)
4. How do the findings re-craft the program? (**P**roduct Evaluation)

These driving questions not only guided the study; they elaborated on and clarified the methodology for the research design.

In alignment with Stufflebeam's (1969) CIPP model of program evaluation, Table 3 merges the research questions with the CIPP framework. As expected, in the structure of this study, some overlap exists between the research questions and the CIPP framework questions. The context (i.e., What needs to be done?) category of the CIPP framework is gleaned from the research question regarding the fundamental elements of disability support service programs. This driving question and its follow-up questions get to the essence of the "context" inquiry and develop it in a thorough and comprehensive fashion. Within the CIPP framework (Stufflebeam, 1983), the purpose of a context evaluation study is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a program and to provide direction for improvement. The context evaluation should also examine whether existing goals or priorities are attuned to the needs of the population being served. The results of a context evaluation should provide a foundation for adjusting existing goals and priorities and identifying needed changes. In the context of this study, the program is disability support services in select community colleges; the population being served is students with disabilities.

The input (i.e., How should it be done?) category is examined through the research questions regarding the following factors: (a) implementation of the support service programs and (b) relationship between the operation of the programs and the skills of the directors, respectively. These factors, along with the related follow-up questions, help the researcher flesh out the input component. According to Stufflebeam (1983), an input evaluation is utilized to determine a course of action needed to generate necessary changes within a program. Two applications for input evaluations are (a) preparation of a proposal for submission to an institution's policy board and (b) assessment of an existing program against what is being done elsewhere. In the context of this study, the data related to the disability support services within each institution and the relationship between the operation of the programs and the skills of the directors will be examined across the case study sites.

The process category (i.e., Is it being done?) is discerned from the research question, which inquires about the evaluation process used by the disability service programs and its follow-up questions as well. This question also overlaps into the final category of the CIPP framework: product evaluation. "In essence, a process evaluation is an ongoing check on the implementation of a plan" (Stufflebeam, 1983, p. 132). Additionally, a process evaluation should, ideally, provide a detailed record of the current status of the program against what was intended for the program. The chief purpose of process evaluation is to garner feedback that can facilitate the operation of a program as it was planned or to employ modifications, if needed. "Process evaluation, in addition to promoting improvement and supporting accountability, also fosters understanding of phenomena under study" (Stufflebeam, 1983, p. 133). This study seeks

to improve the provision of services for students with disabilities through the examination of the data related to the evaluation processes utilized by the disability support services.

The product evaluation (i.e., Did it succeed?) category corresponds to the research question of “How do the findings re-craft the program?” and to the related follow-up questions. The purpose of product evaluation is to determine the extent to which a program has met the needs of the group it intends to serve (Stufflebeam, 1983). The evaluation should also provide direction for modifying the program so that it can effectively serve the needs of its intended population. In the context of this study, data related to the utilization of the data within the disability support services will be examined.

Table 3

Research Questions in the context of the CIPP Framework

Research Questions	CIPP Framework
1) What are the fundamental elements of disability support service programs in select Illinois community colleges? Why and in what ways were the disability support service programs implemented?	Context: (What needs to be done?)
2) In what ways does the knowledge base and skills of the director influence the operation of the disability service programs?	Input: (How should it be done?)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3) What is the evaluation process used by these disability service programs? | Process:
(Is it being done?) |
| 4) How do the findings re-craft the program? | Product Evaluation:
(Did it succeed?) |

Research Design

Qualitative Research

According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), qualitative research is used when little is known about a topic or when an inductive approach is deemed more appropriate to learn about a topic. The general research objectives associated with qualitative research are to describe, explore, and discover. Within the continuum of qualitative research, this study utilizes a multi-site, case study method. This method was chosen because it complemented the nature of the research questions in this study. The overall objective of this study was to explore how the disability support services were evaluated in select Illinois community colleges. Qualitative research views a subject matter holistically within a larger context exploring phenomena. The goal of this research was to explore how disability support services are evaluated in community colleges.

Qualitative researchers embrace the notion that behavior is fluid, dynamic, situational, social, and contextual. Qualitative research happens in a naturalistic setting. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), naturalistic observations occur in the real world where the behavior naturally occurs. Therefore, the exploration of how disability support services are evaluated for this research was conducted in the community college setting. The community college was the natural setting for the study participants; the institutions' disabilities programs were the object of the study. The assumptions underlying the qualitative paradigm make this paradigm the most appropriate fit for this study. Unlike quantitative research, which utilizes a narrow lens to test a specific hypothesis, qualitative research uses a wide-angle lens to examine the breadth and depth of phenomena to learn more about them. The study was undertaken to determine the following: (a) the fundamental elements of these programs; (b) why and in what ways the programs are implemented; (c) the evaluation process and impact on services; and (d) the influence of the knowledge base and skills of the director.

Multi-site Case Study Method

According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is a form of inquiry in which researchers interpret what they see, hear, and understand. The interpretations of the study results will be influenced by personal educational background, history, and prior understandings. Interpretive studies focus on the intricate understanding of a particular situation, culture, or organization; that understanding is then related to existing theories or models (Willis, 2007). This was a qualitative inquiry situated in the interpretive paradigm using the multi-site case study method. A paucity of data exists in the form of qualitative studies in relation to how disability support services are evaluated; therefore, the study is of intrinsic interest. A qualitative multi-

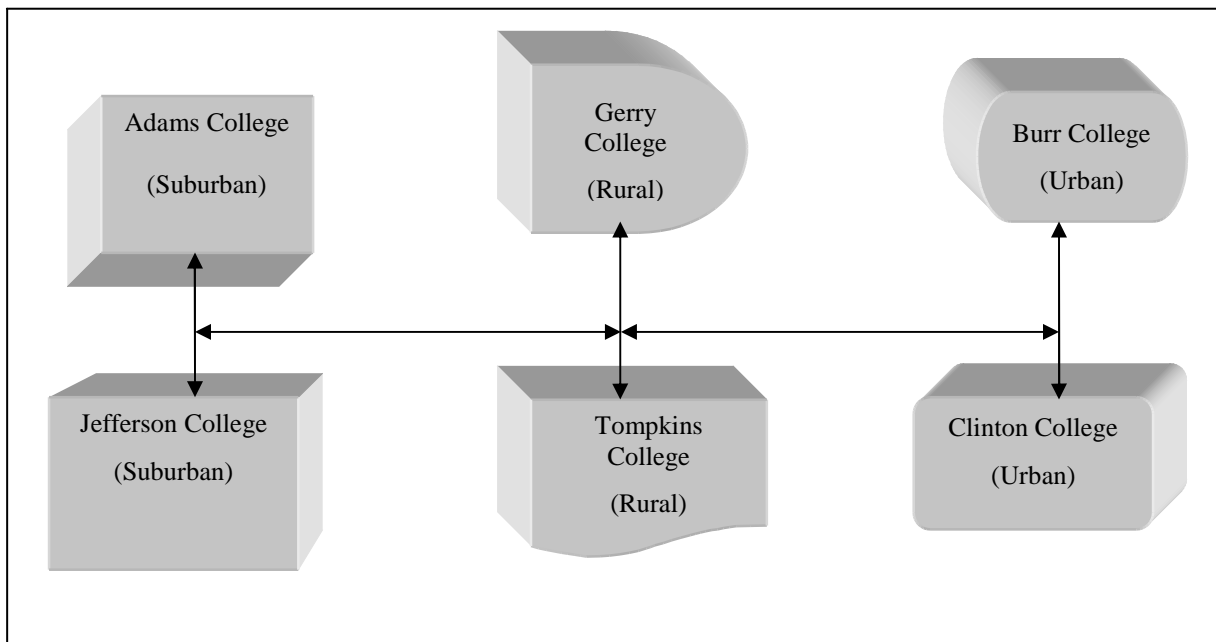
site case study methodology was the appropriate approach for numerous reasons (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003). First, according to Creswell (2007), a case study is used when the researcher has a clearly identifiable case with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the case. A case can be a bounded system of interest; the topic of study is what is happening and considered important within those boundaries (Stake, 1995). Second, Yin (2003) wrote that case studies are the preferred strategy for “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its realistic context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and when a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control” (pp. 13, 18). Third, Creswell (2007) further posits that qualitative research is conducted because an issue must be explored and to obtain a complex, detailed understanding of the issue.

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes. (p. 73)

The “case” in this study is a multi-site case study of the disability service programs within six Illinois community colleges. The case study approach was selected because its definition as a bounded system was best suited to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of disability service programs. The case studies will be analyzed in the aggregate and by comparing them in a cross-case analysis (Figure 1). This approach will provide insight into the cultural and social constructs that contribute to and frame these programs. Case studies can

cover multiple cases and draw a single set of “cross-case” conclusions (Yin, 2003). Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that the aim of studying multiple cases is to see processes and outcomes across many cases, to understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and to develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations. Miles and Huberman (1994) further explain that many researchers approach cross-case comparison by forming types or families. The researchers then study the cases in a set to see whether they fall into clusters or groups that share certain patterns or configurations. Researchers also assume that the cases are more or less comparable, structured in similar ways. By using the multi-site case study design, this research sought to identify similarities and differences between programs that could then be explored to shed light on the policies, procedures and evaluation processes of disability support services in Illinois community colleges.

Figure 1. Multi-Site Case Study Comparative Analysis



Data Collection

Site Selection

Six community colleges in Illinois with disability support services were the focus of inquiry for this study: two community colleges in non-metropolitan (rural) counties, two in suburban counties, and two in metropolitan (urban) counties. A purposeful sample of six community colleges in Illinois with disability student support services was selected by using maximum variation sampling. Creswell (2007) explains that maximum variation is ideal for qualitative research because when a researcher maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, it increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives. The Carnegie classifications assisted in the selection of similarly classified institutions according to size and setting. This enabled selection of broad variations in components and implementation of disability services. These broad variations were essential to facilitate the development of the richness and rigor required in effective qualitative research. Purposive sampling also facilitated the identification of characteristics common to all programs. As Johnson and Christensen (2004) write, “In this form of sampling, a wide range of cases, (individuals, groups, settings, or other phenomena) are purposively selected so that all types of cases along one or more dimensions are included in the research” (p. 220).

Participant Selection

Community colleges selected had a disability support program, a director or individual with equal status with at least 1 year of experience, and was reasonably accessible to the researcher for fieldwork. Therefore, six participants were selected from a convenience sample of Midwestern community colleges in Illinois. A purposeful sample of disability service directors,

obviously situated within the context of community college disability support programs, was the most logical source of detailed information regarding the research topic. Creswell (2007) explains that the concept of purposeful sampling means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. As the focus of this study was exploring how disability support services are evaluated, it was logical to select the person responsible for oversight of the disability services within each institution. No monetary incentives were offered. However, it was hoped that disability service directors would be motivated to participate in the study because one of the study's desired outcomes is improving services for disabled students.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection drew on multiple data sources to answer the research driving questions. Semi-structured interviews of disability service directors, observations of all potentially relevant phenomena, a questionnaire, institutional and program documents, and field notes (both observational and reflective) were used to collect the data. These methods were used to gather data related to the context, input, process, and product of disability support service programs. Each disability service program with its related data was examined in total; then the programs were compared and contrasted through the use of a cross-case analysis. This analysis aided in generating overarching findings and conclusions used to highlight similarities, differences, and anomalies in services between programs. Examining multiple data sources and the data garnered from the participants' interviews enabled triangulation of the data, which strengthened the study. Each of the various data sources are further explained in this section.

Interviews

The study was organized utilizing a semi-structured interview protocol that reflected the intent of the study's overarching research driving questions. Qualitative interviews can be used to obtain in-depth information about a participant's thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations, and feelings about a topic (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Additionally, Yin (2003) notes that case study interviews require the researcher to operate simultaneously on two levels: satisfying the needs of the line of inquiry and conducting the interviews with friendly and nonthreatening questions. This technique was utilized while conducting the interviews for this study. The interviews of the program directors garnered participants' knowledge and perceptions about disability service programs. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for follow-up and probing questions, which facilitated the elaboration of data that may have naturally emerged during the interviews. Potential participants were contacted through an e-mail that explained the purpose of the study and requested potential participants who were willing to participate to complete a questionnaire. Those who agreed to participate were sent an e-mail to arrange an interview date and time. A confirmation e-mail was then sent to each participant stating the purpose of the meeting and a copy of the interview questions.

The interview questions were provided to the directors in advance to allow them an opportunity to review the questions and reflect on relevant responses. The interviews (see Appendix A) took place in the offices of the disability service directors. Each interview began with an explanation of the goal of the research study to provide the interviewee a context for the questions. The interviews lasted between 1 and 2 hours. Interviews began once the consent form was signed and the researcher asked permission to record the session. The interviews were

held on site, conducted in person, and digitally recorded. All interviews were transcribed by a paid transcriptionist who was made aware of the confidential nature of the data (Appendix D). The researcher was prepared to conduct follow-up interviews if the response was deemed to require further elaboration.

Questionnaires

A study participant demographic questionnaire was constructed by the researcher and e-mailed to participants prior to the interviews. The questionnaire asked for work experience at a community college, educational experience, general information about the disability support services office, and the participant's opinion on an area of disability services that needs improvement (Appendix B). The data was used to gather pertinent background information related to the characteristics, qualifications and experiences of the disability service directors, and their respective disability support programs. The questionnaire also saved time during the interviews for more open-ended questioning. Raw data is stored in a locked file cabinet for 3 years after the conclusion of the research study.

Documents

According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), documents are one major type of secondary data for use in a research study. This data was collected and recorded for an entirely different purpose than the current research purpose. Secondary data may be used with other data for corroboration. For the purposes of this study, institutional and program documents (e.g., published information about disability services available on the institution's website and in the disability office) were reviewed, as well as governmental documents on disability law. Archival documents included annual reports, student handbooks, and policy and procedure manuals. These documents were reviewed to ascertain procedures for the access of services, requirements

for the documentation of disabilities, and complaint process, among others. These documents assisted in identifying themes and provided insight through observing how the documents were produced and how they function within the institutions. Yin (2003) cautioned that when archival evidence has been deemed relevant, the researcher should be careful to consider the conditions under which it was produced as well as its accuracy. Archival documents were also used to attain other information pertinent to the driving questions of the study. The documents were stored in a locked file cabinet for 3 years after the conclusion of the research study.

Field Notes

Field notes, both observational and reflective, were recorded during and after interviews to enhance the research and facilitate triangulation of the collected data. The field notes were analyzed to triangulate and enrich the categories and subcategories. The notes and audio tapes were used to ensure the accuracy of the transcribed notes. These notes are also stored in a locked file cabinet for 3 years after the conclusion of the research study.

