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How Do They Do It: A Narrative of Disabled Public School Instrumental Ensemble Conductors and Their Positive Working Relationships With Their Administrators

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HOW DO THEY DO IT: A NARRATIVE OF DISABLED PUBLIC SCHOOL
INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE CONDUCTORS AND THEIR POSITIVE WORKING
RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR ADMINISTRATORS
by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Conducting

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this document to my ancestors who fought so hard for me to have this opportunity. I am forever grateful for the doors you have opened.

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My sincerest thanks to Drs. Cormac Cannon, Jay Jacobs, Alexandria Carrico, and Gail Barnes for your guidance and mentorship. I truly appreciate the support and the opportunity to embark on this journey.

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ABSTRACT

As the leader of the instrumental ensemble, the conductor's role is important on and off the stage. Public school conductors have especially demanding jobs because they must act as a conduit between composer and ensemble as well as handle all administrative duties pertaining to running a music program. Subsequently, this results in a heavier workload than the average teacher. The demanding workload can add to any preexisting issues for disabled ensemble conductors who struggle at work due to insufficient support from their administrators. The lack of strong administrative support for disabled or impaired faculty and staff may be due to unfamiliarity with how to properly support disabled or impaired personnel. Using a qualitative study design in the form of narrative inquiry and autoethnography, the researcher explores the elements which create a positive workplace environment for instrumental ensemble conductors. The sample included six public school instrumental ensemble conductors who identify as having a disability while maintaining a healthy working relationship with their administration. The inquiry showed that while most participants were initially apprehensive about disclosing their disabilities, the level of compassion, trust, and freedom shown by their administrators allowed them to easily receive necessary accommodations either via self-accommodation or school provided accommodations.

PREFACE

My experiences as a disabled ensemble conductor inspired this inquiry. I first considered documenting the problems disabled and/or impaired ensemble conductors encountered with their administration. After some thought, however, I decided to embark on a solution-oriented approach. I chose this approach for two reasons: charity and self-interest. I want my research to be meaningful and helpful and I believe the best way to do that is to be solution oriented. Additionally, I was curious to see what other people in similar situations as myself do to ensure their health and happiness. I hoped the experiences of my interlocutors would help provide guidelines for best practices for administrators working with disabled conductors.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADAAA.....	Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act
ADHD.....	Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
APA	American Psychological Association
CHP	Center of Human Policy
CMT	Charcot-Marie-Tooth Disease
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
U.S. FDA	United States Food & Drug Administration
FMLA	Family and Medical Leave Act
IDEA.....	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LRE.....	Least Restrictive Environment

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Born from the momentum of the civil rights movement, the disability rights movement in the United States has a complicated legal history that is still evolving. Prior to the 1970s, disabled and/or impaired citizens had no legal protection against discrimination. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first form of federal protection against discrimination for disabled citizens in American history (United States Equal Opportunity Commission, 2023). Two years later, the signing of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 ensured that all children with disabilities are eligible for a free public education with special education support services. Congress later renamed it to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). Disability rights have come a long way, but the legislation still has far to go before equity is realized.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that significantly limits major life activities (Americans with Disabilities Act, 2023). An impairment refers to a problem with a structure, organ, or operating system within the human body that may or may not affect how a person can perform a particular activity. The ADA also covers people who currently do not have a disability but have a record of impairment. As of January 1, 2022, the United States had a total population of 332,403,650 citizens (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2022) and 26% of that population identify as having a

disability and/or impairment. This amounts to roughly 61 million adult Americans (Centers for Disease Control, 2022). Further, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics states that approximately 2% of the total adult population are schoolteachers. This means there are potentially 1.2 million public school teachers with a disability and/or impairment. However, this statistic is likely an underestimate given that those numbers only include individuals who chose to formally disclose their disability status.

Scholars have contributed valuable information to the body of literature concerning special education in public schools since the signing of the IDEA. However, literature pertaining to the experiences of educators with disabilities and/or impairments is limited and literature regarding disabled and/or impaired music educators is scarcer. Narrative inquiries are a suitable method of data collection for social sciences because of the limited information available and the nuances of social interactions. Narratives are an important form of exploration for under-researched topics because they allow participants the space to tell their stories within a broad social context (Baden & Niekerk, 2007). They can also identify research problems within the social parameters of the participant as well as provide insight for viable solutions.

Researchers from two different studies identified the difficulties of pre-service and active music educators who identify as having a disability and/or impairment via narrative inquiries. The researchers of these studies were able to discern several common themes that impeded the participants' success in the workplace such as inadequate accommodations and the misconceptions of co-workers and administrators (Parker & Draves, 2017; Weimer & Vaughan-Marra, 2022). In another phenomenological study, Ferri, Keef, and Gregg (2001) looked at special education teachers who had learning

disabilities and how they used their disabilities as tools to ensure their students had a fair and equitable education. The results of that study yielded valuable insight about what a successful situation with a disabled teacher can look like. Unfortunately, 100% ADA compliant workplace situations for disabled educators who need accommodations are rare. Barbara L. Brock conducted a study in 2007 that sought to highlight the many issues faced by disabled educators and provide possible solutions to school administrators to remain within ADA compliance.

Students who utilize special education services in primary and secondary schools are also eligible for assistance in college. However, the protections and accommodations of the IDEA do not extend into higher education, therefore, after high school, the legal protections that people with disabilities have can decrease. In this paper, the term accommodation is defined as any aid or service provided to a person with disabilities which allows them to complete their job duties more effectively (United States Department of Labor, 2023). Accommodations can be physical such as a wheelchair accessible ramp, or organizational such as the ability to take frequent restroom breaks or miss multiple days of work without penalty. The ADA explicitly prohibits employers from discriminating against a qualified individual because of their disability status, however, the vague language used in the legislation gives employers flexibility with the interpretation of the law. For example, a teacher who utilized the help of a paraprofessional as a student may not have access to a similar service as an adult because the employer might not consider it to be a reasonable accommodation. Fear of discrimination can also force adults not to disclose their disabilities to their employer and therefore prevent them from seeking assistance. Ambiguous legal wording coupled with a

lack of communication between teachers and administrators, can result in disabled adults not having the resources necessary to accommodate their disability.

Ideally, teachers with disabilities who require accommodations should have reasonable access to them because the resources already exist within the school. Unfortunately, the majority of resources within school programs are intended for student use. Teachers with impairments with unique job descriptions, such as public school music ensemble conductors, can experience a higher level of anxiety at work due to the extra physical and mental demands of the job. Anxiety and stress can be a trigger for many impairments and improper access to reasonable accommodations can further exacerbate stress-related symptoms. Schools must provide reasonable accommodations to students and teachers to remain in compliance with the ADA and the ADAAA. Unfortunately, cases of non-compliance often occur because schools either do not understand or overlook the needs of disabled teachers.

Public school ensemble conductors often face unique challenges as educators such as extended hours and hard physical labor. Furthermore, if they have a disability and/or impairment, locating allies within the workplace who understand the demands of the job may be difficult. Fortunately, increased focus on inclusivity and diversity within the workplace bodes well for the disabled community at large. Nevertheless, complete equity and inclusivity within the educational workspace will require further study and action. As a former high school band director with Crohn's disease, I use my own experiences to provide insight throughout this narrative inquiry through the use of autoethnography (Chang, 2016). My intimate knowledge of the job requirements and experience with school politics in the United States affords me a unique perspective as a researcher.

