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The Self-(un)Identification of Disability in Higher Education

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Abstract

Use of the self-identification process and accommodation services can, in theory, positively contribute to student success; however, students with disabilities may be negatively impacted if they perceive others viewing them as less significant members of the college community. This study identifies the number of students with self-identified disabilities within higher education and the change in self-identification cases over the course of postsecondary enrollment. Utilizing data from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, findings indicate that, 59% of students who self-identified during the first year of postsecondary education, unidentified by the first follow-up and, of those who identified as having a disability at the first follow-up, only 38% also self-identified during the base-year.

Keywords: students with disabilities, self-identification process, accommodation use

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (n.d.), individuals with disabilities constitute the largest minority group within the United States. Within the higher education setting, over 2.5 million students enrolled in postsecondary institutions self-identify as having a disability (Synder & Dillow, 2015). Although this number represents only approximately 11% of all undergraduate students registered in higher education, the overall enrollment of this student group is growing (Synder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016).

Despite the increased presence of students with disabilities within the postsecondary educational environment, there is variability in accurately capturing data on this student group (Alverson, Naranjo, Yamamoto, & Unruh, 2010; Leake, 2015; Schroedel, 2007). When comparing different national postsecondary data collection systems, Leake (2015) concluded that variation in student disability statistics occurs if students do not self-identify a disability within the college setting or fail to reveal their disability status in self-reported data. Inconsistent transition planning into higher education, negative self-perceptions of revealing one's disability, and stigmatization within the college environment can all influence the decision to self-identify in the postsecondary educational sector (Barnard-Brak, Davis, Tate, & Sulak, 2009; Magnus & Tossebro, 2014; May & Stone, 2010).

Disability may be self-disclosed at any point within a student's college experience, with a student requesting or denying accommodation services based on their preference and perception of service functionality. As noted by Riddell and Weedon (2014), with disability, "there may be a degree of choice as to whether disability is a permanent or transient feature of identity" (p. 39). In addition to concealing one's disability, fluidity of a disability status may impinge accurate data collection on this student characteristic, allowing this student group to be imprecisely explored and frequently excluded from mainstream postsecondary research (Peña, 2014; Quick, Lehman, & Deniston, 2003). Namely, research to date has not investigated comprehensively the variation in disability self-identification in national postsecondary student samples. Without appropriate exploration of how students change disability status throughout institutional enrollment, there is no way to gauge the consistency of accommodation use or define reasons to formally remove one's disability status from institutional records.

The purpose of this study was threefold. First, this study identified the number of students with self-identified disabilities within higher education and the change in self-identification cases over the course of postsecondary enrollment. Second, this study explored characteristics of students maintaining the identification of their disability and those unidentifying the disability within the first three years of postsecondary enrollment. Lastly, this study at-

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tempted to identify the potential influence of student characteristics (e.g., demographic characteristics, academic achievement) on potential self-identification. Therefore, this research study was guided by the following questions: (1) How many students identify as having a disability while enrolled in postsecondary education and does this self-identification remain consistent over time?; (2) What are the descriptive differences in student characteristics, based on variation in disability self-identification?; (3) To what extent do student characteristics and academic achievement account for change in the self-identification of one's disability?

Literature Review

As defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA Amendments Act, 2008), a disability is a physical or mental condition that causes substantial functional limitations of one or more life activities, including learning. For students with disabilities, the presence of the disability may create additional obstacles when navigating within the college environment. There is evidence that students may be apprehensive to reveal their disability status due to potential labeling or shame (Coduti, Hayes, Locke, & Youn, 2016; Demery, Thirlaway, & Mercer, 2012). Policies within the postsecondary sector ensure the availability of disability support services to assist students in coursework and within their institutional community. Although disability accommodations are, in theory, available to increase equity between students with and without disabilities, there are various reasons as to why students with disabilities may not fully or consistently disclose their disability within the higher education setting.