Data Analysis Procedures

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), qualitative researchers make many specific observations and then draw inferences about larger and more general phenomena. They scrutinize the body of data in search of patterns—subjectively identified—that the data reflect. After the themes within the data have been identified using an inductive process, the researcher moves into a more deductive mode to verify or modify it with additional data. Yin (2003) recommends the development of an analytic strategy that will help the researcher to treat evidence fairly, produce compelling analytic conclusions, and rule out alternative interpretations. Additionally, Creswell (2007) states that data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a

process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion. Therefore, the development of a data analysis strategy is an essential first step for data analysis.

The data was coded with the intent of building an understanding on the part of the reader. The data analysis techniques used in this study were derived from the data analysis procedures described above. The following techniques were used to analyze the data for this study.

1. The participants' interviews were audiotape-recorded with the consent of the participants.
2. Throughout the data collection phase, interview sessions were transcribed shortly after the session.
3. The researcher read through an electronic copy of each transcript to do an in-depth study of each individual site, to identify themes and categories related to the sub-questions, and to reduce the amount of data. As it relates to this study, the focus of each guiding question and the corresponding category within the CIPP program evaluation led to the organization of the data into broad categories. For example, the input evaluation question sought to ascertain in what ways the knowledge base and skills of the director influence the operation of disability support services in select community colleges. The data were organized into three broad categories: (a) the relationship between the professional background of director and service delivery; (b) self-perception of the program director's management skills; and (c) professional development opportunities. Notes and emerging themes related to the data were recorded in the margins for each transcript and codes were assigned to portions of the

data. The notes were used to identify new interpretations, questions, or connections with other parts of the data. The notes also aided the researcher in focusing the study by distilling the amount of data into categories of interest for the study.

4. Next, the statements from the interviews related to the emerging themes were highlighted, extracted from the transcripts, and recorded into a data analysis matrix for each institution whose cells corresponded with the codes that were developing into patterns and themes. These matrices facilitated the comparison of information across institutions. Use of this technique provided a detailed analysis of the disability support services in each institution.
5. Once the matrices were completed, the common themes generated by the sub-questions were identified. File folders for each theme were created on the computer. Codes were assigned for themes related to the data for the disability support services within each institution, and for themes that were similar and different in a cross-case analysis. This process allowed for the comparison of patterns (e.g., components of disability service programs) that emerged from the data.

Theme Identification Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in an ongoing process of theming and coding that facilitated the exploration of themes as they emerged. A priori themes were identified from the theories and concept that served as the study's conceptual framework. The themes were further determined by relevance to the driving and sub-questions. Other a priori themes were identified from the CIPP program evaluation model that was used to frame the research. According to Stufflebeam (1969), "the use of the CIPP model is intended to promote growth and to help the

responsible leadership and staff of an institution systematically to obtain and use feedback so as to excel in meeting important needs, or, at least, to do the best they can with the available resources” (p. 118). This model views evaluation as a tool to help make programs work better for the people they intend to serve. Further, the initial codes were created by analyzing the data for themes that were repeated in the interviews, field notes, document reviews, or in response to one or more interview questions. Consistent with the qualitative paradigm, this process was inductive in nature; the themes were generated from the collection of data.

Triangulation Process

The collection of data from interviews with disability service directors, direct observations, document reviews, field notes, and pre-interview questionnaires facilitated the triangulation of the data, corroborated the findings, and increased confidence in the study. “Any case study finding or conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information” (Yin, 2003, p. 116). The data sources were compared to identify similarities and differences. For this study, the main documents utilized were responses to questionnaires, governmental documents from Illinois and the federal office of civil rights on disability law, as well as college-specific information and documents.

Lastly, the findings were interpreted so that the reader of the study would be able to decide if the results were transferable to other community colleges. According to Guba and Lincoln (1982), some level of transferability is possible if enough “thick description” is available about the contexts to make a reasonable judgment feasible.

Subjectivity: The Researcher as Instrument

According to Yin (2003), “We (re)present our data, partly based on participants’ perspectives and partly based on our own interpretation, never clearly escaping our own personal stamp on a study” (p. 43). The researcher is the primary instrument in conducting qualitative research; therefore, it is imperative to provide background information regarding this individual. The researcher for this study has a vested interest in the quality of services for students with disabilities in the community college setting. As an instructor in a community college, the researcher has advised, counseled, and taught students with disabilities. The researcher is concerned about whether or not appropriate services and program supports are in place to best serve the needs of students with disabilities. Moreover, on a personal level, having a child with a learning disability engenders a perspective for this researcher that is both clinical and pragmatic. This personal circumstance further highlights this researcher’s interest in programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of students with disabilities. However, it is the intent of the researcher to be as unbiased as possible.

Ethical Considerations: Protection of Human Subjects

Ethical considerations were addressed as this study was planned and conducted. Before beginning the research, Institutional Research and Review Board (IRRB) approval was gained through National Louis University. The potential risks to human subjects were identified and addressed in the IRRB application. Confidentiality of all participants and all six case study institutions has been maintained throughout the study. All participants signed a consent form stating the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and their right to refuse participation at any time.

The six cases were each given a pseudonym to protect anonymity. Participant agreement to participate in the research study was documented with participants' signatures on the consent form (Appendix C). Interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and downloaded to a flash drive for storage. The flash drive and paper copies of the transcriptions are stored in a locked cabinet for 3 years after the conclusion of the research study. The transcriptionist signed an agreement ensuring confidentiality (Appendix D).

Summary

In Chapter Three, an overview was provided of the specific research strategies used to conduct this multi-site case study, including a rationale and description of qualitative research design and case study method. The CIPP program evaluation model adapted for the study was also discussed. The site and participant selections were done using purposeful sampling. The data collection procedures included document review, interviews, a questionnaire, and field notes. Data analysis consisted of the development of a data analysis strategy that facilitated the identification of themes and codes. An overview of the case studies, the researcher as an instrument, ethical considerations, and a chapter summary were also included in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The mission of community colleges is to provide accessible and affordable education to a diverse student population. These characteristics uniquely position community colleges to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Many of these students have mobility and financial challenges related to obtaining a postsecondary education. One of the major challenges for community colleges is meeting the needs of students with disabilities. More specifically, both state and federal laws require that community colleges provide an educational milieu within which students with disabilities have equal access to higher education. Illinois is the third-largest community college system in the nation; moreover, community colleges are the primary provider of postsecondary education in Illinois. Statewide, 48 community colleges are situated within 39 community college districts. These institutions serve the diverse needs of Illinois' adult population.

Three important pieces of legislation have increased the provision of educational opportunities for students with disabilities: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. These three pieces of legislation provided the impetus for institutions to evaluate the types of services that they provide to students and to ensure that they develop programs that meet federal guidelines (Department of Education, 2008).

A paucity of data exists in the form of qualitative studies in relation to how disability support services are evaluated. This study was undertaken to facilitate the ability of institutions to provide better services for disabled students. Consequently, the students will benefit from support services that are specifically tailored to their needs.

The purpose of this qualitative multi-site study was to explore how disability support services are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges through the use of the CIPP (context, input, process, and product) program evaluation framework. Stufflebeam's (1969) CIPP model of program evaluation was adapted for this study. The four evaluation categories provided the framework through which the data was examined. The primary focus of the study was exploring how disability support services are evaluated; therefore, the areas of program elements, program establishment, and program directors' skills were explored in an effort to provide a comprehensive view of disability support services. Six community colleges in Illinois with disability service programs were the focus of the inquiry for this study: two community colleges in non-metropolitan (rural) counties, two in suburban counties, and two in metropolitan (urban) counties. Therefore, six disability service directors who were responsible for the oversight of the disability support services within each institution were interviewed. The interviews along with questionnaires, observations, documents, and field notes were collected from each institution. Coding and analytic techniques were replicated for the multiple cases within the study. This research study was supported by four guiding questions that anchored the examination. These four questions were also aligned with Stufflebeam's four evaluation categories and are noted in parentheses.

Research Questions

The major research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What are the fundamental elements of disability support service programs in select Illinois community colleges? Why and in what ways were the disability support service programs implemented? (Context Evaluation)

2. In what ways does the knowledge base and skills of the director influence the operation of the disability service programs? (**I**nput Evaluation)
3. What evaluation process do these disability service programs use? (**P**rocess Evaluation)
4. How do the findings re-craft the program? (**P**roduct Evaluation)

This chapter will first present a case narrative for each of the six community colleges examined in the study. In this section, findings will be provided for each individual case by the research question in the form of quotes and vignettes in alignment with the CIPP program evaluation framework. Creswell (2007) suggested the use of quotes to “bring in the voice of the participants in the study” (p. 182). The quotes are integrated throughout the presentation of the findings by short quotes, embedded quotes within the narrative, and longer quotes that are used to express more complex understandings. The last section will present the findings through a cross-case comparison of the six case studies. Evaluation results based on the CIPP program evaluation model created the framework for program improvement. By deploying a cross-case analytical framework, this study will explore how disability support services are evaluated in select community colleges by looking for patterns and themes in the data that are common across institutions. The model facilitated the comprehensive examination of disability support services in select Illinois community colleges.

The exploration of how disability support services are evaluated within the select community colleges in this study was undertaken to determine the following: (a) the fundamental elements of these programs; (b) why and in what ways the programs are implemented; (c) the

evaluation process and impact on services; and (d) the influence of the knowledge base and skills of the director. The focus of each guiding question and the corresponding category within the CIPP program evaluation model are further explained in this section. More specifically, the context evaluation questions sought to ascertain the fundamental elements, components, and implementation that are specific to services provided for students with disabilities in select community colleges.

The data were organized into three broad categories: (a) identification of the most important components of disability support services; (b) specific services provided to disabled students; and (c) guidelines and procedures that expedite service delivery. The question also sought to ascertain why and in what ways the disability support services were implemented in select community colleges. The data were organized into two broad categories: (a) impetus for establishment of the disability support services program; and (b) leaders in establishment of the disability support services program. The process evaluation question sought to ascertain information regarding the evaluation of the disability support services in select community colleges. In addition, this question (product evaluation) sought to garner information regarding the utilization of the evaluation data to re-craft the disability support services. The data were organized into three broad categories: (a) evaluation of disability support services; (b) data collection and constraints; and (c) institutional response to data collection. The input evaluation question sought to ascertain in what ways the knowledge base and skills of the director influence the operation of disability support services in select community colleges. The data were organized into three broad categories: (a) the relationship between the professional background

of director and service delivery; (b) self-perception of the program director's management skills; and (c) professional development opportunities.

Case Studies

This section presents a narrative on six case studies, in alignment with the CIPP program evaluation framework, which includes the findings for each research question. The cases are presented separately to capture a comprehensive view and portrait of disability support services at each institution. To protect anonymity, the six cases were each given a pseudonym. The case study narratives also include an overview of the institutional setting, the organizational structure, mission or purpose of the disability support services, and the specific accommodations offered. Table 4 lists the six institutions and summarizes enrollment data collected from the demographic survey for each institution.

Table 4

Summary of Enrollment Data for Each Institution

Illinois Community College	Full-time Enrollment (Fall 2008)	Part-time Enrollment (Fall 2008)	Students Receiving Disability Support Services (FY2008-2009)
Adams College	6,753	8,497	1,280
Jefferson College	9,882	15,786	1,153
Burr College	3,507	6,204	92
Clinton College	1,758	2,305	132
Gerry College	944	1,444	36
Tompkins College	3,432	5,875	560

Case One—Adams College (Suburban)

Adams College is an open admission, public, suburban-serving, single campus comprehensive community college. The mission of Adams College is to provide excellent education at an affordable cost, promote personal growth, enrich the local community, and meet the challenges of a global society. Early in 1965, on the heels of the Illinois Community College Act, Adams College township voters approved a referendum to establish a community college district. Seven citizens were elected to serve as the first Board of Trustees. The college began by offering classes at a nearby high school. Enrollment rapidly grew from 1,700 students in 1967 to approximately 24,000 students in 1999. Six years after its founding, the college received unqualified full accreditation. Credit enrollment count (academic year 2007/2008) was 25,817; continuing education non-credit count was 8,754. The college currently offers 102 certificate programs, 36 Associate of Applied Science degree programs, and 5 transfer degree programs. The college consists of 24 buildings on 200 acres.

The mission of the Access and Disabilities Office (ADS) is to create a comprehensively accessible environment where individuals are viewed on the basis of ability, not disability. The college serves a large deaf population and seeks to promote increased and improved access and availability of postsecondary educational opportunities for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Legally mandated access and accommodations may include support as follows:

1. Providing sign language interpreters
2. Providing readers or scribes for exams
3. Providing modifications in testing procedures

4. Providing note-taking assistance
5. Using specialized technology
6. Relocating classes to more accessible spaces or using specialized furniture
7. Providing modifications in procedures (e.g., priority registration, reduced course loads)
8. Converting materials into other formats (e.g., Braille, large print, audio)

Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus

The director of disability services at Adams College was very knowledgeable about disability support services as a result of 30 years of experience in the field. He shared a copy of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) program standards and performance indicators and stated that the disability support office at Adams College reflected these standards. According to AHEAD, these standards are intended to enhance service provision for college students with disabilities. The director was eager to participate in the research study and expressed a desire to aid any efforts to improve services for students with disabilities.

The director believed that every disability support service office should have two basic components. He felt that every college should have a way of notifying students with disabilities that an office or person is available to contact if you are in need of services. That office should be prepared to provide the necessary accommodations. The director explained this as follows: “But basically, every office like this has to have a way to access and provide access and accommodations for students based upon their disability which we learn about through an interview and reading background information.”

The director further explained that his philosophy is that the purpose of the disability support office is to facilitate the learning process involving two basic customers—the students and the faculty. He also felt that another ongoing process within the institution should be to make classes progressively more accessible for all students. This comment points to promoting universal design in facilities, communication, and instruction.

The director explained that services provided to students generally fall into two categories: accommodation or access. Specific services are outlined in an accommodation plan based on documentation provided by the student. According to its college website, disability support services at Adams College include many types of legally mandated support such as note taking, print material in electronic format, modifications in testing procedures, use of specialized equipment, reduced course loads, and academic coaching. The director added that there seems to be an increase in the enrollment of students with autism and Asperger's syndrome. The types of accommodations these students need are unique because the disability affects social and interpersonal interactions. The director relayed a recent experience with an autistic student:

This year we have this one student who has autism and she always sits in the front of the class in the middle of the row and she constantly asks questions. So for her, there's no awareness that there's anything wrong about that. Anytime she wants to ask a question she puts her hand up. So her question asking behavior is way beyond the norm and it was irritating the teacher. So we have to either figure out how to extinguish the behavior or we have to figure out how to modify that behavior and enable her, given what we know about her and her disability. In general, people with autism are very rule bound. They love rules so you just establish a rule between the teacher and the student and you say

you can only ask three questions. And maybe you even make it physical, you give her three cards and every time she asks a question, that's the number one card, number two, number three. So when she gets to the third card she knows then, that enables the person to kind of self-regulate.