Following the social model of disability, which suggests that a person's surroundings are the source of their disability instead of their physical impairment, I analyzed participant narratives to provide suggestions for administrators to cultivate a supportive work environment (Oliver, 2013). The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to explore the elements of a positive working relationship between public school instrumental ensemble conductors and their building administrators. The research questions are:

1. Have the conductors with disabilities fully disclosed their disabilities/impairments to their supervisors, and why or why not?
2. Are the conductors with disabilities properly accommodated at work and what types of accommodations do they receive?
3. What are conductor perceptions regarding how to achieve a functional relationship between themselves and their administrators?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study I sought to understand the nature of relationships between ensemble conductors with disabilities and their administrators. I searched for narratives from ensemble conductors with impairments who have positive relationships with their supervisors, however no research currently exists about this topic. The available body of literature pertains to disability studies in academia, disability rights in the United States, and the current state of disability services in the public school system. By examining relationships of these topics to conducting instrumental ensembles, I will provide suggestions to aid school administrators with establishing and maintaining a compassionate and ADA-compliant work environment.

2.1 DISABILITY STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES

As a social science, the broad topic of disability studies is relatively new. Academics began to explore the relationships between people who identify as disabled and their cultural surroundings through the lens of social stigma during the 1960s. According to the Syracuse University Center on Disability and Inclusion (2023), the university became one of the leading research institutions for disability studies when they opened their Center of Human Policy (CHP) in the 1970s. The CHP's goal was to challenge the abuse and mistreatment of people with disabilities through legal advocacy, community education, and program developments. In 2004, the center partnered with the Syracuse College of Law to form the Disability Law and Policy Program. The subject of disability studies has expanded exponentially since then. The immensity of this topic is such that a definition which covers it all is difficult to succinctly conceptualize. Because

of this, Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) chose to approach the definition of disability studies from the lens of what disability studies is not. According to them:

‘[D]isability studies’ should not be allowed to become little more than a synonym for special education or rehabilitation sciences. Nor should the term become interchangeable with research into community support and inclusive education...disability studies is not the same as disability rights. (p.72)

This statement was intended to compel researchers to acknowledge and carefully explore the intersectionality that occurs within disability studies. Overall, disability studies is a broad term for a multidisciplinary academic area of research in which researchers examine the lived experiences of people who identify as having a disability or impairment.

Within disability studies there are several models used to describe the disabled experience. According to Olkin of the American Psychological Association (2022), there are three overarching models of disability: the moral model, the medical model, and the social model. The moral model views disability through the lens of morality and karma. Olkin (2022) said that while viewed under this model, a person’s disability status can be a sign of wrongdoing, or a sign of good, depending on the beliefs of the community. For example, under the moral model, a person’s disability may be a sign of strength from God, a punishment, or sign of wickedness. The moral model of disability is often present in entertainment in the form of the wicked character who may show signs of physical impairments, or the unlikely hero (Olkin, 2022).

The medical model of disability views impairment as a sickness in need of medical intervention. Disability scholars often criticize the medical model because it is

centered around the belief that disabled people are inherently defective and in need of a medical cure. Goering (2015) found that many people with disabilities view their main hurdle as the perception that they are unwanted due to community accessibility. The medical model of disability can be harmful because it encourages this stigma. This model focuses on “fixing” the person so they can assimilate into society rather than attempting to make society more accessible. Despite this negative association that many disability studies scholars and advocates have with the medical model, many disabled people do utilize medical interventions to assist them in their daily lives. Thus, it is important to understand that seeking out medical supports that aid one in accommodating their disability does not necessarily mean that they adhere to the medical model of disability.

Disability activists developed the social model of disability which draws a distinction between impairment and disability (Harry & Klingner, 2007). An impairment is the underlying biological, medical, cognitive, or psychological condition caused by illness, injury, or birth, that restricts a person’s ability to carry out everyday activities. Through the lens of disability studies, an impairment does not become a disability until a person is in an inaccessible environment that does not accommodate one’s impairment. This model does not view a person’s impairment as a handicap, but rather the environment (Harry & Klingner, 2007).

Various iterations exist within each model of disability. Because of this, it is common for people to experience or view disability through multiple lenses. Something all disability models have in common is that a person’s disability is always judged by their proximity to normalcy. Davis (2016) pointed out that the idea of normalcy creates the problem of disability or impairment. However, as researchers continue to learn about

the systemic implications of having a disability within a societal group, they will strengthen the efforts of disability activist and law makers. The strength of disability studies in the United States drives the maturation and enforcement of disability rights.

2.2 DISABILITY RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 offered legal protections for people with disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act extends those legal protections to potential job applicants, current employees of organizations, public schools, and institutions of higher learning (Murphy, 2021). The 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was a major step in recognizing the basic rights of disabled citizens. The ADA prohibits discrimination by local and state governments, private businesses, and employers. It also requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to those in need. Bagenstos (2009), a civil rights attorney and law professor at the University of Michigan, said three main ideologies exist among disability rights advocates: (1) disability law should encourage independence, (2) disabled people are part of a marginalized group that needs protection under the law, and (3) disability is universal. Bagenstos suggested that inconsistencies have limited the disability rights movement and the success of the ADA because of the court's interpretations of disability. He questioned who is entitled to legal protection if disability is truly universal. The nuances of these ideologies cause courts to vary in their definitions of disability, thus causing inconsistencies in the outcomes of disability law cases (Bagenstos, 2009).

Bagenstos (2009) also discussed how structural barriers to employment are not addressed in federal accommodation requirements, thus neglecting a sizable portion of the disabled community. The language of the ADA is notoriously vague, allowing room

for myriad interpretations. It often uses language such as “reasonable accommodations” and “undue hardship” which can be applied in a variety of ways by employers (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2023). Bagenstos (2004) argues that disability activists must find a way to move beyond the anti-discriminatory intent of the legislation to dismantle the systemic barriers of disability and impairment.

George W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) in 2008 to ensure that the court’s interpretation of the term disability would apply to a wide spectrum of individuals. By broadening the term disability, the ADAAA opened the door for a larger group of people to benefit from the law. However, by doing so, the litigation involved in disability law became more complicated. The ADAAA expanded the definition of disability, which created new sub-categories. Because courts could not agree on the application of the phrases “actually disabled” or “regarded as disabled,” the ADAAA split the definition of the word “discriminate” into two different categories: one for “actually” disabled plaintiffs and one for plaintiffs that are “regarded as” disabled (Emens, 2012). Although this broadened the scope of disability, it also substantially limited the rights of those who may qualify under the “regarded as” umbrella.

The systemic nature of disability discrimination is a prominent theme in literature describing the impact of the ADA and ADAAA. While the two acts work to prevent discrimination, they do nothing to address the systemic barriers of social constructs (Harris, 2019). Instead, the ADA and ADAAA act as a bandage for disability discrimination instead of a cure. The systemic barriers which allow discriminatory thoughts and behaviors to thrive need to be addressed. Although disability law has come

a long way, litigation trends imply that there is still a long way to go to achieve true equity.