Integration and Persistence in Postsecondary Education

Research indicates that students with disabilities have challenges integrating into and persisting within the postsecondary environment (Koch, Mamiseishvili, & Higgins, 2014; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2010; Morina, 2015; Shepler & Woosley, 2012). When entering college, regardless of disability status, students must successfully navigate the postsecondary setting to feel included and welcomed within the socio-academic environment. As noted by Shepler and Woosley (2012), engaging in the socio-academic activities within the college environment creates experiences understood by any student; however, unlike challenges faced by students without disabilities, those with disabilities may have ongoing hindrances integrating within the postsecondary community due to required accommodations and disability-based support. Although an increased sense of belonging allows for improved relationships and feelings of inclusion (Vaccaro, Daly-Cano, & Newman, 2015), disability status may potentially inhibit the student from engaging within their environment, preventing him or her from finding support within the academic setting (Markoulakis & Kirsh, 2013). Demery et al. (2012) found that students with mood disorders did not frequently share information about their disability to members within their institutional community (e.g., friends, academic staff). Not self-identifying may be due to previous and/or self-perceived negative connotations related to their disability; this choice may subsequently be "detrimental" (p. 529) to current socio-academic experiences within the higher education environment.

Students with disabilities may have difficulty familiarizing themselves with new social and academic situations found within the college setting and may consider dropping out of higher education (Adams & Proctor, 2010). Embodying the "characteristics of a nontraditional or at-risk student" (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2010, p. 100), students with disabilities require additional support from the institutional community, which influences their persistence within postsecondary education (Getzel, 2008). Koch et al. (2014) found that for students with psychiatric disabilities, situations that allowed for increased academic integration (e.g., meeting with academic advisors) and social integration (e.g., participating in school clubs) was significantly related to student persistence. Ultimately, the role of students' ability to academically and socially integrate within the postsecondary environment impacts their overall ability to persist.

Self-identification and Disclosure

Students entering higher education who previously received disability support services within the K-12 sector may also have the opportunity to receive accommodations at the postsecondary level. However, different procedures for requesting disability support services occur within the secondary and postsecondary sectors. Unlike the process and structure experienced within the K-12 environment (i.e., through the use of an individualized education program [IEP]), the student is responsible to notify the institution that he or she will require accommodations and must provide adequate documentation to support this request. Without adequate documentation, students may be unable to access needed accommodations (Sparks & Lovett, 2009). No longer can the student rely on the use of an IEP team, consisting of student advocates including a school counselor/psychologist, teachers,

school administrators, and parents, to support and promote the student's rights and needs.

Disclosing a disability is a voluntary action but until the student formally self-identifies, an institution is not required to support the student through any form of accommodation (United States Department of Education, 2017). To ensure that the student is knowledgeable of the self-identification process within the higher education environment, it is crucial that students with disabilities receive information and be prepared for the transition into postsecondary education (Megivern, Pellerito, & Mowbray, 2003; United States Department of Education, 2017). Institutions will provide accommodations "that are necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in a school's program" (United States Department of Education, 2017, p. 25). However, students with disabilities may be hesitant to accept support services as self-identifying may have a negative impact on their socio-academic postsecondary experience (Hadley, 2009; Milsom & Hartley, 2005). Neither disclosing a disability nor receiving needed accommodations may thwart the student's postsecondary experience; however, students with disabilities are cautious in self-disclosing because of fear of potential stigma by their peers (American Council on Education, 2008; Martin, 2010).

Receiving Accommodations in Higher Education

With the use of the self-identification process, students with disabilities have the opportunity to receive accommodations to support their postsecondary educational experience. Despite this, students with disabilities may not use the available support services if they had preconceived attitudes on accommodation use within the postsecondary institutional setting or did not engage in transition planning prior to entering higher education (Barnard-Brak, et al., 2009; Newman & Madaus, 2015). According to Barnard-Brak et al. (2009), students with disabilities are more likely to request accommodations when they positively perceive the concept and use of disability support services. Moreover, based on data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS-2), Newman and Madaus (2015) found that students who received ample transition planning from secondary to postsecondary education were more likely to use available accommodations and support services. Negatively perceived use of accommodations or reluctance to self-identify may cause additional obstacles for the students and their postsecondary success (Magnus & Tossebro, 2014).