The director also discussed an example of an accommodation for students with chronic illnesses. This type of accommodation might involve a reduction in the credit hours required for full-time status to maintain insurance eligibility.

The director explained that he and his staff strive to expedite service delivery to students. He characterized his position as split evenly between administrative duties and direct services for students. Additionally, the disability support office has clear office procedures and policies. Written program guides have been developed; these guides discuss common disabilities and outline possible accommodations based on documentation. The office also considers test results and recommendations from psychologists or psychiatrists as long as they are reasonable for the postsecondary environment. The intake process is structured into two appointments. The first appointment is designed to meet the student to discuss medical and educational history, goals, and concerns. During the second appointment, disability service counselors develop an accommodation plan and assist students in choosing courses and instructors to fit students' needs and abilities. The assistant director characterized the process in this way: "It's really a one stop for students who are registered here. But that's very unusual. Normally, most disability support service offices just do accommodations." It was apparent that the guidelines and procedures in place ensure that the disability support service office stays true to one aspect of its mission, which is to create a comprehensive and accessible environment for students with disabilities.

The director at Adams College was very knowledgeable about the history of the establishment of disability support services at his institution and the state of Illinois. According to the director, the program at Adams College started because three deaf students enrolled in the school in 1972. At that time, no laws had been passed, no interpreters were provided, and limited knowledge was available about how to help these students. The predecessor of the current director was then the Director of Health Services. The deaf students and other students with physical disabilities or health problems were routinely referred to this person for services. The Director of Health Services spent a year researching the provision of basic services for the deaf population. About 2 years later, the college entered into a funding agreement with the Department of Rehabilitation Services; a program for a growing population of deaf students was formally established. In 1978, a program for adult learning-disabled students was started with grant funds. A year later, the college hired the current director to facilitate the consolidation of the division for adult learning-disabled students, the program for the deaf students, and health services under one roof.

The director described the leader in the establishment of the disability support services in this manner:

My former boss, who was the Director of Health Services, who later became an Academic Dean, was really the pioneer. She did this when there was no requirement to do it... During the late 1970s, when she was kind of helping to get this program going, she became a doctoral student. So, she did her dissertation on the Rehab Act and on doing the 504 plan here. She was really into it, you know, she just had a heart for it. She

was here a long time, she worked with the college probably 30 or more years, but she retired a few years ago.

The director shared that he had been in his position at Adams College for 30 years and was preparing to retire in 8 months. He hopes that the person that will take his position will be as passionate about providing effective services for students with disabilities.

Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director

The director perceived a direct correlation between the professional background of the director and service delivery. The director stated that many veteran disability service directors either have a disability themselves or have a family member with a disability. Therefore, direct experience with disabilities serves as a basic foundation of knowledge for the position.

The director acknowledged that the position of a disability service director is a relatively young profession. Therefore, the position lacks a professional training track. The director elaborated as follows:

People come to this through special education, rehabilitation, and student affairs. Those are probably the three most common but then everything else so... Some people that are doing this job or like have a degree in psychology or social work, some are counselors, and some are academic support people so the entry point is very wide and very diverse.

The director's example illustrated the issue:

Imagine someone whose just been told well we realize we have 40 students with disabilities so we're anointing you as the director, there's no extra pay but, and you know that person is like starting totally from scratch and the students are coming in the very next day so they are just making it up as they're going along... Some of that works out

okay because you have people that are talented and ambitious, but the flip side of that is that sometimes people burn out because it's just too much work. So they quit and then you have turnover. So you have a lack of stability and a lack of consistency in the program because nobody stays.

He shared that, upon retirement, he would like to positively influence the professional preparation of disability service directors. He felt that for both the longevity and professionalism of the position, a career track should be developed. This track could take the form of a graduate certificate program or a specialization for a master's degree. The sequence of courses should address issues related to the disabled population, management and budget, and issues related to working with faculty. He stated, "I would like to just see that this whole type of work just be elevated... It's going to get bigger, so we need to train. You just don't want to just throw anybody in this job or just kind of anoint people to it anymore."

The director felt he possessed a basic knowledge base regarding disabling conditions and health problems. Additional knowledge involved business management and teaching skills in higher education and more specifically an understanding of the community college environment. He also stressed the importance of interpersonal skills related to supervising, motivating, encouraging, developing, and mentoring people as a manager. The director further described his knowledge base: "I had the good fortune to have a background in rehab [rehabilitation] already so I had already worked 6 or 7 years with people with disabilities. I'd learned sign language so at least, I had that." The director also noted that much work is needed in the area of professional development for directors of disability service programs. This development could be in the format of a graduate certificate program or a specialization in a master's program.

The director elaborated as follows:

But I think both for the longevity and the professionalism it would be great if somebody could go through a sequence of courses that would more specifically prepare them for the issues of the population, the issues of like management and budget, the issues of faculty, and working with faculty.

The director is a strong advocate for professional development. The opportunities for development at Adams College were described in this way:

We start every semester with a staff retreat and usually in the afternoon of that there's some kind of training for professional development that's self-run or we bring in people. I encourage people to go to conferences and to read, get books, resources, go to local seminars, join organizations, and network with people. I try to find money for them to go. At Adams, it's actually really good and I think we're unusual in this too. Every employee has their own professional development account.

The office also strives to maintain a pool of money to cover the costs for the professional development of its part time staff.

Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process

The director stated that there was no formal evaluation process when the disability support services program was developed at Adams College. He added that the program contains a review requirement for academic and student support programs in Illinois by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). These reviews are required every 5 years. The director prepared the first review early in his tenure as a director and has one due next year. The director stated that in addition to the required report, his office writes the results of a comprehensive

analysis of the support office into an annual year-end report as a program under student affairs at Adams College. This report examines budgetary analysis, number of students served, student and faculty satisfaction data, improvement projects, and general objectives for the next 1 to 5 years. Then every 5 years the support services are viewed from a larger perspective.

The director added that in his experience, evaluations completed in addition to those required by ICCB are rarely done in the field. The director explained his view: “Partly it’s rare because a lot of offices are small and so most of the staff time is involved in actually delivering services but also because people don’t necessarily, there’s no expectation and they don’t necessarily see the benefit of doing program evaluation.”

Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data

The year-end report involves a budgetary analysis that examines cost–benefit total cost by student, total cost by contact, and cost by populations. The evaluation also includes quality improvement measures for processes within the disability support office. The director shared an example of quality improvement:

We’ve really beefed up our electronic text production process about 5, 6, 7 years ago.

We bought a whole bunch of new equipment so since we have that we’re actually probably going to make some more changes in the next year. Then we’re going to look at like how well is that process working. You know like how quickly can we get a book done and then kind of compare that to other schools you know like are there norms. If you have a 500-page book and it’s just text, you know, what’s a good amount of time that it should take to get that book in an alternate format like in an audio format?

The director added that the office periodically requests evaluations from faculty or ask students through surveys or interviews. An intern was in the process of conducting exit interviews of 40 or 50 students, by phone calls or e-mails, to ascertain details regarding their experience with the disability support service office at Adams College. The director felt very strongly that research was imperative for the disability support services office to grow.

The director stated that, in addition to the data collected for the ICCB report, the Illinois Board of Higher Education in the Annual Underrepresented Groups Report requires disability support services data. Every community college in Illinois must submit this report. The report data includes number of students served, number of people providing services, total budget, and sources of funding. The director felt that the primary reason for collecting program data was for program improvement. He reiterated that program improvement decisions must be based on actual data. The director added what he felt was a secondary and less practiced reason for the collection of data. This reason is budget driven.

If you want to get more money, you can ask all you want and you can have wonderful anecdotes and stuff but basically you don't secure a lot of money unless you can show that you need it and that the money that you already have is being invested and having an impact on something.

Ultimately, when the office seeks funds, quality data must be available to support the requests.

The director related that the overall institutional response toward the data collected within the disability support services program was positive. He stated "...the college has supported us in finding ways to support the program as the needs have grown or have changed so that's been about money and about people even about space..." The disability services support program

operated in about one third of its current space at the beginning of his tenure as director. One challenge has been to justify high-cost services like sign language interpreters. The director researched other programs with deaf populations and utilized the data to substantiate the funds needed for that aspect of the program.

Case Two—Jefferson College (Suburban)

Jefferson College is a public, suburban-serving, single campus community college whose mission is to be at the forefront of higher education and serve the needs of the community. The mission further states that the college seeks to be a primary resource for residents by providing high-quality educational and cultural opportunities. The college also strives to serve as a model of distinction for community college education. It is the third-largest single-campus community college in the nation and the largest community college in the state. The campus covers 273 acres and has nine major buildings. Jefferson College offers more than 90 certificates, programs, and degrees for today's occupational and technical careers, and seven associate's degrees in 59 occupational and 45 transfer pre-baccalaureate programs. Approximately 31,000 students attend Jefferson College each semester.

Although the college does not have a mission statement specific to the disability support office, the college is committed to equality of educational opportunities for eligible students with disabilities. Students who possess the ability to do college-level work and have an educational commitment to succeed are ensured access, accommodations, and support services.

According to the college's website, the following services are provided:

- Special Student Services ID Card
- Note-taking paper

- Testing accommodations
- Reading pen
- Large computer monitors
- Mobility assistance
- Preferential seating
- Sign language interpreters
- FM system
- TTY
- Assistive technology (i.e., voice-activated software-dragon naturally speaking/remote captioning)
- Large print/Braille available to students
- Barrier-free parking
- Wheelchairs (both manual and electric) for on-campus use

Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus

According to the director, the most important component of the program is to ensure that the campus and the programs are accessible to students. The director serves on a committee that addresses the accessibility of the physical facility for students. The college was in the midst of a large renovation project. The improvement and relocation of the disability service offices were significant aspects of the project.

The director spoke passionately about the services provided for students through the disability support office. The most common accommodation for students was additional testing time. In addition to the services listed in the college profile, the director noted that some

students require other test-related accommodations (e.g., a distraction-free test environment, a test reader, or tests digitally recorded). The director related that about 80% of disabled students receive testing accommodations. The college has an institutional membership to Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D). This organization's mission is to make the written word accessible for students with print disabilities. Through this organization, students who need books in an alternative format are accommodated. The disability office also educates students regarding their rights and responsibilities. The director further explained the students' responsibilities in this way: "We give the student the blue card to identify themselves to the faculty; they are in the driver's seat and they need to advocate for themselves." According to its college website, the disability office supports students with disabilities in a variety of ongoing programs and events such as transition services, a disability support group, a visually impaired awareness day, and a special student services information night.

The director believed that the first step in providing services to students with disabilities is to make students aware of the availability of services. The college's print and online publications advertise the existence of the disability service office. The commencement of services then depends on the student's actions. The director explained as follows:

Students need to identify themselves to our office and bring in current and appropriate written documentation, some students don't know that we're here, some students don't want to be learning disabled anymore after 12 years, and they want to do it on their own.

So if they choose not to contact us, you know, we are not going to seek them out.

The college website states that once students contact the office, individual appointments are then made to assess needs, explain services, and give students guidance through the process.

The director added that faculty involvement was a key factor in delivering services to disabled students at the college. The process was explained in this way:

At the beginning of each term we send an e-mail to all full-time and part-time faculty members explaining that if a student shows you a blue card, this is what it means. We give them a few do's and don'ts, and we talk about people-first language and we make sure that they know that the students have already brought in documentation and have made specific requests.

The director believed that it is the responsibility of the disability service office to educate the faculty and to advocate for the students' rights.

The director was knowledgeable about the establishment of special services at Jefferson College. She described the establishment of the disability support services in this way:

My previous boss was a nurse here. She retired 8 years ago and she had been at the college for 30 or 40 something years. She was here from the very beginning.

Historically, students with disabilities also had medical issues as well... So I believe that when the first student with a physical disability came on campus they directed her to the student. So, that is why special services were under the health center... Today it does not hold true that just because I have a disability does not mean that there are medical issues.

The establishment of special services was connected to a general perception of a link between medical disabilities and other disabilities. The director reiterated that the leader in establishing the disability support services was the predecessor of the director's current position as the coordinator of Health and Special services.

Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director

The director of the disability supports services at Jefferson College felt that the professional background of the director sets the overall tone of the office. She added that there exists a variety of professional backgrounds that could lead to a director of disability services position. Personal characteristics, namely sympathy and empathy towards students, were described as critical for the director to provide consistent and effective service for students with special needs.

The director felt that it is important to focus on the student—not the disability. She stated that sometimes it would be easy to over accommodate and give the students everything that they want, but that is not the purpose of the office and not what the law requires. She also admitted that she does not have as much patience as she would like, but she is working on it. She described her personal management skills in this way: “I think I have a pretty good ability to think on my feet and to problem solve and to see the whole picture and I think I’ve brought on people that have those same characteristics.”

According to the director, the current financial crisis has limited travel opportunities for professional development. However, the director and staff seek out local and less expensive training opportunities. The director expressed that she frequently takes classes because she really wants to learn and become a better person. In the near future, she hoped to take an online class through a disabilities studies program addressing universal design.

Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process

The director did not believe that program evaluation was an initial component in the development of the disability support services office. She felt that evaluations were essential for

collecting positive and negative feedback regarding the program. She explained, "...I think that evaluations can be very positive. There's always room for growth and to better serve the students that there's things that we can do." She added that the disability support office previously attempted to survey students, but she did not feel as if they were successful. She would like to see these done better and on a regular basis.

Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data

The director related that Jefferson College has recently implemented a new data management system. She felt that the system would facilitate the collection of data required for the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). The primary reason for the collection of data is to report the required information to ICCB. The director expressed concern that the collection of data and an inadequate number of staff members sometimes interferes with the provision of services for students. She explained as follows:

We deal with quite a few students on a pretty regular basis and I don't want to say they're high maintenance, but some of our students are more needy than others. So sometimes it feels like we have 1,000 students in on any given day. And sometimes that interferes with trying to get the other things done because we are a direct student service. And if they're in a crisis or distressed, I'm not going to say gosh, I was just doing some input, some data entry stuff so hold that crisis and come back later.

The director felt that the institutional response towards the data collected within the disability support services program was positive. One example was the current renovation of the main campus building. The disability support services office was in a temporary location until its new space was built. The former space was not large enough and was positioned off of a

main hallway. The main hall traffic tended to be loud and was disruptive to the disability support services office. The director gave another example of a positive institutional response regarding handicap parking spaces: “[W]e have always issued the permits and if we see there’s an increase, you know we gave out 75 more this year than we did last year I think that they [institution] are receptive to adding additional spaces not just the letter of the law but following what we see as trends.” These two examples clearly illustrate institutional commitment to the support of the disability services office through current data and data trends.