2.3 DISABILITY IN UNITED STATES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In addition to the protections granted by the ADA and the ADAAA, students diagnosed with a disability who require accommodations during the school day are also protected by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990. IDEA legislation requires public schools to provide special education services to students who qualify. Additionally, it provides specific requirements for states to ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Special needs counselors and staff evaluate qualified students and assign them IEP's (individualized education plans) and/or 504 plans. Both documents outline accommodations students could receive throughout the day, but an IEP allows the student to receive special education services and instruction whereas a 504 plan just allows the student accommodations (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2014). Schools that fail to comply with government regulations face legal and financial repercussions.

Since the IDEA was signed, children with disabilities have had greater access to public education. Additionally, special education has since developed an entire infrastructure catered to supporting disabled students including support for early diagnosis as well as measures that promote classroom inclusion (Aron & Loprest, 2012). However, Aron and Loprest (2012) also discussed the implications of the intersectionality between disability and other historically marginalized groups. Specifically, they recognized the overrepresentation of African American students labeled with a learning disability. Their research findings also acknowledged the link between a learning

disability diagnosis and poverty, lack of diverse representation in the classroom, institutional racism, and biases within standardized tests (Aron & Loprest, 2012). The literature highlights the high impact of systemic discrimination.

While research on the best practices for students with disabilities and/or impairments exist, little information exists about the experiences and necessary accommodations for disabled educators. Consequently, there is minimal research on disabled ensemble conductors. Parker and Draves (2001), and Weimer and Vaughan-Marra (2021) investigated the work lives of music educators with disabilities. Other studies about the topic mostly refer to students or non-music educators. In 2001, Parker and Draves published a narrative inquiry of two preservice choral teachers (Antoine and Lindsey) who identify as legally impaired and blind, respectively. The two participants had vastly different experiences and neither student immediately went on to teach after graduation, citing difficulties with accommodations. Their most prominent point suggested schools should model inclusivity to achieve a highly equitable work environment. They thought increasing the visibility of the disabled community challenged the perceptions of normalcy. Their study, however, did little to acknowledge the intersectionality that likely impacted the experiences of the participants. For example, the language describing Antoine's experiences implied a possible racial bias towards him. The article did not describe his positive attributes, unlike Lindsey's description, but instead, focuses on negative interactions. Additionally, Antoine's supervisors regarded him mostly negatively. For example, his supervisor told him that he "needed to learn how to learn" when discussing struggles in his student teaching environment with his

supervisor, (p. 393). Systemic attitudinal biases such as this are an added element in Antoine's student teaching experience.

In another 2001 study, Ferri, Keefe, & Gregg, conducted a qualitative multi-case study that examined how the past experiences of three learning disabled special education teachers (non-music educators) affected their current teaching philosophies and methodologies. The researchers found that the negative experiences of the participants heavily influenced their current teaching approaches. They also observed that the participants used their disabilities as a tool instead of a hinderance by using their past experiences as motivation and a show of solidarity. Participants used their past experiences to advocate for their students. Although the participants did not discuss specific pedagogical techniques, they did mention that they made sure to always support their students emotionally and academically by maintaining high standards and consistently providing necessary accommodations.

In an interview study, Brock (2007) interviewed twelve educators with disabilities to discover workplace barriers and other discriminatory factors that negatively affected their work experiences. She found that societal and architectural barriers contributed to limited career mobility. As a result, many of the participants reported they self-accommodated to conceal their disabilities. Those actions often lead to overcompensating and overworking as an effort to avoid looking sick. Brock (2007) suggested that schools should provide adequate disability awareness training in their professional development sessions to ensure a healthier workplace environment for disabled employees.

Weimer and Vaughan-Marra (2021) explored the experiences of music teachers with chronic illnesses which was the first study of its kind. They interviewed eight

participants with various chronic illnesses to identify the problems they had in the workplace and understand what, if any, accommodations they used. In their research, Weimer & Vaughan-Marra (2021) found that along with the physical aspects of their conditions, the attitudes and misconceptions of others often impeded the participants' productivity. As a result, the participants had to be proactive and prioritize their health as well as self-advocate and self-accommodate.

Though there is minimal literature highlighting teachers with disabilities and/or impairments, the increased attention to this marginalized group of individuals is encouraging. A common theme was the acknowledgement of the complexity of disability research. Each subtopic I explored yielded literature that implied disability law only addresses the surface level effects of disability discrimination. The literature discussed above is a small fragment of disability topics that need further research. Furthermore, more research is needed to address and find possible solutions to the systemic nature of disability discrimination.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The lack of significant, published research about teachers with disabilities and their coping strategies is a current gap in disability studies research. Until now, there have been no studies that specifically examine middle and high school conductors with disabilities. The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to tell the stories of disabled public school conductors with positive working relationships with their administrators. I believe that telling their stories will help administrative staff throughout the United States gain insight on how to best support their disabled faculty and staff.

I address three research questions to understand efforts and methods that encourage a supportive work environment: [1] Have the conductors with disabilities fully disclosed their disabilities/impairments to their administrators, and why or why not? [2] Are the conductors with disabilities properly accommodated at work and what types of accommodations do they receive? [3] What are conductor perceptions regarding how to achieve a functional relationship between themselves and their administrators? This chapter describes the research methodology and discusses the following: [a] rationale for the research approach, [b] ethical considerations, [c] descriptions of the research participants, settings, and context, and [d] data and analysis collection and method.

3.1 RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative research seeks to examine social interactions of an individual or individuals within their environment and understand why and how different phenomena

occur. In this study I use a phenomenological design using narrative inquiry to examine the lived experiences of a specific person or group to learn about their perspectives as it pertains to their interactions within a particular environment (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). These narratives are typically acquired via interviews, oral stories, or recordings, and they are an especially important research tool for marginalized groups because they lend a voice to those who are seldom heard (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007).

A narrative inquiry is the ideal avenue for the research purpose stated earlier. It allows the participants to share their stories in a way that provides guidance to other school administrators who may need help with supporting their disabled faculty and staff. This narrative inquiry affords the participants space to tell their stories for the sake of elevating the teaching profession. Additionally, as a conductor diagnosed with anxiety and Crohn's disease, I have a vested, personal interest in the research purpose.

3.2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS, SETTING, AND CONTEXT

I identified potential participants via purposive sampling as well as through a private Facebook group for music teachers with chronic/autoimmune illnesses. After potential participants responded to the recruitment materials, I emailed them the information letter for the study. Participants then responded to the email containing the information letter to schedule their interview which also functioned as their consent to participate. The information letter is included in the appendices. To qualify for this study, participants had to be currently teaching or have previously taught high school choir, band, or orchestra, and identify as having at least one disability or impairment.

Participants also had ADA-compliant administrators. I selected one participant who chose not to disclose their disability for context.

Ten participants volunteered and six were available for interviews given the time frame of the study. Each participant identified as having a disability and taught high school or middle school band and/or orchestra at the time the study was conducted. No choir teachers were available during the interview timeframe. All participants admitted to having an ADA-compliant workplace.