Misconceptions on available disability support within the higher education environment may have a negative impact on students' with disabilities postsecondary experience (Sniatecki, Perry, & Snell, 2015). When assessing faculty knowledge and attitudes of students with disabilities and available disability support services, Sniatecki et al. (2015), noted that faculty members often had a lack of understanding regarding the use of accommodations. Additionally, Lombardi, Murray, and Gerdes (2011) found inconsistencies between faculty members "attitudes toward inclusive teaching practices and their self-reported actions" (p. 250) with students with disabilities. Even if students participate in the self-identification process to receive disability support services, the knowledge and actions of members within the institutional environment toward students with disabilities may influence students' continued use and/or effectiveness of the available accommodations.

Stigmatization of Student Disability

Research frequently notes the reoccurring presence of stigmatization towards individuals with disabilities within the higher education environment (Maranzan, 2016; Martin, 2010; May & Stone, 2010; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011; Trammell, 2009). Perceived negative attitudes toward disability may impede the desire and/or action of a student with a disability to seek out needed and available support and accommodations (Maranzan, 2016). Utilizing the Postsecondary Student Survey of Disability-related Stigma (PSSDS), Trammell (2009) found that students with disabilities faced the greatest amount of stigma with relation to how they felt their peers perceived them. Additionally, when surveying students with mental health conditions, Martin (2010) found that approximately two-thirds of their study's sample did not self-identify their disabilities because of previously experienced and/or perceived discrimination specific to the self-identified disability.

Regardless of the type of one's disability, there is evidence of disability stigmatization for both visible and nonvisible disabilities (Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). When assessing the participation of students with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities within the postsecondary environment, Sachs and Schreuer (2011) found that students with disabilities partook in fewer social and extra-curricular events, concluding that current supports within the higher education environment "do not satisfy the need to reduce the social gap, stigma, and isolation experienced by many students with disabilities" (p. 15). Moreover, students with learning disabilities (LD) perceive that those within their environment view individuals with the specific disability type as less intelligent than individuals who do not have a LD diagnosis (May & Stone, 2010). Lisle and Wade (2014) found that

a bias existed towards the idea of LD, noting that "a mere presence of a LD label had the ability to cause a differential perception of those with LDs and those without LDs" (p. 212). If students believe that members of their institutional community perceive their disabilities as a negative, lesser-than characteristic, they may be hesitant to self-identify.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the minority group model of disability (Hahn, 1985). Hahn (1986) noted that there is an intertwined relationship between the overall perception of disability and the creation and implementation of disability policy. Moreover, within the framework, individuals with disabilities are often incorrectly judged and negatively viewed, and that societal perception of disability is perpetuated by existing policy. The minority group model of disability frames individuals with disabilities as a group that are susceptible to discrimination, and that "the opportunities of people with disabilities are limited far more by a discriminatory environment than by their impairments" (Scotch, 2000, p. 214). Understanding that students may unidentify their disability statuses for several reasons including the desire to disassociate with formalized documentation of disability (if the student was discriminated against because of the disability status), the theoretical framework cognizes the structure of disability as an oppressed characteristic and recognizes the lack of equity for individuals with disabilities (Hahn, 1985; 1986; 1996).

Method

Sample

This study utilized data from the Beginning Postsecondary Students study of 2004-2009 (BPS:04/09), sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics ([NCES]; Wine, Janson, & Wheeless, 2011). While an updated BPS study is currently underway, the 2004-2009 study was the most recent complete iteration. We used data from the base-year (2004) and the first follow-up (2006) waves. The BPS:04/09 study is nationally representative of Title IV-eligible postsecondary institutions across the United States, with a focus on first-time college students. Data for the study were obtained from institutional records, administrative databases, and student interviews. Importantly, students who participated in the BPS:04/09 were asked about disability identification during each wave of data collection.