Case Three—Burr College (Urban)

Burr College is a public, urban-serving, multi-campus community college whose mission is to address the needs of the diverse community surrounding the college by providing opportunities for higher education, professional growth, and cultural enrichment. The college is committed to high-quality, affordable programs that fulfill the educational and career needs of the surrounding community. The college offers high-quality instruction in the credit program with 55 full-time faculty members and over 5,000 enrolled students. The total population is 18,615 in all programs (Foundational Courses-Pre-credit, Credit, Career and Technical Education, Continuing Education, Special Interest, Adult Education, and Vocational Skills).

The Disability Access Center (DAC) provides necessary academic accommodations. Although the college does not have a mission statement specific to the disability support office, the center exists to expedite the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities to provide equal access and avoid discrimination.

The Disability Access Center provides the following accommodations:

- Classroom accommodations

- Note-takers test accommodations
- Voice recorders
- Recordings for the blind and dyslexic
- Large-print dictionaries and thesaurus
- Scanners
- Talking calculators and dictionaries
- Braille equipment
- JAWS (i.e., talking software for the blind)
- Readers
- Enhanced magnifiers
- Referrals for one-on-one tutoring
- Books on CD-ROM
- Registration assistance
- Sign language interpreters
- Adaptive equipment and referrals to community and government-based organizations

Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus

The director of Burr College appeared a bit overwhelmed with the tasks required of her at the time of the interview. However, she willingly made herself available for the interview appointment. According to the director, the important components of the disability support office are the accommodations provided to students and the activities of the disabled students club. The director described one recent club event:

We hosted a disability awareness day; many staff participated, and over 200 students participated. We had many vendors from different agencies like autism, the bone marrow people, the Learning Disability Association, Department of Human Services, and Social Security. It's an all-day event and people get comprehensive information at each table so that helps with things like that when they need that information it's right at hand.

The college website further explains that the Disability Awareness Day is an annual event and that the club also partnered with the Department of Human Services to hold a job fair for people with disabilities. According to the Annual Report (2009) for the disability office, another important component is an organization that partners with the student government association. The goal of the organization, as stated on the college website, is for students to work together to achieve goals while overcoming obstacles. However, students do not have to be diagnosed with a disability to join. The disability support services director is the advisor for this active organization.

According to the website, Burr College makes every effort to integrate students with disabilities into all courses and programs. In addressing this effort, the college is “not required to alter fundamental academic requirements,” but it “is required to make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities” (Burr College website). The stated goal of the disability support service office is to make every effort possible to ensure that all students reach their maximum potential. In response to a question on the research demographic survey, the director listed note-taking, extended time for tests and quizzes, and sign language interpretation as common services utilized by students at the college.

According to the director and the college website, service delivery is a two-step process. First, the office reviews the documentation of students' disabilities. The documentation must include an evaluation of the impact on the student of both the diagnosed condition and "provide evidence of the functional limitations experienced by the student academically" (Burr College website). The documentation must include a "diagnosis determined by a licensed physician or primary health provider, psychologist, audiologist, speech therapist, learning disability specialist, or other appropriate professional." The second step consists of an intake interview to determine and discuss eligibility for services accommodations.

The director assumed that the impetus for the establishment of the disability support services at Burr College was directly related to the passing of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. She had no direct knowledge of the history regarding the establishment of the disability support services at her institution. Nor was she aware of the leaders in the establishment of disability support services; however, she shared the fact that her predecessor was in the position for many years and was also a sign language interpreter.

Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director

The director conveyed the belief that the personal background of the director directly influences consistent service delivery for students with disabilities. The director elaborated as follows:

My background coming from a private not-for-profit adult rehabilitation service, really got me ready for this job because if know anything about private not-for-profit you're working with little or no resources; you learn to juggle. You learn to put in the hours. You learn to do whatever it takes to get the job done so everybody is taken care of... So

coming from the private sector, you learn to work with what you have and do the best job you can. So that's how my background prepared me for the situation I'm in.

The director described a wide range of skills and training, including professional certificates, CPR training, and non-violent crisis intervention training that enabled effective management of the disability support services. She reiterated that 16 years of working in an adult rehabilitation facility gave her invaluable experience in addressing the learning needs of adults with disabilities.

The director of Burr College shared that funds are available for professional development. A seminar she recently attended involved career advising for college students with disabilities. A review of a disability services program document revealed development activities not specifically mentioned by the director. A disability center report (2008–2009) listed other professional activities of the director and assistant (e.g., membership of the Service Excellence and Awareness and Access committees and attendance of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities seminar).

Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process

The director related that the office conducts an annual follow-up survey for students. The information gleaned from the surveys is used to determine the effectiveness of services. The institution also requires an annual report with basic information regarding body counts and specific information about the disabilities served.

Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data

The director stated that the effectiveness of the support office was determined by the lack of complaints from the students as well as the overall completion rate of students with

disabilities. The director stated that she and her assistant compile reports based on weekly meetings with the assistant dean of student services, who is the administrator of the program. The end-of-year report is a compilation of the data from the weekly reports. The director did not perceive any constraints regarding collecting data from the disability support services program.

The director felt that the institution trusted the disability support service program to effectively serve students. She explained her perception: "... they kind of trust us with what we do. They don't hover; they're not micro managers of this department. We've been told, you guys do your job." She continued "... they don't have to see if the students are being served. So in a way it's kind of a silent compliment because they leave it up to us to run this department and we give them all of our information."

Case Four—Clinton College (Urban)

Clinton College is a public, urban-serving, multi-campus community college whose mission is to provide high-quality educational programs and support services. The college is dedicated to student learning and academic and career success through instructional excellence and responsiveness to student, business, and community needs. The main facility, including outdoor physical education fields and landscaping, was built at a cost of approximately \$28.5 million. The building houses 35 special instructional areas and laboratories, 50 classrooms, a cafeteria, and a Learning Resource Center, which houses the college's largest open computer laboratory. Nine one-story buildings on the campus provide space and facilities for other programs, including technical programs and short-term skills training.

The philosophy and mission of the Office of Disability is to encourage independence, assist students in realizing their academic potential, and facilitate eliminating physical and

attitudinal barriers. The office is committed to providing a quality education to all qualified individuals.

According to the college website, the following services are provided:

- Sign language interpreters
- Note takers
- Readers
- Exam proctors
- Transcribers
- Classroom accommodation
- Adaptive equipment
- Extended time testing
- Enrollment assistance
- Financial aid application assistance
- Information and referral

Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus

The director of disability support services at Clinton College was apologetic regarding a delay in scheduling the interview. She appeared to be very organized and had prepared for the interview by reviewing the questions. The director stated that the most important component of the disability support services program is to ensure that the college complies with federal laws.

The director explained as follows:

I think the most important component is that we have to ensure that the college is in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Federal

Rehabilitation [Act of 1973] and that is very crucial because what it does is it protects the student and it also protects the college. So that is the most important component and to ensure that our students are getting an equal opportunity in their education.

The disability support services brochure reiterated the responsibility of Clinton College to adhere to federal laws and state statutes in the quest to assist students with disabilities to meet their educational goals successfully.

Clinton College offers a variety of services for students with disabilities. A handout, which contains English and Spanish translation, lists the services available for qualified students with disabilities. The director discussed a few of the vast number of services provided:

We provide sign language interpreters to the deaf and hard of hearing. We also provide note-takers to students with documented disabilities. That doesn't limit them to just a blind student or a low vision student. It's also with students who have dyslexia or who have learning disabilities. We provide adaptive equipment. They may need to use a CCTV [closed caption television] or they may need to use a tape recorder; so we provide that. We also provide large-print and other alternative-print formats.

According to the disability support office brochure and college website, other services provided to disabled students include readers, exam proctors, transcribers, extended testing time, enrollment assistance, and financial aid application assistance.

Delivering services to students with disabilities begins with the self identification of students. The director described the process in this way:

The process is that if a student wants to self identify him or herself having a disability the process is for them to come into this office and provide me or this office with

documentation of their disability. And then we take them through, we give them a spiel on what the program is about... So the student will come into the office and everything is kept confidential; they will disclose that information to me. I will review their documentation and I will set up scheduling for them to take a test. All students must take a placement test unless they want to use their SAT or ACT scores, but they have to be within a 2-year parameter there. And then that student goes on through that regular process as any other student will go through.

The director further elaborated:

We don't enable our students. We ensure that they are getting that equal opportunity, that quality education that the students without disabilities have. But they have to self-identify themselves. We can't go out and say "Hey, you look like you have a disability; you need to come in here." We can't do that at all. The student must self-identify themselves as having a disability.

The college website further explains the procedures for requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities may request accommodations by doing the following: (a) providing the office with documentation of the disability; (b) resubmit requests for accommodations each semester; (c) distribute accommodation letters to instructors on or before the first day of class; and (d) notify the support office of any changes in course schedules (Clinton College website).

The director also discussed faculty involvement as a key factor in delivering services to disabled students at the college. She shared a PowerPoint presentation handout utilized to educate faculty about legal protections for students with disabilities in postsecondary education, as well as provide information regarding common disabilities and potential accommodations.

Other handouts aimed at educating faculty discussed issues such as strategies for teaching students with learning disabilities, over accommodating by faculty members, and an instructor's guide to note-taking services.

The director explained that the disability support services program were in place before her arrival. She assumed that "services were implemented because of the law that states that students have to have equal access to their education." The director added as follows:

So, I would presume that that is why the program is here and I am sure that is what other colleges have probably started too. It is because the students are protected under the law and it is a good thing too because before this law came into effect I cannot imagine what was going on prior. So, because you have a disability does not mean that you do not have rights and because you have a disability does not mean that you cannot learn. It just means that they need that extra support. By law, we should provide those services to those students. So, the program was already established when I arrived here.

The director of Clinton College was not aware of the leaders in the establishment of the disability support services.

Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director

The director of disability support service at Clinton College felt that she could best address this issue through her own experiences. She related that a previous position as a job specialist at a deaf school facilitated the development of the knowledge and skills that she needed to provide effective services for students with disabilities. She further described her previous position as a job specialist. Her duties were to assist students as they transitioned from

the vocational training program into jobs in the community. She also trained employers in sign language to facilitate communication with the students that they hired.

The director described her development of a knowledge base and management skills, which allowed her to provide services for students with disabilities, in this manner:

I think based on that my exposure to that [deaf education] allowed me to be better understanding, more patient and more organized to be able to implement the services that these students are legally entitled to. And it gave me an opportunity to really, really study the law; brush up on it and to ensure that we are in compliance.

She stressed that compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is key to delivering effective services for students with disabilities.

The director related that professional training opportunities are available. She stated "...what I do is the training that I learn and go to. I come back and then I train my staff." She and her 11 support staff members also attend various workshops throughout the state. The director further described the professional development opportunities:

All of my note-takers take training on the Internet. They are all certified in note-taking area and proctoring. They are trained by me and we also have a testing coordinator. She also assists; we do team training because she has the expertise in that area. We meet monthly. When I say "we," I mean the directors and coordinators at other colleges... We also have webinars... Then I self train myself by going on the Internet. I research a lot and I do a lot of reading to try to stay abreast of what's going on.

Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process

The director was not aware of program evaluation as an initial component of the disability support services program. However, she stated that she is required to submit an annual report to the assistant dean of student services regarding various aspects of the program. The report includes information regarding the effectiveness of the services provided for students.

The director elaborated on the information provided in the annual report.

[I]t [information] is also based on what I see the need is. So if there's a need to hire more staff for the students then I'll have to evaluate that process there. If there's a need for additional equipment or if there is a need for software; making sure that we are in compliance. Is there a need to re-write the process; the procedures of having the student come in to this office...? I have not had a complaint against this office that has actually warranted something to be done about it. The students have been quite successful and the evaluations that I do receive are most of the time pretty good.

The director added that every student who receives support from the disability support office completes an evaluation form regarding the services received. The director felt that the student was the best source for information about the effectiveness of support services. This information is then used to improve the support services.

Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data

The director related that the primary reason for collecting data with the disability support service office is to ensure compliance with federal laws and to ensure that students with disabilities receive access to an equal education. The director did not perceive any constraints regarding the collection of data for the program. She did, however, identify challenges related to

the provision of services for students with disabilities. One challenge was identifying strategies to convince students of the importance of advocating for themselves. Another challenge was providing services in light of budget cuts and limited resources.

The director felt that the institution's response toward the data collected within the disability support services program was generally positive. She felt that the institution recognized the importance of the services provided by the office. She stressed that the data collected should support the fact that students are receiving the services to which they are legally entitled.

Case Five—Gerry College (Rural)

Gerry College is a public rural-serving, multi-campus community college whose mission is to serve the needs of the students and the diverse community by providing quality higher education, community education, training, and services that are accessible, affordable, and promote life-long learning. Gerry College strives to provide a dynamic learning environment incorporating advanced technology that ensures students of all ages the greatest chance of success. The physical site consists of 153 acres of gently rolling hills. The campus is centrally located within the college district. The rustic campus was erected during the summer of 1969. The main campus buildings were completed in 1976.

Student Support Services is a federally funded program designed to help and motivate students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. The Student Support Office does not have a separate mission statement. The purpose of the program is to assist students who are graduating and transferring to a 4-year college or university while

providing programs and resources for a successful academic and overall positive college experience.

According to the college website, the following services are provided:

- Academic advisement
- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Laptop and calculator loan program
- Supplemental grant aid
- Scholarships
- Cultural enrichment activities
- Career/transfer activities
- Student-oriented workshops
- Study skills assistance

Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus

The director of disability support services at Gerry College was willing to share her unique perspective as the sole member of the disability support office:

And I take care of all the documentation. I don't provide the services; I do the recommendations for the services. I take care of all of the paperwork, all the documentation. I do all the visits. I meet with all the parents; I take care of all the IEPs [Individual Education Plan]. I take care of it, of everything...That includes our extension centers and we have three extension centers plus the main campus and I work on the main campus. But I have to go to all three extension centers and provide services to those extension centers.

The director felt that the most important component of the disability support services “is someone who is familiar with the services that need to be provided and with disabilities and laws that pertain to disabilities”. The director elaborated:

So if you [students] come in and say I have a disability and I need services where do I go, then they would be able to tell you at administration well there is a person who takes care of that, this is the office number, this is who she is and this is where her office is located so you won't have a hard time trying to find that person or that office. I think that has been the most important thing is someone who can actually provide the services and who knows what services need to be provided.

The director further stated that, in the past, services were not addressed in an organized manner. “Services were just, if you have a disability then we'll find someone to help you out... The services may have been there but there was not a one place, we have now what we call a one-stop center, so to speak, where you can go for that service.”

According to the director and the college website, Gerry College has a success center that provides the services that are identified through the students' documentation. The success center “offers word processing facilities and tutorial services to supplement a wide variety of classes offered by the college.” In addition to services listed in the profile, the director listed a variety of services that are provided to students with disabilities including test proctoring, untimed tests, enlarged print materials, and sign language interpreters. They also utilize smart boards in the classrooms that allow professors to print out the class notes for the day. The director further related:

And basically a lot of times it depends on what the student needs; those are just general things that we can provide, but if a student comes in and they have a special request or if they have to have a special type of service that maybe we haven't broadcasted - we try to provide that service as well.