3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To ensure participants remain protected, all participants chose to remain anonymous, therefore, I changed participant names to protect their privacy (Table 3.1). Additionally, I obtained research clearance from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the University of South Carolina. I encouraged the participants to discuss their situations in as much or as little detail as they chose. I took special care to carefully answer any questions the participants had about this project and consulted them throughout the writing process to ensure accuracy and help contextualize their individual perspectives. To protect confidentiality, all participant data is stored on password protected devices kept in my possession.

Table 3.1 Participant Descriptions

Participant	Grades Taught	Subject	Years Teaching	Disability / Impairment	Disclose?
AW	9-12	Band	23	Leg Amputee	Y
DK	9-12	Band	12	Neurogenetic Atrophy (CMT)	Y
EJ	6-8	Orchestra	1	Type 1 Diabetes	N
KP	5-8	Band/General Music	18	Chronic Migraine	Y
JJ	9-12	Band/Orchestra/Music Technology	8	Depression / HIV	Y & N
TL	6-8	Band	6	ADHD / Anxiety	Y
Lia Snead	9-12	Band	12	Crohn's Disease / Anxiety / Depression	Y

3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND METHOD

I used open-ended interviews as the data collection tool (Seldman, 2019). Table 3.2 lists the interview questions. Participants received the research questions prior to the Zoom interviews. In addition to the three research questions, I asked participants to describe their school culture, their daily responsibilities, and their disabilities in as much detail as they choose. I scheduled recorded Zoom interviews after the participants consented to participate in the study. I recorded the interviews via Zoom and used its transcription tool to collect the participants' responses. After each interview, I used Microsoft Word to label each speaker and correct any faulty captions before transferring the document to the Notability app on an iPad. I then used an Apple pencil to take notes and highlight codes. I identified codes using a combination of inductive coding and a

priori. The a priori codes are disclosure, non-disclosure, communication, school accommodation, and self-accommodations.

Table. 3.2 Interview Questions

Interview Questions	
1	Have you (the participant) fully disclosed your disabilities/impairments and why?
2	What types of accommodations are appropriate for your needs and to what extent are they being met?
3	In your opinion, what does the working relationship of a functional administrator/disabled conductor look like and how can it be achieved?

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to explore the elements of a positive working relationship between public school instrumental ensemble conductors and their building administrators. This chapter contains analysis of findings from participant interviews. Through an iterative coding process three themes emerged: [1] disclosure anxiety; [2] self-accommodation; and [3] positive administrative traits. After identifying emergent themes, I applied analytic ideas based on the source of each theme (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Themes, Keywords, and Analytic Traits

Theme	Keywords	Analytic Ideas
- Disclosure anxiety	Mistrust Retaliation Performance Target Stigma	- Systemic barriers - Trust - Disclosure benefits
- Self-accommodations	Easier Unpredictability Independence	- Employer/employee responsibility
- Positive administrative traits	Compassionate Understanding Trust Flexible Macro-manager	- Self-reflection - management style

4.1 DISCLOSURE ANXIETY

KP, a general music teacher and middle school band director with 18 years of experience, has chronic migraine. During her interview, she described the weight of her workload as being twice as much as many of her colleagues because she teaches a more diverse variation of classes. In addition to the extra courses she teaches, KP's

school requires teachers to attend staff meetings before school as well as perform other administrative duties. When KP was diagnosed with chronic migraine, she felt fortunate to have had a prior relationship with her administration:

I have chronic migraine [and] it started about eight or nine years ago. When I was teaching elementary [full time] I did not have the chronic migraine, so I started this position without really having any sort of disability that was of note...I started [my current] position a year before the migraine got bad. Thankfully, I knew my administrators and they knew me [prior] to my worst years.

Despite having a prior relationship with her administration, however, she had concerns about disclosing her disability:

When I first started having issues, it was a matter of 'do I tell my admin?' ... that could be a reason that they could, you know, start to treat me different...Even though I've been fortunate. In my district, there have been instances where they target people [with disabilities]. [They don't target them] because of an illness, but because of "how" they're teaching.

KP further explained that it appears as if the district targeted those individuals because of their disabilities and was worried that her district would do the same to her.

A common concern among participants was the fear of becoming a target. JJ is a nine year veteran high school band and orchestra teacher who has a history of clinical depression and HIV. JJ's anxiety surrounding disclosure stems from his past experiences. JJ said he has not disclosed because he does not "trust a lot of folks in K-12 education because sometimes they use your illness [against you] and they use that to try to get rid of you." He further explained that his disclosure anxiety was "because of what happened at another school." As of our interview, only one member of JJ's lower administration

knows about his depression, and he has never disclosed his HIV status to any administration.

Although JJ's new school is substantially more supportive than his previous situation, the experience left him wary and mistrustful. Further, the additional and unwarranted social ignominy surrounding an HIV diagnosis creates another barrier for JJ to navigate. JJ is familiar with the impact intersectionality of being a gay, African American man with HIV in the United States and with attitudinal barriers such as racism and bigotry. Additionally, JJ's job description requires he work closely with children, sometimes for long hours, thus heightening the possibility of bigoted attacks. Fortunately, JJ's administration is inherently caring and sympathetic, therefore, he has not had to officially disclose either diagnosis. When JJ has a depressive spell, he communicates with his administration that he doesn't feel well, and they allow him the freedom to take care of himself. For example, if he is in a depressive episode, his administration will allow him to choose when he receives his formal observations. They do this to allow him the opportunity to showcase his peak performances. Additionally, because he is the catalyst to the recent success of the program, they give him plenty of autonomy to structure his lessons any way he sees fit. Because of this, he has not requested any special accommodations.

Although JJ chose not to tell most of his administration about his condition, disclosure can have many benefits, including fostering a communicative environment. KP, for example, decided to disclose her chronic migraines because she felt it was the best way to manage the unpredictability of her condition. She stated:

I wasn't always doing my job to the fullest capacity... I think in the end I just realized you're gonna see that I can't function on some days and you're gonna see

that I'm sitting there doing my very minimum to get through the day and I don't want them to question that. I don't want my kids to question that either.

KP felt that being honest with her administration was the best decision because of the severity and unpredictability of her disability. She wants to establish and maintain trust between them and feels that if they see how hard she works during her good days her reputation should repel any negative thoughts about her work ethic during her bad days.

I also felt anxiety about disclosing my disability to administration due to fear of judgement and retaliation. The decision to discuss my disability was born from a desire to help students. As a high school band director, I have seen many of my students struggle with their mental and physical health while learning how to advocate for themselves. To help them learn to not be ashamed of their differences and celebrate their self-worth, I had to examine my own feelings of shame and worth. Until then, I masked a lot of who I truly was to fit in with the social standards of health, intelligence, and beauty. I realized I was a hypocrite for telling my students to love themselves and not hide who they were while I still hid. I finally decided to divulge my disability to administrators as an example for my students. Fortunately, disclosing worked out extremely well. My administration and coworkers were understanding, and I felt less pressure to hide my disability. The relief of that social stress helped relieve symptoms of my illnesses as well.