From the 23,090 students in the BPS:04/06 sample, we created two analytic samples. Our first analytic sample contained only the 1,670 students who identified as having at least one disability during the base-year, which was their first year in postsecondary education. We limited our sample in this way because our aim was to explore the unidentification patterns for students who identified as having a disability in their first year. The second analytic sample included all students who identified as having a disability during the first follow-up. This sample contained 1,820 students. For this sample, we were interested in exploring identification patterns for students who did not identify as having a disability during the base year. All reported sample sizes were rounded to the nearest ten, complying with our NCES restricted data use agreement.

Analytic Methods

To address our research questions, we used a variety of statistical methods. Our first question was best answered using descriptive statistics. The second research question required the use of a series of means comparisons in order to identify where students who remained identified and those who unidentified differed in statistically significant ways. Additionally, we made these comparisons between students who remained identified and the students who newly identified at the first follow-up. These comparisons were conducted using data from both the base-year and first follow-up waves of data collection. We employed logistic regression to answer our third research question, allowing us to identify variables that were correlated with students' decisions to unidentify as having a disability by the first follow-up. These models were run in a nested series to view the impact that subsequent blocks of variables had on previous estimates and the fit of the model.

Utilizing list-wise deletion to address missing data would have been problematic because the sample size would have been cut in half. Instead, we used multiple imputation – the most widely recommended method, partially because it reduces bias in model estimates compared to methods such as list-wise deletion (Cox, McIntosh, Reason, & Terenzini, 2014; van Buuren, 2012). Due to the complex sampling design employed during data collection, sampling and design weights were included in the imputation process (Heeringa, West, & Berglund, 2010) to account for student responses being nested within postsecondary institutions. We used Stata 14's *mi impute chained* command, generating 100 imputed datasets and used Rubin's (1987) rules to pool results. One hundred datasets were imputed due to the large fraction of missing data (i.e., FMI) during some means comparisons, particularly the SAT/ACT score (White,

Royston, & Wood, 2011). Diagnostic analyses were then conducted, raising no causes for concern with the imputed data. For instance, we tabulated values for the original and imputed data and compared to identify significant discrepancies. No more than minor differences were found, which is to be expected.

Following the advice of Manly and Wells (2015), we provide supplemental information about the missing data. Across the samples, the rate of missingness ranged from 3% for parental education up to 42% for SAT/ACT score. All missing data resulted from the question being skipped during the student interview. For SAT/ACT scores, students were not asked for their score if they did not take either test (16%) or were more than 23 years old (26%). Missing data rates for academic and social integration were 12% during the base-year and 25% during the first follow-up. Students no longer enrolled in higher education were not asked this question, nor were students in a degree program less than an Associate's level (12%). Finally, GPA in 2006 had a rate of missingness of 33%. This question was skipped if the student was no longer enrolled in postsecondary education. Excluding students who were no longer enrolled in higher education resulted in nearly identical identification proportions.

Variables

The majority of the variables used in our analyses were captured during the base-year of the survey. Many of these variables were demographic in nature, including self-reports of gender and racial identities, age, parental income and education, and disability type. Because the noted variables were demographic characteristics, it was likely assumed the variables would remain fairly stable over time and were not measured at each time point. This assumption is not always safe to make, as we show by investigating the transitory nature of disability identity, which was measured at each data collection wave. Of note for our disability variables, students who identified as having a disability during the first follow-up were only asked if they had sensory, mobility, or other impairments. This greatly limited our ability to explore trends in identification by disability type.