In response to a question on the research demographic survey, the director listed additional specific services that are provided to students with disabilities (e.g., tape recording, note taking, room re-arrangements, and web accessibility).

According to the director, the guidelines and procedures that expedite service delivery involve the presentation of formal documentation to identify the disability for which the student needs services. Most of the students complete exit interviews as they complete high school. The director is often invited to participate in the exit interviews. The director further explained the process:

So, basically, I use their IEP [Individualized Education Plan] because I know it has been recently done and they have the exit interview which is the final one... Then all of the services that they could benefit from are put on that IEP so when they come to the college we try to duplicate as many of those services as we can.

The college sometimes makes special provisions for students who may not have current documentation. The director further described the circumstances for special provisions:

Sometimes we have students who come in with medical records from their doctor's offices and a lot of times we will use those because we are in a very small rural area and a very poor area and it is very difficult for students to get up to date evaluations on a regular basis so we will use their medical records... I'm not going to turn that student

away just because their records are not as current as someone who just came out of high school. But if I can get something from their doctor saying that the student could benefit from these types of services; then we provide services based on that medical documentation.

It is clear that the disabilities support office at Gerry College is dedicated to providing services tailored to the specific needs of its population of students.

The director related that disability support services were established approximately 20 years ago. Previously, services were provided for handicapped students, but there was no formal office. She did not have any information regarding the specific types of services that were provided. The director surmised that the services were provided through the counseling department before the establishment of a formal office. The director of Gerry College was not aware of the leaders in the establishment of disability support services.

Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director

The director explained that a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling aided her professional development for the current position. In addition, experience with students who were considered mentally challenged and students with learning disabilities facilitated the development of the knowledge and skills needed to provide effective services for students with disabilities.

The director felt that her organizational skills and educational background were the key characteristics that allowed her to manage the disability support services office effectively. Effective organizational skills are especially important because she staffs the office alone. The

director described an array of personal skills related to effectively managing the disability support services. She described her skills as follows:

Well, for one thing, I'm very knowledgeable about disabilities. I'm very knowledgeable about the students that come to the college. I'm very knowledgeable about the policies and the laws that govern students with disabilities and I think you also have to have some compassion for students as well as be able to take care of the paperwork. I'm a very organized person.

The director further related:

I do a lot of research in terms of the students who come in with various disabilities. A lot of times when they are telling me about the disability I can pretty much tell them what services we can offer them and some things that they may not even be aware of that we might be able to help them with based on the fact that I usually keep abreast of the things that are happening in terms of disabled students and what's out there for them.

The director shared that there are numerous opportunities for professional development. Some involve networking and sharing information with other community college disability support service directors. Other development opportunities are offered at a university feeder school. These opportunities also strengthen the relationship between the university and the community college. The director explained the connection with the university in this way:

They (the university) have an entire [disabilities support service] department; a number of disabled students there so we feed into a lot of things that they bring on their campus. They will let us know that they are having someone to come in and speak about disabled

services; speak about certain types of disabilities and we always go to meetings and things there. So that opportunity for in-services and that type of thing is certainly there and we all [community colleges] take advantage of it.

The director added that the students benefit greatly from the relationship between the university and her institution. The relationship facilitates a seamless transition for the students with disabilities.

Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process

The director stated that evaluation was not an initial component of the disability support services. She plans to initiate a formal evaluation of the office this summer. She is routinely evaluated as part of the staff evaluation, but she would like to evaluate specific aspects of service delivery.

Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data

It appears that no obvious use of data occurred. The director wants to develop an evaluation process to protect the continuity and effectiveness of services for students with disabilities after her retirement. Program data is required for the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) report. This data includes student body count and other data related to the specific disabilities served. The director shared that many disability support service programs were already collecting data before ICCB required this information. She stated "...when I first started I just kept it because it was important when we were applying for a grant; when we needed to write reports I always thought that type of information needed to be documented so I would keep it for my benefit and people and I had it so we could start sharing that information..." She recalled that the ICCB began requiring the report about 3 or 4 years ago.

According to the director, most of the data that is collected for the program is required for the ICCB report. She did not note any constraints regarding collecting data for the disability support services program. The director felt that the overall response of the institution toward the data collected within the disability support services program was positive. However, she did not cite any specific examples.

Case Six—Tompkins College (Rural)

Tompkins College is a public, rural-serving, comprehensive community college that was organized in 1966, as mandated by the Illinois Community College Act, to provide education and training services. The philosophy of Tomkins College is based on the premise that education is the cornerstone of a literate, democratic society; moreover, learning is a lifelong process, and the pursuit of knowledge must be supported by institutional policies that demonstrate the values of accessibility, service, value, quality, and innovation. The school's initial enrollment of 1,603 students (403 full time and 1,200 part time) has grown steadily; the college currently serves more than 10,000 students each semester. The area encompasses approximately 600 square miles and has an assessed valuation of more than \$5.0 billion. Facilities include nine buildings with 117 classrooms, several conference rooms, library, teleconferencing facilities, specialized laboratories, student lounge, bookstore, childcare center, cafeteria, observatory, 375-seat auditorium, gymnasium, 120-workstation computer center, fitness center, and 2-mile nature trail.

The Access Center serves students with disabilities. Although the college does not have a separate mission statement for the disability support office, the Access Center provides academic accommodations and other services to promote student success, self-determination,

and self-sufficiency. The Access Center staff helps identify and work toward the educational and career goals of students.

According to the college website, the following accommodations and assistive technology services are provided:

- Testing accommodations
- Note takers
- Audio/electronic book
- Sign language interpreters
- Large computer monitors
- Voice activated software (i.e., Dragon Naturally Speaking)
- Reading pen
- VPod
- Premier assistive technology
- FM System

Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus

The director of disability support services at Tompkins College was initially uncertain about whether she would participate in the research project. She objected to the questions on the research demographic survey regarding the total numbers of students receiving services by category. The questions on the survey seemed to point to the segregation of students according to disability. The director strongly disagrees with this characterization of disability support services. “We don’t even have a program. We have an Access Center and the students who choose to come here, come here and we’re just limited because if they have a disability we can

work with them...” After a phone conversation to further explain the purpose of the research study, she agreed to participate. Her philosophy regarding the provision of services for students with disabilities is reflected in this statement. “We look at the person as a person, not just a prescription. ...So what we do is really look at the person and say how is this impacting you in this class...” The director’s philosophy is consistent with the mission of the Access Center to “value each student as an individual with individual strengths, skills and abilities.”

Consequently, the director identified the most important component for the disability support services as one-to-one service so that all services are provided on an individualized case basis. Students are asked to describe how their disability presents in the academic environment. The director elaborated on the process:

We do an in-depth analysis of the disability, the person, the class itself, the teaching style of the instructor and the environment. And then we make the response happen... So what we do is really look at the person and say how is this impacting you in this class, how does it impact you in ceramics? How does it impact you in electronics? Because it’s very different especially with so many technical classes, the disabilities may impact them in different, odd ways or not logically linked ways, so that’s really the biggest part.

The director added that faculty involvement was a key factor in delivering services to disabled students at the college. The faculty involvement was described in this way:

We have just under I think 170 full-time faculty and 1,900 part-time and we do presentations to every faculty unit in the fall and the spring and we have a different topic that we present to them each time. We go back over some of the processes and how they

provide accommodations within the classroom. What's a courtesy and what's an accommodation, that kind of thing.

Another component of the program is the availability of assistive technology devices for students to borrow. The goal of the department is to train the students so that they are competent users of the devices that help them function in the college environment. The director described one example of an assistive technology device available to students:

We have probably 12 or 13 flash drives that the students check out and that carries their screen reader, talking dictionary, and highlighting program. They can use it for a semester. They train on it here and then they can check it out for a semester. If they like it, they can buy it themselves. If they can't afford it, they can check it out the next semester.

An extension of the access center is the addition of an associate's degree program in disabilities studies. The director and one of the educational specialists both teach in the program. The goal is to give students in the community a place to identify and learn about having a disability.

The mission of the Access Center for students with disabilities is to "provide quality academic support services and appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities." Tomkins College, according to the website and the director, provides a wide range of accommodations and services for students. The office provides a number of basic accommodations for students such as testing accommodations, note takers, audio books, sign language interpreters, large computer monitors, and voice-activated software. Priority registration is provided for students with mobility or chronic health problems. According to the director, some services that are provided extend beyond basic accommodations. An example of

this type of service was described in this way: “Things that might be considered a courtesy for some students like a table and chair because of obesity or whatever, you know, that’s a courtesy and this is a nice friendly place and we try to do that if we are aware.” The college website regarding the access center for students with disabilities states that “...accommodations are intended to provide equal access as required by law; they are not intended to fundamentally alter the academic course or program.”

The disability support services program at Tomkins College is staffed by two full-time accommodations specialists and three part-time educational specialists. The director described the process this way: “What they do is they process the intakes; they look at the student’s documentation, and talk to them through interviews and talk to them about what kind of accommodations they’re using, they provide on-going disability centered tutoring.”

A review of an Access Center handout for students revealed a detailed explanation of the roles of the student, faculty, and the Access Center regarding service delivery. The student’s role is to request accommodations and support services in a timely manner, provide sufficient disability-related documentation, and describe the impact of their disability on their functioning in an academic setting. The faculty member must be willing, if needed, to meet with students to discuss accommodation recommendations and make suitable arrangements for the accommodations to be met. The Access Center’s role is to review disability documentation, verify the documentation, and implement an intake process with the student to assess the impact of the disability on the student’s academic functioning. At the conclusion of the intake process, the students receive a VISA [Verified Individualized Services & Accommodations] and training on the recommended services and accommodations.

The director described the atmosphere of the disability support service office that appears to positively affect service delivery to students.

So you have to be lucky enough to have a disability to work with us; that's our idea. And we try to be the coolest office on campus. So we're always busy; we get student-to-student referrals more than we get any other kind of referral. "Oh, come join the Access Center," so it works out.

The director was very knowledgeable about the establishment of the disability support services at Tompkins. The establishment and leadership of the disability support services at Tompkins College slowly evolved over time. The director was an integral part of the evolution. The director explained as follows:

The college was founded in 1966. In 1968, they had deaf students on campus. Two faculty members, who were teachers of the deaf at the junior high level, came here to teach English and Reading. They wrote a seed grant [for a deaf program] for \$2,000.00 in 1969, which was funded in 1970, through a state grant. ...When I joined the staff in 1984, we had 138 deaf students with a dorm and we had the Tomkins College hearing program. In about 1984, many things just kind of just mish mashed around and we had a change in counselors and it was kind of a start of the LD [learning disabled] group.

The director further explained:

It was in about 1987, I think, I became the manager and what we did is we made an active decision not to split into groups and just to do a unified approach. By that time, we probably had more students with learning disabilities than we did students who were deaf or hearing impaired. ...With the advent of the Americans with Disabilities Act, it

changed a lot. We became a mandated program instead of just kind of oh, that's a nice thing for you to do and our administrators have always been very mindful of the possibilities of the program.

The director felt fortunate to have been an integral part of the establishment of the disability support services program. She appeared extremely proud of the program and shared many examples of students that have greatly benefitted from the services that were provided for them.

Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director

The director was not sure of the general relationship between the professional background of the director and effective service delivery. She surmised for herself that personal vocational ethics from experience as a sign language interpreter and previous managerial experience positively affected her ability to facilitate the delivery of effective disability support services. The director further explained:

Those vocational ethics I think are actually what I think drive whatever leadership I'm providing for this department a lot of it is about honoring the client and respect and boundaries and individualism and abilities really... The more autonomy my students have the better. The more respect the students have the better.

She added that her office is very involved in the diversity leadership council not only from a disabilities perspective, but from a respect and universal design perspective as well. She stressed that it is essential that all staff members respect the students as well.

The director stated that she never tires of learning and this thirst for knowledge caused her to change majors several times while in college. She says that because of this wide base of

knowledge, she “can pretty much handle her own in most conversations.” The director’s self-perception of the skills that facilitated the effective management of the disability support services were described in this way:

I love to learn. I am a crazy, addicted student... I am just a committed social justice person, people behaving themselves and treating each other well is really important to me. So you add the disability element to that so that’s, I think more than knowledge is passion. And I think more than passion is respect for other people.

The director related that professional development, especially for staff, is an integral part of the disability support services. The professional development opportunities were explained:

Yes, actually any kind of class I want to take I can pretty much take. If I take off-campus classes, it’s just like the faculty members. I have class reimbursement for any kind of classes or degrees I want to take... I have a travel budget to go to conferences and more importantly my staff has a travel budget to go to conferences. We are very fiscally responsible so we double up or, but this last year my accommodations specialist and I both went to AHEAD [Association on Higher Education and Disability] [conference] with our counselor and then I took the whole staff and I went to the AHEAD spring transition conference. They [staff] presented at the AHEAD spring conference. A big part of it for me is really they’re the front line.

The director further explained the importance of professional development for staff:

They’re doing the work with the students for the most part. I mean we all do everything but they’re doing work with the students so they need to be up on what facility

management is all about and how to make the college accessible, universal design and return on investment and all of those things; they need to be aware of those things too.

The director added the college provides administrative and management training services every other month. The staff has taken sign language classes so that they can better serve the needs of deaf students. The counseling unit also participates in professional development training.

Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process

The director related that evaluation was a component of the program from its inception because it was grant driven. The college also has an extensive evaluation process. The college requires goal setting and monitoring accomplishments by each department. Student surveys are conducted either by phone or mail each semester. Some of this feedback was the impetus for the relocation of the support services office to create a more welcoming climate for students.

Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data

Tompkins College participates in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) process to retain accreditation; the disability services program is a part of that process. The director commented on this process. “[I]t’s a 1-year cycle, a 4-year cycle; a 7-year cycle so last February ICCB [Illinois Community College Board] came around and they had specific questions for this department so those kinds of things happen all the time.”

The director shared that the type and amount of data collected is determined mainly by the data needed for the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) report and the college. The director noted, “We actually collect more data than the college requires because sometimes I need more information for a specific program or a specific grant so even things like cross referencing career goals, programs and disabilities.” She added that the primary reason for

collecting data is increasingly to acquire grant money for funding. The director noted one constraint to collect the required data as a lack of necessary staff.