The choice to acknowledge disability in the workplace may not always be possible for some. Three participants, AW, KP, and DK felt as if the choice to mention disability was not entirely within their control due to the nature of their disabilities. AW, for example, is a high school band director with 23 years of experience who was recently involved in an accident which left him without his left leg. It was not possible for him to be discrete about his injury given the time and public nature of the incident. Fortunately,

AW's community immediately rallied behind him. During his interview, he explained that:

[My administrators] have gone out of the way to try to create an environment where I can feel comfortable discussing any issue that I may be having, or just letting them know what's going on, even before I returned to work.

Although the choice to disclose evaded him, the love and support shown by AW's administrators assured him that they would be able to have a healthy and communicative relationship.

DK is a high school band director with twelve years of experience. He has a genetic condition called Charcot-Marie-Tooth Disease (CMT) which affects the muscle strength in his hands and feet. DK did not choose to disclose his condition during the first three years of his first job because he was worried about the stigma associated with having a disability. Eventually, however, he trusted his administration enough to disclose. Although his prior administration was not restrictive, DK implied that better equity training would have benefited everyone because they seemed "completely unaware of how to react." He disclosed his condition during the interview process for his current district. Although he knew it was a risk, he did it because he wanted to establish trust immediately as well as ensure the good faith of his future administrators.

Although all participants work in ADA-compliant environments, five participants admitted to feeling anxious about the decision of whether to disclose their disability. The decision to disclose is a significant one that can potentially help or hurt the individual. Most participants expressed concerns about how disclosing their disabilities to their administration would impact their careers.

4.2 SELF ACCOMMODATION

Trust was an overwhelming factor for participants when making the decision to disclose their disability. Often, individuals from marginalized groups have a deep mistrust of governmental and societal institutions. This mistrust stems from generations of systemic abuse and is precisely why EJ, a first-year high school orchestra teacher with type 1 diabetes, did not disclose his condition to his administration. When asked about his decision to disclose, he said:

I decided not to. I thought about it. My diabetes is mostly under control. Most days, I keep snacks in my office if I need them, or any kind of candy in case I need them. But I also wear a continuous glucose monitoring system which is connected to my phone that allows me to check my blood sugar anytime. All I have to do is pull up my phone and I can check my blood sugar. It also warns me before it even drops to a dangerously low level, or, if it is too high. It warns me before that even happens. So that's one of the main reasons why I decided not to disclose it to my administration.

Essentially, EJ feels his administration does not need to know about his disability. He recognizes that he is fortunate because his administration does not employ a micromanagement approach. Because of this, he can self-accommodate without any issues. Additionally, his admission of self-accommodating is an overwhelming similarity among the participants in this narrative. All participants prefer to self-accommodate and do not employ official district accommodations. The ease and privacy of self-accommodation is an alluring aspect for disabled conductors because they may perceive the act of officially filing for accommodations as complicated and cumbersome.

Many people with disabilities or impairments have days in which their conditions affect them more severely than others. Crohn's disease, for example, is an autoimmune disorder of the digestive tract. Although Crohn's is primarily found in the digestive tract,

it can affect everything from joints to an individual's mental health. The unpredictability of a Crohn's flare can be devastating, and a very bad flare can result in a lengthy hospital stay, surgery, or even death. Conversely, when well controlled, it can be easy to forget the disease exists. Because of the range of symptoms and severity of Crohn's, it is often easiest to self-accommodate.

Within a school musical ensemble setting, self-accommodation comes in many forms. KP chooses to self-accommodate by building quiet times into every lesson and being strategic about planning concerts, trips, and other activities to places and events that will accommodate her needs. Still others may enlarge scores or provide their own adaptive equipment to use during the workday. TL, a sixth year middle school band director with ADHD noted that in addition to making sure her administration is aware of her condition, she intentionally employs organizational methods such as forming healthy habits and lists to help her stay organized.

4.3 POSITIVE ADMINISTRATIVE TRAITS

While self-accommodating is an important part of independent living for people with disabilities, it does not absolve employers from fulfilling their legal obligation to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to their employees in need of them. Additionally, while most participants preferred to self-accommodate, much of the ability to do so in a reduced stress environment is reliant on administrative support. As stated earlier, the purpose of this narrative inquiry was to discover the elements of a positive work environment between public school instrumental ensemble conductors and their administrators. Therefore, ADA-compliant administrators were a requirement for participation and although most chose to primarily self-accommodate, all are able to do

so as needed because their administrations exhibited behaviors that extend beyond compliance.

All participants implied that their administration employed a macro-management approach (Bucăloiu, 2019). Contrary to a micromanagement leadership style in which leaders excessively supervise and control employees, administrators with a macro-management leadership style employ a hands-off method. This style gives their employees autonomy over their work. The managerial focus on broader goals and outcomes allows participants the freedom to succeed in a way that works best for their disability given their program objectives. This approach often works to create a creative and amicable work environment. A macro-management style is especially helpful for ensemble conductors because of the vastly different duties that encompass the profession.

Although all participants except EJ chose to disclose their conditions, six have never filed an official accommodations request. Some participants expressed concern with requesting accommodations because they did not want to be obligated to use them on days when they did not feel the need. Most believed filing an official request was unnecessary because their administrations were already so accommodating. KP, for example, has made her school as well as her union aware of her chronic migraines. She expressed that mornings are difficult, and she can sometimes miss morning staff meetings or other morning duties. However, because of her relationship with her administrators, this is rarely a problem. KP says this is because:

I'm communicating with them about what's going on...They see me staying later and doing work at home to make up for the time that I can't be there in the morning...They've always accepted [my condition] at face value and I've never been asked to provide any documentation. They've been really great about that.

KP disclosed that she has applied for Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) benefits in case she must be out of work for an extended period. FMLA guarantees employees up to twelve unpaid workweeks per year. FMLA ensures an individual will retain their job and will not face any retaliation if they must take leave. However, FMLA is not an accommodation that an individual can actively utilize during the school day.

KP has plans to ask for an official accommodation soon, however. According to her, the migraines are exceptionally bad the day after a particularly stressful day, such as the day after a concert. To account for this, she plans to ask for a day off immediately following concerts. During her interview, KP elaborates:

I'm considering talking to them about setting up a schedule that whenever I have a concert, I plan to have the next day off. If I can plan for that rather than it be a surprise for them and for my kids, I think [everyone will] have a better experience. It will also help me physically, because I won't have that stress on top of the stress of everything else.

An accommodation such as scheduled absences may cost the school money in the form of hiring substitute teachers and, thus, falls firmly under ADA regulations. Because KP has successfully filed for FMLA benefits her school may qualify for tax incentives and other means of monetary support to assist with the accommodations. KP is not worried about the outcome of her request, however, because her administration has a history of being compassionate and willing to work with their employees.

Another common trait participants expressed was the macro-management style of their respective administrators. All participants expressed gratitude that their administrators do not harass them when they must self-accommodate. Instead, they are encouraged to take the necessary steps to stay healthy. For participants such as JJ and KP,

this often means allowing their classes to be covered without repercussions if they are unable to work. For others, like EJ and myself, this means having ample access to restrooms and allowances for snack breaks. DK enjoys the freedom to adjust and repurpose the physical requirements of the job while the swiftness of AW's accommodation requests show the commitment of their districts. Lastly, the willingness of TL's administration to help keep her on track with her ADHD by giving her gentle reminders and not formally reprimanding her if she forgets something is crucial to TL's success in the classroom. Disclosure anxiety, self-accommodation, and positive administrative traits were the top three themes from participant interviews. Additionally, communication as an insular idea was also common. Participant interviews led me to believe that compassionate administrators who take time to listen to their employees is an essential aspect of a workplace culture that is equitable, caring, transparent, flexible, healthy, and happy.