Variables that we compared from each of the first two waves of data collection included grade point averages and two indexes of integration. The two integration indexes pertained to students' academic and social integration and were constructed by the NCES. These indexes were not perfect, but after reviewing the variables available within the data set, we determined that any attempt to refine or enhance the scale was not worthwhile. The composite measure of academic integration was composed of students' responses about the frequency (i.e., never, sometimes, often) of engaging in the following: participating in study groups, having social contact with faculty, meeting with academic advisor, and talking with faculty about academic matters outside of class (Wine et al., 2011). Social integration represented the frequency students engaged in the following: attended fine arts activities, participated in intramural or varsity sports, or participated in school clubs. Two variables only measured during the first follow-up were utilized: transfer status and attainment or persistence. The reasoning for this was simple: a student could only transfer after first attending a school, and since the base-year wave only captured new students, there was no opportunity for them to have yet transferred. Further, attainment and persistence can only be measured over time.

For the logistic regression models of unidentification, categorical variables were manipulated in order to produce meaningful and interpretable estimates. Manipulation resulted in the dichotomization of the following variables: institutional level indicating whether an institution was 4-year or not, institutional control to indicate whether an institution was public or not, and race to represent whether a respondent was White or not. Inclusion decisions were driven by descriptive comparisons between students who remained identified and those who unidentified as well as through empirical model trimming where variables which did not contribute to a better model fit were excluded. Only unidentification was predicted because we had more disability-related information for these students.

Results

During the base-year of data collection, over 10% of students identified as having any form of disability. This percentage increased slightly to 11% two years later during the first follow-up. To some, this might signal stability in disability identification; however, the students within this group identifying as having at least one form of disability were not consistent. While 1,670 students identified as having a disability during the base-year, 59% unidentified by the first follow-up. Of the 1,820 students who identified as having a disability at the first follow-up, only 38% also self-identified during the base-year.

Few statistically significant differences existed between students who remained identified as having a disability at the first follow-up and those students who unidentified as having any type of disability. The students who remained identified were older, on average, than students who unidentified when they first

enrolled in postsecondary education (25.69 years old versus 22.97 years old, $p < 0.01$). Of those who remained identified, a proportionally higher amount had a sensory disability (23% versus 11%, $p < 0.01$). Students remaining identified also applied for vocational rehabilitation services at disproportionately higher rates during the base wave of data collection (22% versus 14%, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, although not reaching our identified level of statistical significance ($\alpha < 0.05$), during the base-year of the study, the two groups were quite similar, on average, in terms of social integration; however, students who unidentified by the first follow-up appeared to be less socially integrated than those who remained identified. Complete results can be found in Table 1.

Similarly, only a few statistically significant differences were discovered between students who remained identified and those who newly identified at the first follow-up. Students who remained identified were, on average, older when they initially enrolled than students who newly identified (25.69 years old versus 23.14 years old, $p < 0.01$). The proportion of students with physical disabilities was higher in the group of students who remained identified (34% versus 25%, $p < 0.05$). Finally, the proportion of students who had transferred at least once was higher in the group of students who newly identified (15% versus 21%, $p < 0.05$). See Table 2 for complete results.

Descriptively, we saw differences between the students who remained identified and those who unidentified along the lines of disability type and racial identity. Comparing proportions between the two groups, more students in the remained identified group reported having a hearing impairment during the base-year (8% versus 3%). Conversely, for students who identified as having a health impairment during the base-year, a higher proportion moved into the unidentified group by the first follow-up (14% versus 18%). In terms of racial and ethnic identity, students identifying as Black (8% versus 11%) or Hispanic (9% versus 15%) represented a higher proportion of students within the unidentified group, while a higher proportion of White (74% versus 62%) students remained identified. These results can be found in Table 3. In terms of racial and ethnic identities between the students who remained identified and those who newly identified at the first follow-up, a high proportion of White (74% versus 65%) students remained identified while higher proportions of Black (8% versus 11%) and Hispanic (9% versus 15%) students newly identified. Full results for these two groups can be found in Table 4.