The director was asked to describe a positive and negative example of the institution's response toward the data collected within the disability support services program. She described a negative aspect related to the collection of data within the college. She stated that she is sometimes frustrated by requests for data that is not available or inconsistent. She explained the issue:

I think the negative is they [administrative team] like data that's not there. So I'd say that most of it, not just local data, not just institutional data, but national data is not there. I could say well 11% of the population has disabilities... however; there are other figures other places. Is the autistic population 1 in 55 or 1 in 155? I see both numbers this year; that's a big, huge difference. And when I say, well, we've got this group of people coming up that are going to need some kinds of accommodations and certain testing accommodations is it 1 in 55 or 1 in 155? I don't know because it's conflicting data too.

The director then related that the most positive response by the institution occurred when in spite of a declining economy, a bond was passed that allowed the creation of a very high-profile office with the idea that the disability support services office would grow. The disability support service office grew from serving 200 students in 2004 to serving 500 students in 2010. This growth proved that that institutional response had been appropriate.

Cross-Case Analysis

In this section, a cross-case analysis will be utilized to examine any differences or similarities within and across regions in support services provided to students with disabilities in

select Illinois community colleges. Stufflebeam's (1969) program evaluation framework is utilized. The evaluation model consists of four major categories: context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation. Tables 4.1 to 4.3 summarize the findings within regions in the context of the CIPP program evaluation framework. Table 4.4 summarizes the findings through a cross-region analysis.

Within-Region Analysis

Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus

Adams College (Suburban) compared to Jefferson College (Suburban). The directors of disability support services at the suburban region institutions both stressed the importance of the accessibility of the college campus and support programs for students with disabilities. The director at Adams College also believed that the purpose of the office was to facilitate the learning process for students and faculty. A two-appointment intake process to expedite service delivery to students was a program element that was shared by both institutions. As was expected, both colleges provided specific services through accommodation plans that were written based on disability documentation provided by individual students. Both colleges in the suburban region had clear office procedures and policies to expedite services for students.

Both directors were very knowledgeable about the history of the establishment of disability support services at their respective institutions. The impetus for the establishment of support services at both institutions was the result of a need for formal, coordinated services for students with disabilities. Previously, services were provided in an inconsistent manner. Notably, the disability support services, for both institutions, were initially housed under Health Services. It appears that this practice emerged from a past societal perception of a link between

medical disabilities and other disabilities. Both directors identified their immediate predecessors as the leaders in the establishment of disability support services at their institutions. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
Cross-Case Analysis—Within Regions

Region	Context Evaluation (Elements and Impetus)	Input Evaluation (Influence of Skills of Director)	Process Evaluation (Evaluation Process)	Product Evaluation (Utilization of Data)
Suburban	<u>Elements</u> Accessibility for students	<u>Skills</u> Direct correlation	Not an initial component of program	For program improvement
Adams College	Provision of needed services Legally mandated support as outlined in accommodation plan Written program guides Two appointment intake process <u>Program Impetus</u> Services needed for deaf and learning disabled students Initially housed under Health services	Basic knowledge regarding disabilities/health issues Higher Ed. Management and teaching skills Interpersonal <u>Professional Development</u> • Numerous • Encouraged • Funds available	ICCB program review Support services year-end report	Data to support budget requests Adequate funds Ample facility space provided
Suburban	<u>Elements</u> Accessibility for students	<u>Skills</u> Sets overall tone of office	Not an initial component of program	Information required by ICCB
Jefferson College	Additional testing time Student awareness of services Individual assessment of students' needs Education of faculty regarding services <u>Program Impetus</u> Services needed for students with learning disabilities Initially housed under the Health & Special Services Center	Sympathy and empathy for students critical Patience Student /not disability focused Problem-solving <u>Professional Development</u> Budget limitations Seeks local opportunities Professional growth valued	Students surveys	Determine space and physical needs Relocation and improvement of support services office

Burr College (Urban) compared to Clinton College (Urban). The directors at Burr and Clinton Colleges varied in their responses regarding the fundamental elements of disability support service programs. Although some slight variation occurred in procedures, both colleges employ clear procedures to expedite service delivery to students as an important element. The director at Burr College related that the accommodations provided to students were important, while the director at Clinton College stated that the most important component was to ensure that the college remains compliant with federal laws. The director of support services at Clinton College also considered faculty involvement as key to the delivering effective services.

Neither director had any first-hand knowledge of the history regarding the establishment of disability support services at their institutions. They both assumed that the impetus for the establishment of support services was the passage of legislation that mandated the provision of services for students with disabilities. Neither director was aware of the leaders in the establishment of disability support services at their institutions. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2
Within Regions

Region	Context Evaluation (Elements and Impetus)	Input Evaluation (Influence of Skills of Director)	Process Evaluation (Evaluation Process)	Product Evaluation (Utilization of Data)
Urban Burr College	<u>Elements</u> Accommodations provided for students Activities of disabled students club Reasonable accommodations Ensure students reach maximum potential Two step process to determine eligibility for services <u>Program Impetus</u> Related to the passing of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Leaders unknown	<u>Skills</u> Direct correlation Ability to multi-task Crisis intervention training Past adult rehabilitation experience <u>Professional Development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous • Encouraged • Funds available 	Annual follow-up student surveys Support services year- end report	Year-end report data from weekly report data No constraints Positive institutional response
Urban Clinton College	<u>Elements</u> Compliance with federal laws Legally mandated support as outlined in accommodation plan Self identification, then interview and testing process Faculty involvement <u>Program Impetus</u> Services mandated by law Leaders unknown	<u>Skills</u> Direct correlation Past job experience with deaf population Patient/understanding Organized Basic knowledge regarding federal laws <u>Professional Development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous • Encouraged • Funds available 	Annual report Evaluation by students	Ensure compliance with federal laws No constraints Positive institutional response

Gerry College (Rural) compared to Tompkins College (Rural). The directors at Gerry and Tompkins Colleges varied slightly in their responses regarding the fundamental components of disability support services. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.3. The director at Gerry College felt that the most important component was a qualified person to facilitate the provision of services for students, whereas the director at Tompkins College

identified the most important component as individualized services that involve a comprehensive analysis of the disability, the student, and the academic environment. A significant difference in the provision of services is that the director at Gerry College is the sole member of the disability support office, whereas the support office at Tomkins College is staffed by the director, two full-time accommodations specialists, and three part-time educational specialists. The disparity in the number of staff members, summarized in Table 4.0, is a direct result of the difference in student population.

Both directors were very knowledgeable regarding the time frame and evolution of disability support services at their respective institutions. The support services were established at both institutions as a result of a need for a formal office to coordinate services for students with disabilities. The director at Gerry College was not aware of the leaders in the establishment of the disability support services, but surmised that services were provided through the counseling department before the establishment of a formal office. The director at Tompkins College proudly shared detailed information as one of the leaders in the establishment of support services at her institution. She felt fortunate to have been an integral part of the establishment of the disability support services at her institution.

Table 4.3
Within Regions

Region	Context Evaluation (Elements and Impetus)	Input Evaluation (Influence of Skills of Director)	Process Evaluation (Evaluation Process)	Product Evaluation (Utilization of Data)
Rural	<u>Elements</u>	<u>Skills</u>	Not an initial component of program	Information required by ICCB
Gerry College	Provision of needed services Experienced director Needed services identified through documentation Presentation of formal documentation to identify disability High school exit interviews <u>Program Impetus</u> Need for formal office to coordinate needed services Leaders unknown	Direct correlation Degrees in Sociology and Rehabilitation Counseling Experience with disabled students Organization Compassion Basic knowledge regarding federal laws <u>Professional Development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous • Encouraged • Funds available Networking with other directors	Director evaluated	No constraints Positive institutional response
Rural	<u>Elements</u>	<u>Skills</u>	An initial component of program	Information required by ICCB
Tompkins College	Service provided on individualized case basis Quality support services Appropriate accommodations Review students' documentation Ongoing disability centered tutoring <u>Program Impetus</u> Services needed for deaf and learning disabled students Leaders - current director, former faculty members and counselors	Unsure of correlation Thirst for learning Committed to social justice Passion/respect for others <u>Professional Development</u> Integral part of support services Numerous Encouraged Funds available	College evaluation process (AQIP) Student surveys	Data to support grant requests Positive- enlargement of support services office Negative- requests for unavailable data

Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director

Adams College (Suburban) compared to Jefferson College (Suburban). Both directors in the suburban region felt that a definite correlation existed between the professional background of the director and effective service delivery for students with disabilities. The director at Jefferson College described sympathy and empathy towards students as a critical attribute for a director. He also noted the lack of a professional training track for disability support service directors as a critical issue. He felt that for both the longevity and professionalism of this leadership position, a career track should be developed. The director of Adams College related direct, personal experience with persons with disabilities as an essential foundation of knowledge for an effective disability support service director. The directors described the skills that they bring to the position as including problem-solving and management skills, patience, a student-centered focus, and interpersonal skills. Both directors valued and encouraged professional development opportunities. However, budget limitations at Jefferson College adversely affected professional development opportunities. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.1.

Burr College (Urban) compared to Clinton College (Urban). The directors at Burr and Clinton Colleges exhibited similar thinking. They both articulated a direct, positive correlation between the professional background of the director and effective service delivery for students with disabilities. The directors both believed that their previous positions in disability-related fields prepared them to effectively manage the disability support services office. The directors described the skills that they bring to the position as including patience, organization, crisis-intervention training, and past experience with the disabled population. Both directors

described the professional development opportunities at their institutions as numerous, encouraged, and adequately funded. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.2.

Gerry College (Rural) compared to Tompkins College (Rural). The directors at Gerry and Tomkins Colleges provided disparate responses regarding the relationship between the skills of the director and service delivery. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.3. The director at Gerry College perceived a direct correlation between the professional background of the director and effective service delivery for students with disabilities. She felt that her past experience with mentally challenged and learning disabled students facilitated the development of the knowledge and skills needed to manage the disability support services office effectively. The director at Tompkins College was unsure of the relationship between the background of the director and service delivery. The directors described the skills that they bring to the position as organizational skills, compassion, respect, and experience with disabled students, education, and commitment to social justice, among others. Professional development was an integral part of the disability support services at both colleges. Both directors described the professional development opportunities at their institutions as numerous, encouraged, and adequately funded. The director at Tompkins College believed that professional development must be an integral part of the operation of the support services office.

Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process

Adams College (Suburban) compared to Jefferson College (Suburban). Neither college in the suburban region indicated that program evaluation was an initial component in the development of the disability support service programs; however, both directors discussed the collection of data for the Illinois Community College Board program review. Adams College

prepares comprehensive year-end reports as part of its evaluation process. Jefferson College administers student surveys to solicit feedback regarding the services provided. Both directors felt that ongoing program evaluation was essential for the provision of effective services for students with disabilities. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.1.

Burr College (Urban) compared to Clinton College (Urban). The colleges in urban region both utilized annual reports and student evaluations to evaluate the effectiveness of the disability support services. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.2. The information gleaned from the reports and student evaluations is used to determine the effectiveness of services.

Gerry College (Rural) compared to Tompkins College (Rural). Evaluation was an initial component of the disability support services at Tompkins College, but was not an initial component at Gerry College. Both colleges collect the data required by the Illinois Community College Board; Tompkins College collects additional data for program improvement. Evaluation was an initial component at Tompkins from its inception because it was grant driven. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.3.

Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data

Adams College (Suburban) compared to Jefferson College (Suburban). The overall reason for the collection of data at both institutions was to satisfy requirements of governing bodies and for program improvement. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.1. The director at Adams College stressed that the collection of data was essential to support budget-related requests. The director of Jefferson College noted the lack of adequate staff to facilitate

the collection of meaningful data as a concern. The institutional response to the collection of data was positive at both institutions.

Burr College (Urban) compared to Clinton College (Urban). This comparison is summarized in Table 4.2. The data is primarily utilized to ensure compliance with federal mandates at both institutions. Burr College prepares year-end reports compiled from data in weekly reports. Neither director identified any constraints to the collection of data regarding the provision of services for students with disabilities. The institutional response to the collection of data was positive at both institutions. The director felt that the data collected should verify that students are receiving the services to which they are legally entitled.

Gerry College (Rural) compared to Tompkins College (Rural). The director at Gerry College did not identify any constraints to the collection of data. It also appeared that there was no tangible use of data. The director expressed a desire to establish an evaluation process to address the continuity and effectiveness of support services. The director at Tompkins College noted inadequate staff as a constraint to the collection of program-related data. However, both institutions indicated a positive response from the institution regarding the collection of data. This comparison is summarized in Table 4.3. The director at Tompkins College described one negative aspect to the collection of data is that sometimes institutional requests are made for data that is unavailable or inconsistent. For example, depending on the source, the director noted two different statistics regarding the autistic population. This conflict in data could make it difficult for the disability support office to execute long-range planning.

Cross-Region Analysis

Six community colleges in Illinois with disability service programs were the focus of the inquiry for this study: two community colleges in non-metropolitan (rural) counties, two in suburban counties, and two in metropolitan (urban) counties. This section will present the research findings across regions through the use of Stufflebeam's (1969) program evaluation framework.

Context Evaluation—Fundamental Elements and Program Impetus

In a comparison of fundamental elements and program components shown in Table 4.4, the directors at the suburban colleges identified one of the most important components of disability support services as an office that is prepared to make the necessary accommodations. All of the colleges' (urban, suburban, rural) websites listed common services and accommodations that were provided for students. All of the colleges were clearly committed to providing quality, appropriate, and legally mandated support services. However, the specific details of the guidelines and procedures that expedite service delivery varied among the colleges. The procedures at the rural colleges included high school exit interviews and ongoing disability centered tutoring to support the disabled students in their academic programs. Yet, all of the colleges included detailed procedures to review students' documentation and determine eligibility for services.

In a review of the data regarding the impetus for the establishment of disability support services, support services at the suburban and rural colleges were established as a result of a need for coordinated services for students with disabilities. The impetus for the establishment of disability support services at the urban colleges appeared to relate to the passing of legislation that mandated the provision of services for students with disabilities. The directors at both

suburban colleges and one of the rural colleges were able to provide firsthand knowledge regarding the history of the establishment of disability support services at their institutions. The directors at both colleges in the suburban region clearly identified the leaders responsible for the establishment of support services. It was apparent that the region had a deep sense of pride and appreciation for its history in the development of disability support services. The directors at both colleges in the urban region were unaware of the history of the establishment of disability support services at their institutions. The urban college directors were also unaware of the leaders responsible for the establishment of the support services. The director of one of the rural colleges was unaware of the leaders responsible for the establishment of support services whereas the other director identified herself as one of the individuals responsible for the establishment of disability support services at her institution.

Input Evaluation—Influence of the Knowledge Base and Skills of the Director

In a review of the data regarding the relationship between the knowledge base and skills of the director and the operation of the disability support services, the directors in all three regions acknowledged a direct correlation between the two. The director at one of the suburban institutions expressed the lack of a professional training track for a disability support service director position. However, the responses varied across all three regions regarding the self-perceived skills of the directors. Each region contributed to an extensive list that included patience, basic knowledge regarding disabled students, compassion, organization, and problem-solving skills, among others. Only one of the six colleges in the suburban region noted budget limitations to professional development opportunities. Yet, it appeared as though all regions

described professional development opportunities as numerous, encouraged, and adequately funded.

Process Evaluation—Evaluation Process

In a review of the data regarding the implementation of disability support services, the suburban region institutions related that evaluation was not an initial component in the development of the disability support services. The urban region institutions make use of annual reports and student evaluations to evaluate the effectiveness of the support services. Evaluation, with regard to the rural region, was an initial component of support services for one, but not for the other.

Product Evaluation—Utilization of Data

All three regions collect the program data required by the state governing bodies. For the most part, all three regions collect additional data for other program-related matters. However, some variation occurred within the suburban and rural regions whereby one suburban and one rural college noted inadequate staff for comprehensive data collection as a constraint. All three regions noted no constraints to the collection of program data. The institutional response to the collection of data was also expressed as positive in all three regions. The directors within each region related various examples to illustrate the positive institutional responses. Additionally, the director at one of the rural colleges described a negative aspect to the collection of data as institutional requests for data that is unavailable or inconsistent.

Table 4.4
Cross Regions

Region	Context Evaluation (Elements and Impetus)	Input Evaluation (Influence of skills of director)	Process Evaluation (Evaluation Process)	Product Evaluation (Utilization of Data)
Suburban	<u>Elements</u>	<u>Skills</u>	Not an initial component of program for either college	For program improvement
Adams & Jefferson College	Accessibility for students	Direct correlation		Data to support budget requests
	Provision of needed services	Patience Basic knowledge regarding disabilities/health issues	ICCB program review	Positive institutional response
	Legally mandated support as outlined in accommodation plan	Higher Ed. Management and teaching	Support services year-end report	Adequate funds and facility space provided
	Written program guides	Interpersonal / Problem- solving	Students surveys	Information required by ICCB
	Two appointment intake process	Sets overall tone of office		Relocation and improvement of support services office
	Additional testing time	Sympathy and empathy for students critical Student-focused/not disability		
	Education of faculty regarding services	<u>Professional Development</u>		
	Student awareness of services	• Numerous • Encouraged • Funds available		
	Individual assessment of students' needs	Budget limitations		
	<u>Program Impetus</u>	Seeks local opportunities		
	Initially housed under Health services	Professional growth valued		
	Services needed for deaf and learning disabled students			
	Initially housed under the Health & Special Services Center			
Urban	<u>Elements</u>	<u>Skills</u>	Annual follow-up student surveys	Year-end report data from weekly report data
Burr & Clinton College	Accommodations provided for students	Direct correlation	Support services year-end report	No constraints & Positive institutional response for both colleges
	Activities of disabled students club	Ability to multi-task Crisis intervention training	Annual report	
	Reasonable accommodations	Past adult rehabilitation experience	Evaluation by students	
	Ensure students reach maximum potential	Past job experience with		
	Two step process to			Ensure compliance

<p>determine eligibility for services Compliance with federal laws Legally mandated support as outlined in accommodation plan Self identification, then interview and testing process Faculty involvement</p> <p><u>Program Impetus</u></p> <p>Related to the passing of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Both directors unaware of leaders Services mandated by law</p>	<p>deaf population Patient/understanding Organized</p> <p>Basic knowledge regarding federal laws</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous • Encouraged • Funds available 	<p>with federal laws</p>		
<p>Rural</p> <p>Gerry & Tompkins College</p>	<p><u>Elements</u></p> <p>Provision of needed services Experienced director Needed services identified through documentation Presentation of formal documentation to identify disability High school exit interviews Service provided on individualized case basis Quality support services Appropriate accommodations Review students'</p>	<p><u>Skills</u></p> <p>Direct correlation Degrees in Sociology & Rehabilitation Counseling Experience with disabled students Organization Compassion Basic knowledge regarding federal laws Unsure of general relationship- Gerry Thirst for learning Committed to social justice Passion/respect for others</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous • Encouraged • Funds available <p>Networking with other directors Integral part of support services</p>	<p>Not an initial component of program -Gerry</p> <p>Director evaluated</p> <p>An initial component of program- Tompkins</p> <p>College evaluation process (AQIP)</p> <p>Student surveys</p>	<p>Information required by ICCB</p> <p>No constraints-Gerry</p> <p>Positive institutional response Information required by ICCB</p> <p>Data to support grant requests</p> <p>Positive- enlargement of support services office</p> <p>Negative- requests for unavailable data</p>

documentation
 Ongoing disability
 centered tutoring
Program Impetus
 Need for formal
 office to coordinate
 needed services
 Director unaware of
 leaders - Clinton
 Services needed for
 deaf and learning
 disabled students
 Leaders -current
 director, former
 faculty members and
 counselors- Tomkins

Summary

This chapter presented a case narrative for each of the six community colleges located in suburban, urban, and rural regions. The findings were provided through a within-region and cross-region analysis using Stufflebeam's (1969) program evaluation framework. Evaluation results based on the CIPP program evaluation model created the framework for program improvement. The findings were presented in the form of quotes and vignettes and based on an analysis of data from interview transcripts, questionnaires, document review, observations, and field notes. The last section presented a cross-case comparison of the six case studies through narratives and data summary tables. By deploying a cross-case analytical framework, this study sought to explore how disability support service programs are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges by looking for patterns and themes in the data that are common across programs. Chapter Five will further discuss the findings in relation to implications, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the major challenges for community colleges is meeting the needs of students with disabilities, particularly as the number of individuals with disabilities increases. The focus of this study was to explore how disability support services are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges. This study was undertaken to present a picture of disability support services provided in urban, suburban, and rural regions in Illinois community colleges. The organization of this chapter includes a discussion, conclusions, and implications based on the findings, which utilized Stufflebeam's CIPP program evaluation model. The chapter concludes with recommendations for practice and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The mission of community colleges is to provide accessible and affordable education to a diverse student population. The characteristics of accessibility and affordability uniquely position community colleges to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Community colleges are located in urban, suburban, and rural areas; moreover, they are less expensive than 4-year institutions (Dougherty, 1994). As a result of its open admission policy, one of the major challenges for community colleges is meeting the needs of students with disabilities. One motivation for the development of disability support services was the state and federal legislation that was enacted to promote equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. More specifically, both state and federal laws require that community colleges provide an educational milieu within which students with disabilities have equal access to higher education. Another motivation was the projected steady growth of the disabled student population. Disability

support service departments in postsecondary education exist to expedite the provision of accommodations to students with disabilities. For legislation to positively affect the provision of services for students with disabilities, those services must be implemented in a well-delineated program plan. A comprehensive evaluation of services provided to learning disabled students will enable institutions to provide better services for this population. The students will benefit as a result of having support services that are specifically tailored to their needs. This study sought to highlight services provided within various regions in Illinois and as a result hopes to serve as a resource for developing additional services in community colleges. A preponderance of the current data concerning students with disabilities in postsecondary education is in the form of surveys and quantitative studies. A paucity of research exists in the form of qualitative studies in relation to how disability support services are evaluated.

In relation to this study, a discussion is required regarding the standards of professional practice for postsecondary disability service providers that have been established by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). AHEAD is a professional membership organization of diverse individuals involved in the development of policy and in the provision of quality services to meet the needs of persons with disabilities involved in all areas of higher education (Ahead.org). According to the organization's website, AHEAD is actively involved in all facets of promoting full and equal participation by individuals with disabilities in higher education, including the support of the systems, institutions, professions, and professionals engaged in this mission.

The professional standards for the organization are classified into the following five sections:

1. Responsibilities related to the administration or management of the office serving students with disabilities.
2. Providing services directly to students or acting on behalf of students with members of the campus community.
3. Working with campus or community personnel and agencies regarding students with disabilities or disability issues.
4. Providing training and expertise regarding disability issues to members of the campus community.
5. Maintaining up-to-date professional knowledge and skill.

One of the institutions in this study discussed these standards during the interview process. The program director shared a copy of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) program standards and performance indicators; the director stated that the disability support office at Adams College reflected these standards.

Stufflebeam's (1969) CIPP model of program evaluation was adapted for this study. This study was conducted to explore how disability support services are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges through the use of the CIPP (context, input, process, and product) program evaluation framework. The four evaluation categories provided the framework through which the data was examined. The research questions in this study were addressed by using the multi-site case study method. Data for the study was organized around each of the four following research questions. These four questions were aligned with Stufflebeam's four evaluation categories as well and are noted in parentheses.

1. What are the fundamental elements of disability support service programs in select Illinois community colleges? Why and in what ways were the disability support service programs implemented? (Context evaluation)
2. In what ways does the knowledge base and skills of the director influence the operation of the disability service programs? (Input Evaluation)
3. What is the evaluation process used by these disability service programs? (Process Evaluation)
4. How do the findings re-craft the program? (Product Evaluation)

A qualitative multi-site case study method was employed to address the research questions; data collection drew on multiple data sources to answer the driving research questions. The primary focus of the study was how disability support services are evaluated; therefore, the areas of program elements, program establishment, program evaluation, and program directors' skills were explored in an effort to provide a comprehensive view of disability support service programs. Six community colleges in Illinois with disability service programs were the focus of the inquiry for this study: two community colleges in non-metropolitan (rural) counties, two in suburban counties, and two in metropolitan (urban) counties. Semi-structured interviews of disability service directors, observations, institutional documents and websites, program documents and field notes (both observational and reflective) were used to collect the data. The disability service program directors were interviewed to garner participants' firsthand knowledge and perceptions regarding the disability support services within their respective institutions.

Chapter One provided an overview of the research study. The literature review in Chapter Two facilitated an understanding of the contexts of community colleges and issues related to learning disabled students. This was described through a brief historical profile of community colleges and a discussion of the current role of disability support services in the community college. Key legal decisions related to providing services for learning disabled students were described. Learning disability within the context of higher education was defined to clarify how this term is used for the purposes of this study. In an overview of the current context for the research, the prevalence of learning disabilities in higher education and related adult learning theories were discussed. Additionally, program evaluation related to support programs for students with disabilities in postsecondary education was discussed. The theoretical lens used in analyzing the study's data and findings, the CIPP program evaluation model, was described in detail.

In Chapter Three, an overview was provided of the specific research strategies used to conduct this multi-site case study, including a rationale and description of qualitative research design and case study method. The CIPP program evaluation model adapted for the study was also discussed. The site and participant selections were done so using purposeful sampling. The data collection procedures included document review, interviews, a questionnaire, and field notes. Data analysis consisted of the development of a data analysis strategy, which facilitated the identification of themes and codes. This chapter also included the researcher as an instrument, ethical considerations, and a chapter summary.

Chapter Four presented a case narrative for each of the six community colleges examined in the study. Findings were provided for each institution by the research question in alignment

with Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP program evaluation framework. The case narratives provided for each of the six institutions within the three regions facilitated a portrait of the unique situations within each. A cross-case analysis was then utilized to explore similarities and differences across all regions. By deploying this cross-case analytical framework, this study sought to explore how disability support services are evaluated in select community colleges by looking for patterns and themes in the data that were common or different in services both within and across regions. The CIPP evaluation model facilitated the comprehensive examination of disability support services in select Illinois community college regions.

Conclusions

For this study, a cross-case analysis was utilized to explore differences or similarities within and across regions in support services provided to students with disabilities. In this section, the conclusions drawn are articulated within and across regions as related to the four research questions within the four categories of the CIPP program evaluation framework.

Within-Region Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the fundamental elements of disability support service programs in select Illinois community colleges and why and in what ways were the disability support service programs implemented? (Context Evaluation)

Adams College (Suburban) compared to Jefferson College (Suburban). The key findings in the suburban region highlighted the importance of the accessibility of the college campus and support programs for students with disabilities. The findings from the suburban region also disclosed that the purpose of the office was to facilitate the learning process for students and faculty. A two-appointment intake process to expedite service delivery to students was a program element that was shared by the institutions in the region. As was expected, both

colleges provided specific services through accommodation plans that were written based on disability documentation provided by individual students. Both offices had clear office procedures and policies to expedite services for students.

The impetus for the establishment of support services at both institutions within the suburban region was the result of a need for formal, coordinated services for students with disabilities. Previously, services were provided in an inconsistent manner. Notably, the disability support services, for both institutions, were initially housed under Health Services. It appears that this practice emerged from a past societal perception of a link between medical disabilities and other disabilities.

Burr College (Urban) compared to Clinton College (Urban). Although the procedures varied slightly, both colleges within the urban region utilized clear procedures to expedite service delivery to students. Burr College related that the accommodations provided to students were important, whereas Clinton College stated that the most important component was to ensure that the college remains in compliance with federal laws. A key factor in delivering effective services at Clinton College was faculty involvement. Within the urban region, the assumption prevailed that the impetus for the establishment of support services was passing legislation that mandated the provision of services for students with disabilities.

Gerry College (Rural) compared to Tompkins College (Rural). At Gerry College, the most important component was a qualified person to facilitate the provision of services for students, whereas at Tompkins College, individualized services involve a comprehensive analysis of the disability; the student and the academic environment were identified as the most important component. There was significant difference in the provision of services at the two

rural colleges. Gerry College had one staff member in the disability support office, whereas the support office at Tomkins College was staffed by three full-time and three part-time staff members. The disparity in support service staffing is explained by the comparatively small number of students receiving services at Gerry College.

The support services were established at both institutions as a result of a need for a formal office to coordinate services for students with disabilities. It was surmised that services were provided at Gerry College through the counseling department before the establishment of a formal office. Tompkins College's current director played an integral part of the establishment of the disability support services at her institution.

Research Question 2: In what ways does the knowledge base and skills of the director influence the operation of the disability service programs? (Input Evaluation)

Jefferson College (Suburban) compared to Adams College (Suburban). Within the suburban region, it was believed that a definite relationship existed between the professional background of the director and effective service delivery for students with disabilities. Jefferson College described sympathy and empathy towards students as a critical attribute for a director. The lack of a professional training track for disability support service directors was noted as a critical issue. It was suggested that for both the longevity and professionalism of this leadership position, a career track should be developed. Adams College related direct, personal experience with persons with disabilities as an essential foundation of knowledge for an effective disability support service director. The self-perceived skills of the directors included problem-solving and management skills, patience, a student-centered focus, and interpersonal skills, among others. Professional development opportunities were valued and encouraged. At one of the suburban colleges, budget limitations adversely affected professional development opportunities.

Burr College (Urban) compared to Clinton College (Urban). Within the urban region, there was a perception of a direct, positive relationship between the professional background of the director and effective service delivery for students with disabilities. Previous positions in disability-related fields were viewed as preparation for effectively managing the disability support services office. The self-perceived skills of the directors included patience, organization, crisis-intervention training, and past experience with the disabled population. The professional development opportunities at both institutions were numerous, encouraged, and adequately funded.