Participants frequently described their administration using words such as compassion, understanding, communication, and freedom. All participants have different diagnoses, teach in a variety of socioeconomic situations, have varying years of experience, and represent a variety of cultures. Despite their differences, their administrators share similar traits: they are compassionate, understanding, and do not micromanage their employees. These traits, combined with the support of coworkers are the biggest facilitators in the participants' positive work environments.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section contains a discussion of the findings of this inquiry. The major discoveries of this narrative are a testament to the possibility of overcoming deep-rooted structural ableist barriers. A thorough examination of the systemic structures that extend far beyond the considerations of musicking is necessary to build a complete picture of the relationship between the education system in the United States and disability rights.

For decades, disability activists and scholars have worked diligently to improve the quality of life for disabled citizens. Today, legislation such as the ADA, the ADAAA, and the IDEA, exist to ensure fair legal protection and treatment for disabled citizens. The legislation does so by attempting to ensure disabled citizens have fair access to education and accommodations. The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to explore the elements of a positive working relationship between public school instrumental ensemble conductors and their building administrators.

The conclusions drawn from the interviews inspire three concepts: [1] systemic barriers levied against marginalized citizens are multitudinous and complex and must be addressed to achieve true equity; [2] the freedom to self-accommodate if desired is beneficial to both employers and employees; and [3] administrators with a disposition

towards compassion, understanding, and trust may be the key to dismantling systemic barriers within public school education.

5.1 DISCLOSURE ANXIETY

In the United States, disability disclosure at work is noncompulsory and many factors can contribute to someone's disclosure decisions. Although the premise of this narrative highlights and analyzes positive interactions, the systemic cause of disclosure anxiety emphasizes an underlying stigma. Participant apprehension regarding disclosure is not without merit. Historically, citizens who do not meet the criteria of being white, heterosexual, and able-bodied male have been unprotected and at times mistreated by the United States government (Diangelo, 2018). Although disability rights have come a long way, there is a substantial amount of work to do before there is widespread equity. Systemic and social barriers continue to provide obstacles for disabled citizens.

Systemic barriers are policies, or other systems, that create inequities for a particular group. Examples of systemic barriers to disabled citizens include denying reasonable accommodations in the workplace or denying public services to an individual because of their disability (McKoy & Lind, 2023). Further, the disabled community may suffer from increased anxiety due to these barriers. The existence of systemic barriers are why policies such as the ADA and the ADAAA exist today. Despite the importance of these policies, they do little to address the social barriers that are often the backbone of inequity. This section will focus on attitudinal barriers such as implicit bias and internalized isms as they are the most relevant to the research subject and can create other barriers.

Many of the participants expressed concerns that people may treat them differently after they disclosed their conditions. KP, for example, expressed a strong desire to ensure her administration sees how hard she works when she is healthy. By making a concerted effort to go above and beyond when she is able, she hopes her administration will continue to be lenient with her during the times she has to self-accommodate because of her disability. Her efforts to dispel societal biases are common in many marginalized communities.

Understanding the source of discriminatory attitudes can lead to the elimination of many systemic barriers to disability rights. Unfortunately, discriminatory attitudes are profoundly ingrained in western culture and are the cause of systemic barriers. Because of this, it is important to actively work to humanize marginalized groups and dispel negative stereotypes (Tatum, 2017). It is also imperative that much of the work to eliminate -isms must happen by those who perpetuate prejudicial ideologies and not the victims of said ideologies. JJ was the victim of highly prejudicial actions by members of administration from a previous job. He believes his former school district targeted him because of his depression and self-accommodations. Moreover, he believes his race may have played a significant role in his mistreatment. The stress caused by his former district's attempts at intimidation increased the number of depressive spells JJ experienced and led him to struggle with self-care, thus perpetuating a cycle of ill health and mistreatment. Although JJ's depression symptoms are currently well managed and his HIV status is undetectable, his diagnoses can sometimes impact one another, causing an overlap of symptoms. Because of this, it is extremely important for JJ to carefully manage his stress levels to avoid a flare. Similarly, EJ's mistrust for the system is so

strong that he will not disclose his type one diabetes to his administration for fear of a negative reaction from his coworkers and the district. It is possible that some of EJ's mistrust also stems from his experiences as an African American man. The evidence suggests that the intersectionality of two marginalized groups, disabled and African American, have influenced both JJ and EJ's attitudes about disclosure.

While the systemic disenfranchisement of disabled citizens is still present in the United States, the national push against attitudinal prejudices has risen (Haslem, 2022). Social media platforms such as Facebook and TikTok have given previously disenfranchised individuals a louder voice to aid their activism, thus allowing a global audience to hear from multiple perspectives. The grassroots self-advocacy of disabled citizens via social media is part of a growing trend where marginalized can harness the power awareness-raising forums. Perhaps having greater access to these perspectives will help inform the public about the struggles of marginalized groups. Because disclosure continues to be a sensitive topic for participants due to possible negative attitudes and outcomes, establishing trust through communication is paramount.

5.2 SELF ACCOMMODATIONS

Although laws require employers to provide reasonable accommodations, it may not always be necessary to file official paperwork through human resources. Most participants did not apply for official disability accommodations because their administrators were able to accommodate them without a governmental mediator. AW was the only participant to go through official channels for accommodations. He did this because the nature of his disability requires facility adjustments. It is important to note that the discovery that most participants preferred to self-accommodate was unexpected.

Although most participants in this narrative did not file official paperwork to gain accommodations, the importance of human resources' role in ensuring employers remain within ADA compliance is substantial. Some accommodations can involve the use of specialized equipment or other workplace modifications and, thus, require written notification, planning, and perhaps money spent. If the participants do not need specialized equipment or changes to the facility, however, they often find that they are able to self-accommodate with minimal administrative involvement, if given the opportunity.

The duties and responsibilities of instrumental conductors often surpass those of the remaining faculty and staff in most schools. The job duties of public school ensemble conductors require extended hours and sometimes hard, physical labor. For example, it is not uncommon for a high school band director to work between 60 and 70 hours per week in the fall and between 50 and 60 hours a week in the spring (Wright 2019). Conductors are responsible for rehearsing their schools' musical ensembles, often including choirs, orchestras, symphonic bands, marching bands, pep bands, jazz bands, percussion ensembles, pit orchestras, indoor colorguard, and a variety of other ensembles. The general expectation is that most ensembles perform a few times a year, including adjudicated festivals and competitions. Preparation for these performances often involve rehearsals either before or after school and on weekends. Conductors are also responsible for the administrative tasks involved with running a comprehensive music program. Additionally, conductors often spend considerable time on long bus rides and moving heavy equipment such as timpani or risers. In addition to the specialized duties of ensemble conductors, many must also perform daily tasks such as lunch duty, faculty

meetings, and other tasks as assigned before and/or after school. Managing the intense workload of an ensemble conductor is difficult and the added effort of managing a disability can be overwhelming.