Table 5 contains the results of the final nested logistic regression models in the form of odds ratios. In this study, an odds ratio can be thought of as the effect that a variable has on the odds of a student unidentifying. When a ratio is equal to one, the variable has no effect. Ratios greater than one are associated with increases in the odds of unidentifying while ratios less than one represent lower odds of unidentification. The complete model results are consistent throughout the modeling process (i.e., the estimates remained statistically significant throughout), so only those results are reported here. From the model estimates, we were able to see the impact that different disability types had on students' probability of unidentifying by the first follow-up. Students who reported difficulty learning or who had sensory disabilities were unlikely to unidentify. Converting the odds ratios reported in Table 4, students with difficulty learning had a probability of 0.37 to unidentify. Students with sensory disabilities had a probability of just 0.26.

Vocational rehabilitation services appeared to have a substantial impact on the likelihood of a student unidentifying. For students who applied to receive these services, their probability of unidentifying was particularly low: 0.25. However, students who actually received these services were quite likely to unidentify, with a probability of 0.71. Consistent with the descriptive results above, age had an influence on the decision to unidentify, with the likelihood decreasing as students got older. Finally, our results indicated that White students were unlikely to unidentify, having a probability of only 0.36. This result was consistent with the racial representation in the descriptive results discussed above.

Discussion and Implications

This study brought to light some important distinctions between students who unidentified as having a disability and those who maintained disability identification status throughout postsecondary enrollment, while also raising several new questions about the unidentifying population. As mentioned previously, students with disabilities are likely to have a decreased sense of belonging due to increased social stigma. We conceptualized the social integration index as a manifestation of students' sense of belonging. During the base-year when all students identified as having a disability, the average social integration of both groups was nearly identical. Yet by the first follow-up, students who remained identified became more socially integrated than their peers who unidentified. While this difference was not statistically significant, this trend is worth noting because of the implications it could have on further longitudinal analysis of this and similar measures. Students

who unidentified might have done so due to lower perceived sense of integration, in hopes that by unidentifying they would feel like they belonged. These differences also supported Hahn's (1985;1986) minority group model, particularly the role the environment plays in "disabling" persons.

Another trend that surfaced was the difference in percentages for types of disabilities reported within the groups of unidentified and identified students, particularly for physical and sensory disabilities and students with difficulty learning. Across these three types, only the difference between the percentage of students with sensory disabilities reached statistical significance. For this type of disability, a higher percentage remained identified by the first follow-up. Students with physical disabilities tended to unidentify while those experiencing difficulty learning were likely to remain identified. In compliance with ADA regulations, postsecondary institutions readily work toward making the physical campus accessible. As a result, students with physical disabilities are better able to access buildings and move about campus with more limited interference in their everyday lives, reducing the perceived stigma of their conditions. Conversely, institutions face larger hurdles when making campuses accessible to students with learning and/or sensory disabilities. These students may rely more on accommodation services to access classroom material such as extended time for tests, audio- visual technology, or completing tests in an alternate location. These accommodations, while often proving to be critical for students (Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002), enhance feelings of being different (Kranke, Jackson, Taylor, Anderson-Fye & Floersch, 2013; Marshak, Van Wieren, Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010). Additionally, the higher percentage of students with physical disabilities in the unidentified group of students speaks to the transient nature of some types of disability. For instance, a student responding to the survey during the base-year could have been on crutches because of breaking a leg and identified as having a physical disability. By the first follow-up, the leg could have completely healed and the student no longer identified as having a disability. Also noteworthy was the finding that students who pursued vocational rehabilitation services were more likely to remain identified. Seeking these services implies that these students are in the workforce, prompting further research into the net impact of working on postsecondary persistence and attainment for this population.

Given the measures captured by the NCES in the BPS:04/09 study, we are still left with several questions pertaining to disability identification status. We need to know more about these students, particularly reasons for unidentifying or newly identifying over time. Additional research is also needed to explore whether the students who unidentify do so just when asked on a survey or to the disability services office on their campuses as well. Practitioners will be able to use our results to better serve their students by anticipating unidentification and new identification and providing additional support for these students as they transition. Disability identification is often assumed to be static in the literature; yet, our findings suggest quite the opposite: a large percentage of students with disabilities are much more fluid in their identification. These results warrant the measurement of identification at each time point for longitudinal studies and raise new questions for an understudied population.

Limitations

There are a couple of limitations of this study that should be noted. The first pertains to the measurement of disability by the NCES in the BPS:04/09 study. While disability was measured in some form during each wave of data collection, the approach was not consistent. During the base-year, a measure was included that captured the main disability type for students who identified as having a disability. The more fine-grained nature of this measure is appealing to use for research; however, it completely disregards the issue of comorbidity of disability. Further, this level of detail was not captured in the following wave of data collection, so comparisons over time (the intention of this paper) were not feasible.

An additional limitation to carefully consider is the conceptualization of the academic and social integration scales by the NCES. Integration is a heavily researched topic in higher education and has given rise to multiple operationalizations over time. In this dataset in particular, these indices were composed of relatively few behaviors. This is problematic given the vast realm of possible ways that students are able to become integrated on their campuses. Social integration was particularly flawed in this manner because of its very limited view of social activities (e.g., sports teams, extracurricular clubs). Only one of the three activities allowed for the attendance at an event to be considered social integration; whereas, the other two items necessitate that students formally belong to recognized groups. It is possible that replicating our study with different conceptualizations of these forms of integration using different data would result in differential effects of integration on likelihood of unidentifying.

Conclusion

Continued research is needed on this population of students with disabilities who are unidentifying as having a disability. While the BPS data allowed us to identify this population, few variables were useful to our overall understanding of why students are unidentifying. Our results brought to light some potentially valuable threads to pursue in additional research, particularly around the role of social connection and feelings of belonging in students' identification decisions. Supplementing these data with data from other national studies such as the National Longitudinal Transition Study and/or a qualitative component focusing on students who change their identification status would enhance our understanding of this phenomenon. Currently, we cannot be sure whether this trend should be concerning to researchers and practitioners. These supplementary data would also help to identifying ways in which campus community members can support students during these transitional periods. However, from our results, we hope to highlight the size of this subpopulation of students with disabilities. This subpopulation reinforces the fluid nature of disability and should prompt further discussions of the services being provided to these students at postsecondary institutions across the US and whether we are prepared to fully support students through this decision process.

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Table 1

Mean Comparisons Between Students Who Remained Identified at the First Follow-Up and Those Who Unidentified

	Remained Identified		Unidentified	
Variable	**Mean**	**Std. Err.**	**Mean**	**Std. Err.**
Academic Integration ‘04	68.89	2.66	68.44	2.80
Academic Integration ‘06	80.46	2.86	78.07	3.23
Social Integration ‘04	31.42	2.45	30.78	2.16
Social Integration ‘06	38.01	2.86	34.71	2.79
% Female	0.59	0.03	0.57	0.03
Age First Enrolled**	25.69	0.64	22.97	0.38
Parental Income	$53,882.42	3,184.14	$52,181.61	2,458.47
% Physical Disability ‘04	0.37	0.03	0.42	0.03
% Difficulty Dressing ‘04	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.01
% Difficulty Learning ‘04	0.53	0.03	0.47	0.02
% Sensory Disability ‘04**	0.23	0.02	0.11	0.01
GPA ‘04	2.88	0.05	2.79	0.05
GPA ‘06	3.09	0.04	3.17	0.03
Risk Index	1.81	0.10	1.89	0.10
SAT/ACT Score	929.37	14.69	917.67	14.03
% Persisted/Attained	0.62	0.03	0.55	0.03
% Transferred	0.15	0.02	0.20	0.02
% Applied Voc. Rehab**	0.22	0.02	0.14	0.02
% Received Voc. Rehab	0.16	0.02	0.12	0.02

Notes. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; $n = 1{,}670$. Results calculated using the WTA000 analytic weight in conjunction with BRR weights.

Table 2

Mean Comparisons Between Students Who Remained Identified at the First Follow-Up and Those Who Newly Identified

	Remained Identified		Newly Identified	
Variable	**Mean**	**Std. Err.**	**Mean**	**Std. Err.**
Academic Integration ‘04	70.12	2.84	67.71	2.89
Academic Integration ‘06	81.97	3.81	95.92	3.77
Social Integration ‘04	36.92	2.71	35.63	2.56
Social Integration ‘06	41.78	4.26	42.77	3.70
% Female	0.59	0.03	0.55	0.02
Age First Enrolled**	25.69	0.64	23.14	0.41
Parental Income	$52,006.26	3,128.133	$53,177.22	2,003.43
% Physical Disability ‘06*	0.34	0.03	0.25	0.02
% Sensory Disability ‘06	0.19	0.02	0.17	0.02
GPA ‘04	2.88	0.05	2.77	0.04
GPA ‘06	3.06	0.06	3.03	0.04
Risk Index	1.81	0.10	1.79	0.08
SAT/ACT Score	919.72	61.79	910.60	42.79
% Persisted/Attained	0.62	0.03	0.59	0.21
% Transferred*	0.15	0.02	0.21	0.02

Notes. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; $n = 1{,}670$. Results calculated using the WTA000 analytic weight in conjunction with BRR weights.

Table 3

Percentage Comparisons Between Students Who Remained Identified at the First Follow-Up and Those Who Unidentified

Variable	Remained Identified	Unidentified
Enrollment Intensity		
Full-Time	62	67
Part-Time	10	15
Not-Enrolled	22	19
Institutional Level		
Less-than-2-year	7	12
2-year	56	55
4-year	37	33
Institutional Control		
Public	71	68
Private not-for-profit	14	12
Private for-profit	15	20
Main Disability Type		
Hearing Impairment	8	3
Visual Impairment	6	4
Mobility Impairment	21	21
SLD and Dyslexia	8	7
ADD	17	17
Health Impairment	14	18
Emotional/Psychiatric	11	10
Depression	10	12
Other	5	8
Race		
White	74	62
Black/African American	8	11
Hispanic/Latino	9	15
Asian	2	3
Another Race(s)	6	9

Note. n = 1,670; results calculated using the WTA000 analytic weight

Table 4

Percentage Comparisons Between Students Who Remained Identified at the First Follow-Up and Those Who Newly Identified

Variable	Remained Identified	Newly Identified
Enrollment Intensity		
Full-Time	71	66
Part-Time	11	10
Not-Enrolled	24	19
Institutional Level		
Less-than-2-year	7	10
2-year	56	50
4-year	37	40
Institutional Control		
Public	71	69
Private not-for-profit	14	15
Private for-profit	15	16
Race		
White	74	65
Black/African American	8	11
Hispanic/Latino	9	15
Asian	2	4
Another Race(s)	6	5

Note. n = 1,820; results calculated using the WTA000 analytic weight.

Table 5

Odds Ratios of Unidentifying by the First Follow-Up

	Block				
Variable	1	2	3	4	5
Difficulty Learning	0.64**	0.62**	0.58**	0.58**	0.59**
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Sensory Disability	0.34**	0.34**	0.35**	0.34**	0.35**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
GPA in ‘04		0.87	0.88	0.96	0.95
		(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Transferred			1.34	1.23	1.26
			(0.25)	(0.24)	(0.24)
Applied for Voc. Rehab Services			0.31**	0.36**	0.33**
			(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Received Voc. Rehab Services			2.17	2.41*	2.44*
			(0.99)	(1.04)	(1.05)
Age in ‘04				0.97**	0.97**
				(0.01)	(0.01)
White				0.55**	0.57**
				(0.09)	(0.09)
Attended 4-Year Institution					0.74
					(0.12)
Attended Public Institution					0.85
					(0.14)

Notes. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; n = 1,670; results calculated using the WTA000 analytic weight and BRR weights