Gerry College (Rural) compared to Tompkins College (Rural). The findings within the rural region disclosed a direct relationship between the professional background of the director and effective service delivery for students with disabilities. Past experience with mentally challenged and learning disabled students facilitated the development of the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage the disability support services office. The self-perceived skills of the directors included organizational skills, compassion, respect, and experience with disabled students, education, and commitment to social justice. Professional development was an integral part of the disability support services within the region. The professional development opportunities at both institutions were described as essential, numerous, encouraged, and adequately funded.

Research Question 3: What is the evaluation process used by these disability service programs? (Process Evaluation)

Adams College (Suburban) compared to Jefferson College (Suburban). Neither college indicated that program evaluation was an initial component in the development of the disability support service programs; however, data was collected for the Illinois Community

College Board program review. Adams College prepares comprehensive year-end reports as part of its evaluation process. Jefferson College administers student surveys to solicit feedback regarding the services provided. Ongoing program evaluation was seen as essential for the provision of effective services for students with disabilities.

Burr College (Urban) compared to Clinton College (Urban). Both colleges utilized annual reports and student evaluations to evaluate the effectiveness of the disability support services. The information gleaned from the reports and student evaluations is used to determine the effectiveness of services. No specific information was provided regarding the use of the report data.

Gerry College (Rural) compared to Tompkins College (Rural). Evaluation was an initial component of the disability support services at Tompkins College, but was not an initial component at Gerry College. Both colleges collect the data required by the Illinois Community College Board. Tompkins College collects additional data for program improvement. Evaluation was an initial component at Tompkins from its inception because it was grant driven.

Research Question 4: How do the findings re-craft the program? (Product Evaluation)

Adams College (Suburban) compared to Jefferson College (Suburban). The overall reason for collecting data in both suburban institutions was to satisfy requirements of governing bodies and for program improvement. The collection of data was viewed as essential to support budget-related requests. Jefferson College noted the lack of adequate staff to facilitate the collection of meaningful data as a concern. The institutional response to the collection of data was positive at both institutions.

Burr College (Urban) compared to Clinton College (Urban). The data is primarily utilized to ensure compliance with disability related legislation. Burr College prepares year-end reports compiled from data in weekly reports. No constraints to the collection of data regarding the provision of services for students with disabilities were identified. The institutional response to the collection of data was positive at both institutions.

Gerry College (Rural) compared to Tompkins College (Rural). Gerry College did not identify any constraints to the collection of data. It also appeared that no tangible use of evaluation data occurred. No evaluation process addressed the continuity and effectiveness of support services. Tompkins College noted inadequate staff as a constraint to the collection of program-related data. Both institutions indicated a positive response from the institution regarding the collection of data. One negative aspect related to the collection of data was identified as institutional requests for data that is unavailable or inconsistent.

Cross-Region Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the fundamental elements of disability support service programs in select Illinois community colleges and why and in what ways were the disability support service programs implemented? (Context Evaluation)

Within the suburban region, the colleges identified the most important components of disability support services as an office that is accessible to students and prepared to make the necessary accommodations. The colleges in all of the regions were clearly committed to the provision of quality, appropriate, and legally mandated support services. Yet, all of the colleges included detailed procedures to review students' documentation and determine eligibility for services.

The suburban and rural colleges' impetus for the establishment of disability support services was the need for coordinated services for students with disabilities. The impetus for the establishment of disability support services in the urban regions appeared to relate to the passing of legislation that mandated the provision of services for students with disabilities. The directors at both suburban colleges and one of the rural colleges were able to identify the leaders and provide firsthand knowledge regarding the history of the establishment of disability support services at their institutions. Notably, the urban region was unable to identify the leaders responsible for the development of services for disabled students and consequently was unaware of the establishment history.

Research Question 2: In what ways does the knowledge base and skills of the director influence the operation of the disability service programs? (Input Evaluation)

All of the regions acknowledged a direct relationship between the knowledge base and skills of the director and the operation of the disability support services. One of the suburban institutions noted a lack of a professional training track for a disability support service director position as an issue that needs to be addressed. The responses varied across all regions regarding the self-perceived skills of the directors. Each region contributed to an extensive list that included patience, basic knowledge regarding disabled students, compassion, organization, and problem-solving skills. However, these skills were not region specific. Only one of the six colleges, in the suburban region, noted budget limitations to professional development opportunities. Yet, it appeared as though all regions described professional development opportunities as numerous, encouraged, and adequately funded.

Research Question 3: What is the evaluation process used by these disability service programs? (Process Evaluation)

The suburban region institutions related that evaluation was not an initial component in the development of the disability support services. The urban region institutions make use of annual reports and student evaluations to evaluate the effectiveness of the support services. Evaluation, with regard to the rural region, was an initial component of support services for one college, but not for the other. Although no common evaluation process was used across regions, it appears that each region utilized some form of evaluation.

Research Question 4: How do the findings re-craft the program? (Product Evaluation)

All three regions collect the program data required by the state governing bodies. For the most part, all three regions collect additional data for other program-related matters. However, some variation occurred within the suburban and rural regions, whereby one suburban and one rural college noted inadequate staff and database insufficiencies for comprehensive data collection as a constraint. All three regions noted no constraints to the collection of program data. The institutional response to the collection of data was also expressed as positive in all three regions. However, there was no indication of the use of data to improve or re-craft services.

Implications

The CIPP model uses evaluation as a tool by which to improve programs for the people it is intended to serve (in this case, support services for disabled students). The exploration of how disability support services are evaluated within select Illinois community colleges was based on Stufflebeam's (1969) program evaluation model of context, input, process and product. Based on the findings of this research, four primary implications can be drawn. Those implications

involve: (a) provision of services for disabled students; (b) skills of directors; (c) data collection; and (d) program evaluation.

Provision of Services

Regarding the provision of services to students, the data suggests that institutions should work to refine and streamline the processes related to the provision of services to students with disabilities. Service structures such as “one-stop services” seem to meet the needs of this generation of students. Although disability-related legislation directly impacts the institutions’ responsibility to provide an accessible education for students with disabilities, the legislation establishes the floor and not the ceiling for services. Institutions should revisit long-standing guidelines and procedures to ensure continued effective service delivery to students.

Skills of Directors

The data suggests a relationship exists between the skill set of the director and the provision of effective services for students with disabilities. The directors in the study came to their respective positions with a variety of skills and through diverse career paths. As one would anticipate, the directors who played an integral part in the development of their institution’s disability support programs and had been in the positions the longest had a more comprehensive perspective on what it meant to provide effective services to disabled students. As directors are primarily responsible for the provision of services, implications are that the identification of a comprehensive set of skills for disability service directors would facilitate the recruitment and hiring of effective directors.

Data Collection

The findings further suggest that a lack of meaningful program data collection exists within the regions covered in this study. This appears to adversely affect efforts to improve the provision of services for disabled students. It also appears that the study institutions are not taking full advantage of the opportunity to collect data, nor are they making full use of the data that is collected to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of services provided. Within the case study institutions, it seemed that the term “program evaluation” was ascribed to any form of data collection regardless of relevance to program improvement.

Program Evaluation

A final implication involves the need for the development of a program evaluation instrument specifically designed to address the provision of services for students with disabilities at all levels. While it was apparent that the institutions in the study collected and utilized program data to complete state required reports, other use of data was not clear. As a result, there appeared to be a lack of utilization of data to forecast the needs of students with disabilities, to determine how effectively current needs were being met or to assess the general effectiveness of the support services provided to students. Examination of these areas would positively affect the provision of services for students with disabilities.

Recommendations for Future Practice

This study was conducted to explore how disability support service programs are evaluated in select Illinois community colleges through the use of the CIPP (context, input, process, and product) program evaluation framework. Based on the findings and knowledge gained by the researcher, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. Development of a professional training track for disability support service directors.

One interviewee expressed that this development would positively affect the longevity and professionalism of the position. He expressed hope that the profession would be elevated because disability support services are and will remain an integral part of higher education. A professional training track that replicates the knowledge base and skill set of veteran directors should be established to better meet the needs of disability support services in community colleges. Ideally, the training track would include a sequence of courses regarding issues related to the disabled adult population, management and budget concerns, and preparation to work effectively with faculty members.

2. Development of training programs for faculty members and administrators regarding the unique needs of students with disabilities. It is imperative that faculty be trained to serve these students effectively. Although not addressed specifically in this study, two of the institutions included in this study discussed faculty training as an important component in the effective delivery of services to students with disabilities.
3. Adoption of a program evaluation model that could be implemented throughout the Illinois community college system for continuity and effectiveness in the provision of services for students with disabilities.

Recommendations for Future Research

Given the scope of this study, which was limited to six community colleges in Illinois, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. As a continuation of this study, a similar study could be conducted regarding disability support programs in community colleges involving a larger sample size and inclusive of states other than Illinois.
2. A follow-up study could be conducted to determine which institutional factors contribute to the success and completion of students with disabilities.
3. A comparative study could be conducted to examine the impact of community college disability-related services on disabled students compared to university-based, disability-related services. This type of study would facilitate a comparison of the type and quality of support services provided by these institutions.
4. As a continuation of this study, future research could explore the perceptions of faculty, disability service directors, and students with disabilities regarding what faculty must know as preliminary steps in developing faculty training programs. This research would facilitate the design and delivery of an effective faculty training program. The development of a faculty peer mentoring program may also positively affect the ability of faculty to meet the needs of students with disabilities effectively.

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APPENDIX A

Driving Questions / Participant Interview Questions

1. What are similarities and differences among the disability support programs in select Illinois community colleges in regard to program administration and service delivery?
 - a. What specific services are provided to students through the program?
 - b. What guidelines and procedures exist to expedite service delivery to students through the disability support program?
2. How and in what ways was the disability support services program developed in select Illinois community colleges?
 - a. What was the impetus for the establishment and implementation of the disability support services in your institution?
 - b. Who were the leaders in establishing this service program?
3. What is the evaluation processes used by these disability support services programs and how do the findings re-craft the program?
 - a. Was program evaluation an initial component in the development of the disability support services program?
 - b. Does your institution evaluate the disability support services program? If so, how?
 - c. How does the disability support services program collect and report data within your institution?
 - d. Who or what determines the type and amount of data collection within the disability support services program?

- e. What is the primary reason for the collection of program data?
 - f. What are the primary constraints regarding program data collection?
 - g. Describe a positive and negative example of your institution's response toward the data collected within your disability support services program.
4. Identify commonalities, similarities, and differences in the educational and professional training of the disability support services program directors in select community colleges.
- a. How and in what ways does the professional background of the disability services director relate to the program's ability to provide consistent service delivery and a proper focus on the unique needs of adult students with disabilities?
 - b. What knowledge base and skills do you possess that enable you to effectively manage the disability support services program?
 - c. Are professional development training opportunities available for directors and staff within the disability support services program? If yes, what type of training?

APPENDIX B

Study Participant Demographic Questionnaire

Date: _____

Participant Name: _____

Please complete this demographic questionnaire for this study.
If your institution provides a handbook to students with disabilities, please attach a copy.

1. Present title: _____

2. Number of years:

a) employed at a community college: _____

b) working with students with disabilities in a community college: _____

c) number of years as director/coordinator of disability program: _____

3. Please list all degrees and certificates you have earned:

Degree/Certificate	School	Location	Year

4. Is there a specific program within your institution designated to serve students with disabilities?

Yes ____ No ____

5. How many staff members make up the Disability Support Services Program (include all full-time, part-time, and administrative positions)?

Number of full-time staff members ____

Number of part-time staff members ____

Number of administrators ____

6. Do any of staff members in your Disability Support Services Program have a disability?

Yes _____

No _____

If yes, what type of disability? _____

7. Does your Disability Support Services Program have a mission statement?

Yes _____

No _____

If yes, please attach.

8. How many years has your Disability Support Services Program existed?

Less than one year _____

1 – 5 years _____

6 – 10 years _____

11 – 20 years _____

Over 20 years _____

9. Total number of students receiving Disability Support Services. _____

10. Since the inception of your Disability Support Services Program, how has the number of students served by the program changed?

Student numbers have increased _____

Student numbers have decreased _____

Student numbers have stayed the same _____

11. Total numbers of students receiving Disability Support Services by category.

a. Hearing impairment....._____

b. Blind or visual impairment that cannot be corrected by wearing glasses....._____

c. Speech or language impairment....._____

d. Mobility/orthopedic impairment....._____

e. Specific learning disabilities, including attention deficit disorder....._____

f. Health impairment/ problem....._____

g. Mental illness/emotional disturbance....._____

h. Other (specify) _____

12. In what one area of disability services provision at your institution what you like to see improvement? _____

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to complete this survey. Your careful responses will provide substantive depth and clarity to this study and will aid in providing necessary context.

Donna A. Walker
 Doctoral Student
 National-Louis University

APPENDIX C
 Informed Consent—Participant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study that will take place from October, 2009 to January, 2011. This form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

I consent to participate in a research project conducted by Donna A. Walker, a doctoral student at National-Louis University, located in Chicago, Illinois.

I understand the study is entitled *Program Evaluation of Disability Support Services in Community Colleges*. The purpose of the study is to evaluate disability support service programs in select Illinois community colleges through the use of the CIPP program evaluation framework.

I understand that my participation will consist of audio recorded interviews lasting 60 to 90 minutes with a possible second, follow-up interview lasting 60 to 90 minutes. I understand that I will receive a copy of my transcribed interview at which time I may clarify information.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time until the completion of the dissertation.

I understand that my anonymity will be maintained and the information I provide confidential. I understand that only the researcher, Donna A. Walker, will have access to a secured file cabinet in which will be kept all transcripts, audio recordings, and field notes from the interview(s) in which I participated.

I understand there are no anticipated risks or benefits to me, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Further, the information gained from this study could be used to assist community colleges in become more effective in their strategic planning processes.

I understand that in the event I have questions or require additional information I may contact the researcher: Donna A. Walker

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact my Primary Advisor and Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dennis Haynes, National-Louis University (Chicago Campus), 122 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603. Phone: 312-261-3728 or E-mail: dennis.haynes@nl.edu

Participant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX D
Confidentiality Agreement

Data Transcription

This confidentiality form articulates the agreement made between Donna A. Walker, the researcher, and the transcriptionist.

I understand and acknowledge that by transcribing the audio files provided to me by Donna A. Walker that I will be exposed to confidential information about the research study and the research participants. In providing transcription services, at no time will I reveal or discuss any of the information of which I have been exposed.

In addition, at no time will I maintain copies of the electronic or paper documents generated. Further, upon completing each transcription, I agree to provide the electronic and paper documents to the researcher:

Donna A. Walker
Doctoral Student
National-Louis University

I understand that breach of this agreement as described above could result in personal and professional harm to the research participants for which I will be held legally responsible.

Transcriptionist's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____