5.3 POSITIVE ADMINISTRATIVE TRAITS

Considering the collective trauma of years of systemic discrimination within the disabled community, mistrust towards societal and governmental institutions is common (Pothier, 2010). Based on participant interviews, however, I found that a trusting and empathetic relationship between employer and employee is paramount to establishing a functional, ADA-compliant relationship. While discussing their respective workplace environments, all participants lauded their administrators for being compassionate and understanding and most used the words “trust” and “flexible” at least once during their interviews. The compassionate, understanding, trusting, and flexible nature of their administrators is heavily responsible for the participants’ workplace satisfaction and ability to thrive in their environment.

Participant interviews suggested an administrator’s propensity to go beyond compliance depends on their capacity for empathy. During his interview, AW recalled how his administrators made it a point to visit him in the hospital after his accident. He said:

[They’ve] gone out of their way to create an environment where I can feel comfortable discussing any issue that I may be having, or just letting them know what’s going on, even before I returned to work. They were pretty adamant about letting me know that anything I needed, or any kind of accommodations...I would not need to hesitate to ask. [They said they] would do anything to help me out.

His administration continues to surpass the legal requirements for ADA compliance. TL also celebrates her administration’s patience and willingness to help with her ADHD.

During her interview, she frequently mentioned the compassion and understanding of her principal. A disabled conductor's need for accommodations can sometimes clash with their desire for independence. Administrative personality traits, managerial style, and workplace culture can heavily influence the intensity of that struggle.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

As disability rights scholars and activists work together to address bias and prejudice individuals must also explore the cause of systemic attitudinal barriers. Administrators should examine intra- and intercommunal relationships and their power-dynamics with analytical honesty. Additionally, administrators should strive to understand that the disability spectrum is expansive and not all disabilities are visible. By examining the thoughts, desires, and intentions behind attitudinal biases and prejudicial behaviors, administrators can better prepare to establish trust between themselves and their disabled employees. Once established, trust can facilitate positive working environments.

Participant interviews suggested a lack of prejudicial behavior from their current administrations. According to Abrams (2010), prejudice is a “bias which devalues people because of their perceived membership of a social group” (p. 3). He highlighted four ideas that are crucial to understanding prejudice which are: [1] understanding prejudice within an intergroup setting; [2] the main psychological reasons for prejudice; [3] the ways in which prejudice manifests; and [4] the effect it has on individuals (Abrams, 2010). Often, prejudicial thoughts and actions occur between members of different social groups and these negative thoughts and actions can stem from ignorance and fear. The nature of perceived threats or power dynamics can also influence the manifestation of

negative stereotypes. Abrams (2010) also mentioned that these perceived differences can heighten if groups have different or conflicting values, are outsiders, if their identities are attached to a single group, and/or their home group discriminates against other groups.

These psychological reasons for prejudice can then manifest into systems and actions that negatively affect entire groups of individuals. The results of this study suggest that mistrust and negative assumptions seem to be a significant barrier to achieving social equity. Therefore, the easiest way to remain within ADA compliance is to foster a trusting and communicative school culture. Based on the findings of this narrative inquiry, administrators should take time to consider three things about their disabled ensemble conductors: [1] the possible trauma that individual has experienced in their lives as a marginalized person in society; [2] the environment in which that individual operates; and [3] their desire for independence without feeling abandoned.

To understand the daily circumstances of members of the disabled community, one must acknowledge their life experiences and possible past trauma and how it may impact the way they currently navigate society. Intently listening to, and studying the experiences of, people from the disabled community may decrease underlying misgivings due to assumptions and misunderstandings. Most participants in this study trust their administrators will value their experiences and listen to their needs. Communication is an important tool to understanding members of the disabled community. Participants and administrators used communication as an important instrument in building a sturdy professional relationship.

Administrators should also work to truly understand the job duties of public school ensemble conductors. While most administrators have substantial classroom

experience, far fewer may understand the atmosphere and nuances of a music classroom. Shadowing a conductor for a day may lead to insightful information about their daily responsibilities. Additionally, administrators who shadow their disabled conductors may also have an opportunity to see how that person's disability may or may not impact their day and how the accommodations, either self-applied or school-given, assist the conductor. Moreover, monthly check-ins, can help administrators and conductors maintain open lines of communication.

Sensitivity training led by members of the disabled community can help non-disabled faculty and staff gain a stronger appreciation for, and understanding of, the lives of their disabled colleagues. Sensitivity training works by raising awareness of personal attitudinal biases and giving suggestions to conquer them. Such training may uncover uncomfortable truths but can ultimately assist in building and maintaining an equitable workspace.

Results from participant interviews suggest administrators also consider the following questions in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Administrative Considerations

Administrative Considerations	
1	Is the school's culture supportive and non-judgmental?
2	What is the managerial style of the administrative staff?
3	Is communication actively nurtured?
4	Are there facility barriers that can hinder disabled faculty and staff?

Each question has the potential to alter the situational experiences of the disabled conductor. Contemplating the questions in Table 5.1 can help administrators evaluate their effectiveness in cultivating an ADA compliant workspace.

5.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND LIMITATIONS

In this study I collected and analyzed the lived experiences of conductors with disabilities and how they navigate their workplaces. I established credibility through member checking and used a peer reviewer to add further validity to the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Limitations are a common critique in qualitative research. Generally, the common limitations are the risk of bias and reactivity. Major limitations of this study are the small sample size and the underrepresentation of apparent neurodiversity, within the sample. The small sample size limits the number of situational variants available for study, thus limiting the number of potential suggestions. Similarly, the limited representation of neurodivergence within the sample population also severely limits the number and type of possible suggestions for accommodations.

Most of the participants are living between the social and medical models of disability and many of them still seek medical interventions. While they may live with physical and mental impairments, their conditions become disabilities when they meet social barriers. The intersection between the medical and social lenses of disability affected the variability of the study. Other considerations such as those in Figure 5.1 can have a direct impact on the type of accommodations needed or awarded. The type and severity of the disability is also a factor in determining accommodations and the availability of what the school system can afford. This study can serve as a helpful guide to aid administrators in adequately supporting their faculty and staff members who have disabilities or impairments. Even with the small sample size, the results of this study can still be transferred to similar populations.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

This study can be expanded to include a more robust and diverse population. An additional sample should expand to include choral conductors and a greater range of disabilities such as neurodiversity, ocular, and auditory delineations. The concepts within this narrative exist within four main categories: psychology, sociology, health, and economics. Each category contains variables that yield considerable research options both alone and together. Figure 5.1 highlights variables that will have a direct impact on the quality of the work environment. Future research should explore the impact of each subgroup within the four main categories as well as the intersectionality that exists between them.

I did not intend to explicitly explore the effects of personality type within the context of this study despite the thematic emergence of positive administrative personality traits. Future studies should evaluate specific personality types and their effects on workplace cultures. Additionally, researchers can dissect the experiences of individuals who face multiple, intersecting levels of marginalization. Although acknowledged, I did not evaluate types of accommodations needed and the funding available to either the participant or the school district. Subsequent research should also explore the relationship between necessary accommodations and the availability of financial assistance for individuals with disabilities.

Future research should evaluate the efficacy of administrative preparation programs with preparing future administrators to manage a diverse faculty and staff. Administrative preparation programs should also include updated research about disability legislation as it pertains to ADA compliance cases. An additional area of research is the effect of attitudinal barriers on disability legislation. Another avenue for

research lies within the comparison between self-accommodating and official, governmental accommodations within U.S. public schools.

Researchers can also examine various aspects of undergraduate music education programs. For example, researchers can compare the percentage of disabled music education students admitted, their graduation rates, and the percentage of disabled music teachers hired in public schools. The immense diversity of disability studies coupled with the niche avenue of instrumental conducting has the potential to yield numerous unexplored avenues of study.

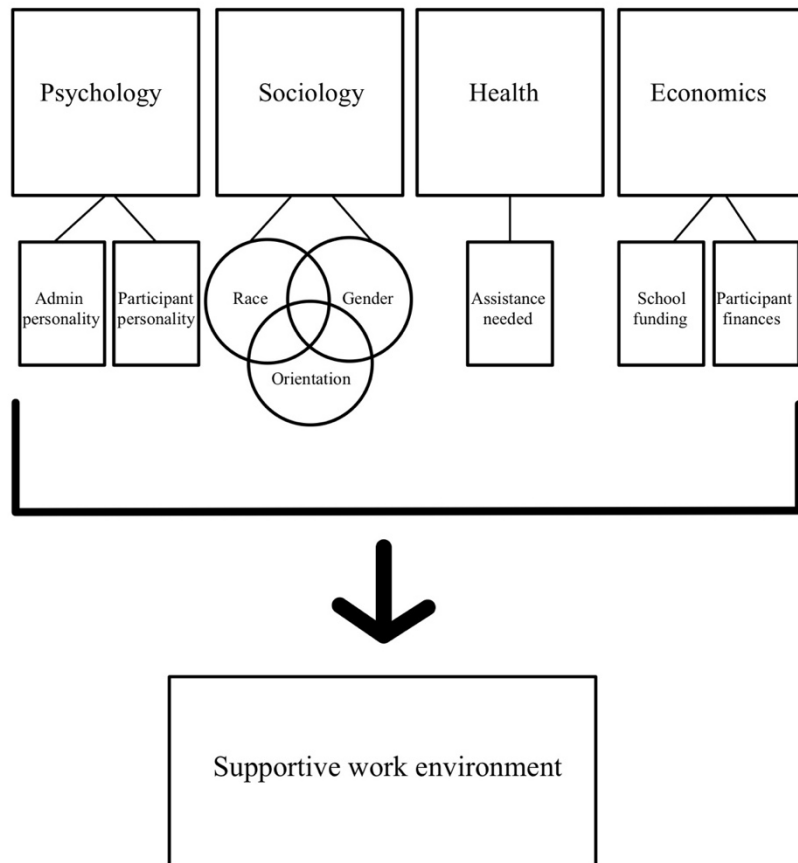


Figure 5.1. Situational Variables

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT INVENTATION

Dear participants,

My name is Lia Snead. I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Music at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in instrumental conducting and I would like to invite you to participate.

I am studying the accounts of disabled ensemble conductors who have found ways to effectively communicate their needs with their administrators and provide suggestions to encourage a functional relationship with disabled ensemble conductors and their administrators. If you decide to participate, we will have an interview via Zoom. One or two follow-up interviews may occur for accuracy checks and to address any follow-up questions.

In particular, you will be asked open-ended questions about your teaching situation and accommodations as it involves your disability or impairment status. I will provide the questions in advance to facilitate a thoughtful response. You may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. The meeting will take place during a mutually agreed upon time and should last about 45 minutes. The interview will be recorded on Zoom so that I can accurately transcribe what is discussed. The recordings will only be reviewed by myself and destroyed upon completion of the study.

Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location at the University of South Carolina. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at (912) 755-2702 or Lpsnead@email.sc.edu. Or you may contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Cormac Cannon, at (803) 777-4278 or Cormac@mozart.sc.edu.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please contact me at the number or email listed below to discuss participating.

With kind regards,



Lia Alexandria P. Snead
813 Assembly Street
South Carolina, 29208
(912) 755-2702
Lpsnead@email.sc.edu

APPENDIX B

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH



OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH DECLARATION of NOT RESEARCH

Lia Alexandria Snead
813 Assembly Street
Columbia, SC 29208

Re: **Pro00124240**

Dear Mrs. Lia Alexandria Snead:

This is to certify that research study entitled ***How do they do it: a narrative of disabled public school ensemble conductors and the accommodations they use during the workday*** was reviewed on 2/2/2023 by the Office of Research Compliance, which is an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB). The Office of Research Compliance, on behalf of the Institutional Review Board, has determined that the referenced research study is not subject to the Protection of Human Subject Regulations in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 et. seq.

No further oversight by the USC IRB is required. However, the investigator should inform the Office of Research Compliance prior to making any substantive changes in the research methods, as this may alter the status of the project and require another review.

If you have questions, contact Lisa M. Johnson at lisaj@mailbox.sc.edu or (803) 777-6670.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Johnson
ORC Assistant Director and IRB Manager

APPENDIX C
SNEAD REHEARSAL RECITAL

Lia Alexandria P. Snead, conductor

in

DOCTORAL REHEARSAL RECITAL

Thursday, October 28, 2021

2:20 p.m.

School of Music, Room 016

Vientos y Tangos	Michael Gandolfi	11' (b. 1956)
A Festival Prelude	Alfred Reed	8' (1921-2005)
Halcyon Hearts	Katahj Copley	6' (b, 1998)
Scenes from the Louvre	Norman Dello Joio	12' (1913-2008)
Suite of Old American Dances	Robert Bennett	16' (1894-1981)
Spirals	Ryan Williams	22' (b. 1980)

Total		75'

Mrs. Snead is a student of Cormac Cannon. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting.

APPENDIX D

SNEAD COMPILATION RECITAL

Lia Alexandria P. Snead, conductor

in

DOCTORAL COMPILATION RECITAL

Via Video 2022

Koger Center for the Arts

Serenade No.1, Op. 1	Vincent Persichetti	9' (1915-1987)
Everywhere that Music Is	Peter Underhill	10' (b. 1995)
Hold This Boy and Listen	Carter Pann	8' (b.1972)
Vientos y Tangos	Michael Gandolfi	11' (b. 1956)
One Life Beautiful	Julie Giroux	6' (b. 1961)
Traveler	David Maslanka	13' (1943-2017)
Total		<hr/> 57'

Mrs. Snead is a student of Cormac Cannon. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting.

APPENDIX E
SNEAD LECTURE RECITAL

Lia Alexandria P. Snead, conductor

in

DOCTORAL LECTURE RECITAL

Monday, November 22, 2022

2:30 p.m.

University of South Carolina

School of Music

Recital Hall

Liberating the Library: An Investigation of Quality Wind Music by Black Composers	45'
Performance, Partial of:	15'
Nova	Katahj Copley (b.1998)
DOPE	Katahj Copley (b.1998)
Heaven at Night	Katahj Copley (b.1998)
<hr/>	
Total	60'

Mrs. Snead is a student of Cormac Cannon. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting.