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Out of (Queer/Disabled) Time

Temporal Experiences of Disability and LGBTQ+ Identities in U.S. Higher Education

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Abstract

A qualitative study using situational analysis (Clarke, 2005) explored the temporal experiences of 25 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students with disabilities at a U.S. research university. Drawing upon queer and critical examinations of time, this manuscript details students' experiences navigating and transgressing normative temporalities in higher education. Students in the study described processes of (a) calculating time to graduation; (b) resisting and accommodating temporal expectations; and (c) lacking energy, lacking time. Failure to align with the campus tempo was dismissed as an individual failure of motivation and of time management, thus absolving the institution. Ultimately, however, a focus on students experiencing acute institutional pressures related to temporality might offer insight into broader trends embedded in dominant neoliberal discourses of higher education. This paper suggests interconnections among time, power, and identity that could inform new paradigms for higher education practitioners and researchers.

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How does higher education construct and maintain normative temporalities? What would it mean to *queer* and *crip* dominant understandings of time? Time is often taken for granted in education, as the entire enterprise appears to be organized around a linear organization of time: academic calendars, timed exams, class periods, timeliness to graduation, credit hours, the ticking tenure clock. In higher education, those who identify as queer and disabled students might transgress normative expectations of time that others fail to notice and thus may make temporal assumptions apparent. These temporal expectations may become visible as students receive academic accommodations that call for extended time on assignments, spend time and energy navigating multiple university resources, and explore their gender and sexual identities well into adulthood. In an era when queer youth are told to endure discrimination because "it gets better" — a fundamentally individualized, temporal discourse that draws upon medical understandings of disability by suggesting a cure for marginalization at some point in the future — it is past time for educational researchers and practitioners to recognize time as a form of power that can be critiqued and transformed (Puar, 2011).

Conceptually, this work brings together the critical study of temporalities with queer theory and disability studies. Further, these concepts are applied to the study of higher education, a field in which constructivist, psychosocial, and cognitive-structural perspectives have most often been used to study students and their identities (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009). Time has not traditionally been associated with power in the discourses of diversity and social justice in higher education. A closer examination of this topic might allow scholars and practitioners to view temporalities as socially constructed, imbued with power, and embedded in dominant neoliberal discourses of capitalistic approaches to higher education (Giroux, 2014; Mountz et al., 2015). Queer/disabled students in higher education, in particular, might critique these discourses, given the multiple ways in which they may transgress normative temporalities in their lives on and off campus.

This manuscript addresses the following research question: How do temporalities operate in the lives of self-identified queer students with disabilities in higher education at one U.S. research university? The analysis presented in this paper emerged from a larger study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+[1]) students with disabilities and how they conceptualized their multiple, intersecting identities (Miller, 2018).

Literature Review

LGBTQ+ Students with Disabilities in Higher Education

In higher education, scholars have often separated the study of students with disabilities and students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, a separation that fails to acknowledge the existence of students who identify with both experiences (Duke, 2011). Disability and LGBTQ+ represent broad umbrella terms that encompass a wide variety of experiences and identities (Berger, 2013; Renn, 2010; Sherry, 2004). Disability labels can include, though are not limited to, attention-deficit/hyperactivity, blindness or low vision, brain injuries, Deaf/hard of hearing, learning disabilities, medical disabilities, physical disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and speech and language disabilities. LGBTQ+ identities include those associated with gender identity (e.g. transgender, genderqueer, gender non-binary) and with sexual

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[1] In this manuscript, *LGBTQ+* is used interchangeably with *queer* as an umbrella term. The plus sign acknowledges additional minoritized gender and sexual identities named by participants in this study. When prior studies or participants in this study use a more specific term, that term will be used instead.

orientation (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer) (Renn, 2010). Given the variety of experiences and groups within the broader labels of disability and LGBTQ+, some group members may identify strongly with the umbrella group, or within a particular sub-group (e.g., bisexuals, people on the autism spectrum), or with both simultaneously (Price, 2011; Renn, 2010). Identifications with any of these groups have, historically and presently, been understood through a variety of medical, social, political, and activist frameworks (Jones, 1996; Renn, 2010; Tringo, 1970; Withers, 2012).

Lines of scholarly inquiry on LGBTQ+ students and students with disabilities have focused on differing needs and developmental trajectories. Studies about disability have often focused on legal mandates for access and accommodations designed to ensure opportunity for full participation and success in university classrooms (e.g., Barnard-Brak, Lechtenberger, & Lan, 2010; Cook, Rumrill, & Tankersley, 2009). To name only a few examples, scholars have considered the experiences of specific student populations including students with autism spectrum disorders (Cox et al., 2017), students with learning disabilities (Troiano, 2003), students with visual disabilities (Myers & Bastian, 2010). Studies have less often examined the campus climate and identities of students with disabilities, though more recent work offers substantial contributions in these areas (Abes & Wallace, 2018; Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012; Riddell & Weedon, 2014).

In comparison to disability research, studies of campus climate for LGBTQ+ students and LGB students' identities and campus experiences are relatively more common (Rankin, Blumenfeld, Weber, & Frazer, 2010; Vaccaro, 2012), while studies specifically centering the experiences of transgender students (Nicolazzo, 2016; Pryor, 2015) and LGBTQ+ students of color (Duran, 2019; Johnson & Javier, 2017) are increasing. While discrimination, exclusion, and harassment have undoubtedly influenced the experiences of students who identify with one or both groups (e.g., Gonzales, Davidoff, Nadal, & Yanos, 2015; Henry, Fuerth, & Figliozzi, 2010; Woodford, Kulick, Sinco, & Hong, 2014), scholars run the risk of affirming a deficit viewpoint by focusing primarily or exclusively on oppression (Talburt, 2006)

A variety of studies have considered the mental health needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ students (Oswalt & Wyatt, 2011; Westefeld, Maples, Buford, & Taylor, 2001), however, these studies have less often considered mental ability/disability as a social identity intersecting with gender and sexual orientation. The limited intersectional research about queer students with disabilities in higher education that has thus far emerged (Duke, 2011) includes an interview-based study with one gay male college student with a physical disability (Henry et al., 2010). More recently, studies about LGBTQ+ students with disabilities have examined microaggressions and marginalization experienced in the classroom from peers and faculty members (Miller, 2015), how students explore their identities and build community online via social media platforms (Miller, 2017), and how students consider whether and how to disclose their identities to others (Miller, Wynn, & Webb, 2019). While growing, research in this area is extremely limited.

Theoretical Grounding: Critical Temporalities

This manuscript focuses on social and cultural aspects of time, understanding the premise that time is deeply connected to power and is a valuable commodity in the capitalist educational framework of the United States (Mountz et al., 2015; Shahjahan, 2015; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). In particular, this analysis draws upon queer and critical investigations of temporalities (Freeman, 2010; Halberstam, 2005; Kafer, 2013; Sharma, 2014), with many of these critiques of normative temporalities building upon critical feminist scholarship (e.g., Kafer, 2013; Mountz et

al., 2015; Youngs, 2001). For instance, Youngs (2001) explored the "gender matrix of time" (p. 15), asserting that "women are alienated from their own time, which is identified as mostly legitimately allocated to the service of others both in the home and at work" (p. 14). In scholarship queering concepts of time, Halberstam (2005) conceptualizes queer time and space by considering the site of the transgender body. Pushing back against the notion that queer/disabled people have no future, Kafer (2013) unpacks normative conceptions of time in contrast to crip time, while Freeman (2010) elaborates on queer temporalities, suggesting defiance of the temporal markers of domestic life mandated by capitalism.

Scholars have explored critical temporalities in education (Clegg, 2010; Clegg & Bufton, 2008; Kakkori, 2013; Price, 2011; Shahjahan, 2015) and have crafted responses such as "slow scholarship" (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 2) in reaction to neoliberal academia's requirements of "high productivity in compressed time frames" (p. 2). Neoliberalism elevates "personal responsibility over larger social forces, reinforces the gap between the rich and poor by redistributing wealth to the most powerful and wealthy individuals and groups, and it fosters a mode of public pedagogy that privileges the entrepreneurial subject" (Giroux, 2014, p. 1). The neoliberal turn in higher education — which intensified after the publication of the Spellings Commission report focused on higher education accountability (U.S. Department of Education, 2006) — positions students as customers who should take on the financial risks of pursuing a degree so that they might accrue individual benefits in return (Giroux, 2014; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

In addition, this study aims to advance the project of crip theory, a nascent dialogue between queer theory and disability studies that offers the word *crip* as a verb and noun, analogous (but certainly not identical) to *queer* (McRuer, 2006). Crip becomes a fluid identity and/or action, calling attention to compulsory able-bodiedness and its complex relationship to compulsory heterosexuality (McRuer, 2006, 2018); that is, the pervasive centering and normalizing of able-bodiedness and heterosexuality and the subsequent othering and marginalization of all who are unable to be, or project an image of, able-bodied or heterosexual. While crip originated as a derogatory term to refer to disabled people, it has also "been reclaimed by many disabled people and groups … [and] functioned for many as a marker of an in-your-face, or out-and-proud, cultural model of disability" (McRuer, 2018, p. 19). McRuer noted that crip theory opposes the medical model of disability, which positions disability as a bodily misfunction that can be treated and possibly cured, as opposed to a cultural model. Crip theory has found a home more readily in the humanities and cultural studies than in educational research, as it has been used to critique views of popular culture such as film and television and to offer alternative readings of current and historical events. Crip theory is closely linked to considerations of time. At various moments, queer and disabled people have disrupted normative notions of time, including expectations for one's lifespan and the timing of normative developmental markers (Edelman, 2004; Halberstam, 2005; Kafer, 2013), which Freeman (2010) referred to as chrononormativity and Farrier (2015) defined as "the process of rendering societal expectations so that they appear natural and inevitable" (p. 1400). Samuels (2017) articulated six conceptions of crip time, acknowledging both the liberatory potential of reconceptualizing time through a critical disability lens, as well as physical realities that may affect how disabled people experience time and navigate an able-bodied world: "It's the time of late nights and unconscious days, of life scheduled lived out of sync with the waking, quotidian world" (para. 23).

Though the critical study of temporality is a broad and growing area of inquiry, this manuscript follows Sharma's (2014) lead by focusing on the micropolitics of particular actors in particular contexts, in this case, offering a critical reading of time in the lives of queer students

with disabilities at one higher education institution. Sharma (2014) considers how power, inequality, and meaning is attached to time — referred to as power-chronography — by considering the organization of time in the lives of business travelers, taxi drivers, and slow-living advocates. In the context of this study, queer students with disabilities offer a vision of how to *queer* and *crip* time in higher education, presenting possibilities for acknowledging, critiquing, and resisting normative temporal expectations that surround them. Though I do not contend that *queering* and *cripping* time represent identical processes, I intend to illustrate the ways in which students targeted simultaneously by ableism, genderism, and/or heterosexism experience, reframe, and resist normative temporal pressures within neoliberal higher education.

Methodology

A qualitative approach offered the opportunity to conduct an in-depth examination of the experiences of the sample population (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014; Maxwell, 2013) and to address this manuscript's central research question concerning how temporalities operated in the lives of queer students with disabilities. Specifically, this study drew upon situational analysis, a postmodern version of grounded theory that strives for thick analysis rather than theory generation and encourages both coding of written data and mapmaking to represent data visually during analysis (Clarke, 2005). As part of a larger study that addressed the identities and campus experiences of queer students with disabilities, this paper reflects a subset of the data—namely, findings concerned with temporalities experienced by students in the higher education arena.

Method and Analysis

This IRB approved study took place at a large research university in the southern region of the United States made up of approximately 50% white students. The institution, located in a progressive urban center within a conservative state, offered academic, administrative, and programmatic resources related to disability and LGBTQ+ identities. I purposefully recruited students who fit the following criteria: 1) At least 18 years old, 2) Enrolled at the university selected for this study, 3) Self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, and 4) Self-identify as a person with a disability of any kind. While I intended to recruit students who identified as LGBTQ, participants also identified with other gender identities including non-binary and other sexual identities including asexual, demisexual, and pansexual. Recruitment materials emphasized self-identification of disability rather than a specific medical or psychiatric diagnosis. As such, I did not require participants to produce documentation of a diagnosis (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012). I recruited participants primarily by email and social media through academic centers and affiliated faculty (disability studies, women's/gender studies), student affairs offices (dean of students, disability services, LGBTQ+ center), and student organizations (disability and LGBTQ+ student groups). Semi-structured, in-depth interviews provided the primary data for this study, as these methods allowed participants to share their experiences constructing their identities and navigating the higher education environment (Jones et al., 2014; Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). I asked participants to take part in one interview lasting one to two hours in length, with an optional second interview to address topics not covered in the first interview, as well as to capture reflection and introspection that may have occurred in the interim. The average interview lasted an hour and a half. Six of twenty-five students participated in follow-up interviews. Interviews provided autonomy to the interviewee to explore themes in the depth of their choosing and to the interviewer to follow up on new and unanticipated threads of the conversation (Legard et al., 2003). This format emphasized the co-construction of meaning and the development of a reciprocal

relationship between interviewer and interviewee (Legard et al., 2003). Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and given to participants to confirm accuracy. I also invited participants to take part in follow-up conversations after receiving their interview transcripts and a draft of emerging findings. This process of "negotiating meaning" contributed to reciprocity (Lather, 1991, p. 61). Direct quotes were highlighted extensively in this work both to center the perspectives of participants (Lather, 1991) and because the researcher's life experiences inevitably differed from those of the participants (Bergerson, 2007).

I aimed to create a "multi-voiced, multi-centered text" that might "*frame* meaning possibilities rather than *close* them in" (Lather, 1991, p. 113, emphasis in original). Given this goal, situational analysis guided the study's initial analytic plan (Clarke, 2005). In line with a postmodern epistemology that views "*all* knowledges … as socially and culturally produced" (Clarke, 2005, p. xxiv, emphasis in original), situational analysis expanded the study's analytic grounding from the research participants themselves to the larger context. Situational analysis draws upon many techniques associated with grounded theory (Clarke, 2005). Such techniques used in this study included simultaneously collecting and analyzing data, building multiple iterations of codes and categories from data, writing analytic memos throughout the process, and sampling participants for theoretical purposes (Charmaz, 2006). Specific coding techniques included in vivo, process, and initial coding during the first cycle, followed by focused and axial coding in the second cycle (Saldaña, 2009). Throughout coding, I also followed Clarke's (2005) advice to construct several situational maps that made written concepts visual and suggested new interconnections within the data. In particular, Clarke (2005) suggests consideration of human/non-human, political/economic, sociocultural, temporal, and spatial elements at play in the research context, as well as major issues/debates and related discourses. Temporal elements brainstormed during situational mapmaking supplemented analysis of coding for students' experiences navigating and transgressing normative temporalities and became the basis for the three sub-sections presented within the findings (Table 1).

Table 1
Temporal elements from situational mapmaking (Clarke, 2005)

Theme	*Temporal element*
Calculating time to graduation	"Class of 2019"
	"Knowing your major on day one"
	"Some days I can't get out of bed"
	Age appropriate expectations
	Course attendance requirements
	Tempo of campus life
	Time as within one's control
	Time in college as limited/running out
	University temporalities as arbitrary
	University's four-year graduation campaign
Resisting and accommodating temporal expectations	Expectations of daily activity on campus
	Free time
	Queer/crip time
	Time as individual commodity

Theme	*Temporal element*
	Time needed to perform queer/disabled
	Time required to be an activist
	Time spent navigating university resources
	Timed exams and class assignments
	Waking hours/sleep
Lacking energy, lacking time	"It gets better"
	"Some days I can't get out of bed" Ability/disability as temporary
	Bodily needs at times considered inappropriate
	Cyclical/seasonal disabling experiences
	Identities constructed on non-normative timetables
	Past/shifting gender/sexuality identifications
	Time as commodity/limited resource
	Time needed to secure disability accommodation letters

Participants

Rather than completing a demographic questionnaire or survey, I encouraged participants to name and tell stories about social identities they considered important during interviews. This process allowed participants to name multiple identities without limitation; for identities including disability, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation, participants used multiple terms to identify themselves, often utilizing several labels contextually. A summary of participants is found in Table 2. Most students (19) identified with more than one disability label. A majority of participants discussed their psychiatric disabilities or struggles with mental health, naming depression and anxiety most frequently. Participants used a variety of terms for gender and sexuality in context, with a majority of participants using the term queer to describe their sexuality, often in tandem with at least one other term they use in particular times and spaces. The participants often identified with multiple terms relating to sex and gender, often naming terms relate both to sex (e.g., female, male) and gender (e.g., woman, man, genderqueer, transgender). In addition, transgender and genderqueer-identified students often identified with another term to describe their sex/gender identity. The sample, reflective of the university under study, was predominantly white, though many participants identified strongly with particular racial, ethnic, and cultural categories other than white, including as biracial/multiracial (5 students) and Latina/o/Chicana/o (5 students) in particular.

Table 2
Participant overview

Pseudonym	*Classification*	*Pronouns*	*Disabilities*[a]	*LGBTQ+ identities*
Abby	Graduate	she/her	Narcolepsy	Queer
Adrianna	Graduate	she/her	Addiction, anxiety, brittle bones, depression, eating disorder, OCD, PTSD	Bisexual
Aurora	Undergraduate	they/them	Anxiety, depression, neurodivergent	Non-binary, polyamorous, queer, trans
Carlo	Undergraduate	he/him	ADHD	Gay
Christopher	Graduate	he/him	ADHD, dyslexia	Gay
Dani	Graduate	she/her	Visual disabilities	Gay
Desi	Undergraduate	he/him	ADHD, anxiety, Asperger's, depression	Demisexual, queer, trans
Diego	Graduate	he/him	Anxiety, depression, narcolepsy	Gay, queer
Elijah	Graduate	he/him	Bipolar disorder	Gay
Ella	Undergraduate	she/her	Anxiety, depression, hard of hearing	Queer, trans
Eva	Undergraduate	she/her	Anxiety, depression, eating disorder, PTSD	Bisexual
Haley	Graduate	she/her	Depression, pregnancy	Queer
Jackie	Undergraduate	she/her	Anxiety, autoimmune disease, brain malformation, depression	Asexual, quoiromantic
Kristen	Graduate	she/her	Anxiety, depression, mental health	Bisexual, queer
Madison	Graduate	she/her	ASD, health problems, injuries, mental health	Queer
Maria	Undergraduate	she/her	Anxiety, depression, mental health, PTSD	Genderqueer, queer
Marie	Undergraduate	she/her	Anxiety, depression	Lesbian
Miranda	Graduate	she/her	Anxiety, ASD, Asperger's, Lyme disease, neuromuscular condition, OCD	Asexual, panromantic, queer
Rodney	Graduate	he/him	ADHD, depression, heart condition	Gay
Sandy	Undergraduate	she/her	Anxiety, auditory processing disorder, depression, epilepsy, OCD, panic disorder, sensory processing disorder	Gay, lesbian, queer
Sebastian	Graduate	he/him	Lyme disease	Gay, queer
Shannon	Undergraduate	she/her	Anxiety, depression, health problems, injuries	Bisexual
Taylor	Undergraduate	they/them	Anxiety, depression, mental health, PTSD	Non-binary, pansexual, polyamorous, queer, trans
Will	Undergraduate	he/him	Asperger's	Gay
Zachary	Undergraduate	he/him	Tourette syndrome	Gay, queer

[a]ADHD = attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder; ASD = autism spectrum disorder; OCD = obsessive compulsive disorder; PTSD = post-traumatic stress disorder

Trustworthiness and Researcher Positionality

Basic components of trustworthiness in qualitative research include "integrity of the data, balance between reflexivity and subjectivity, and clear communication of findings" (Williams & Morrow, 2009, p. 577). To promote integrity of data, I carefully documented all phases of the study, including recruitment materials, interview transcripts, observational notes, analytic and reflective researcher memos, and documents from the university site. I used these documents to assist in conversations about the study and emergent findings with several faculty and student peer debriefers including six faculty and graduate student colleagues, all of whom identified with a disability and/or as LGBTQ+. These conversations and feedback helped to clarify my goal to create research as praxis, which Lather (1991) defines as committed to social justice and offering a "change enhancing, interactive, contextualized approach to knowledge-building" (p. 53).

As the research instrument in this qualitative study, I prioritized reflecting upon my own positionality during design and analysis, as well as in conversation with all participants prior to their agreement to participate in the study. I disclosed my social identities (white, temporarily able-bodied cisgender queer man and first-generation college graduate), personal background informing this study, and goals for the research with every student who expressed interest in the study. I disclosed my own background in queer organizing and activism within higher education, as well as my process of learning more about disability based on my experience directing an LGBTQ resource center and working with LGBTQ+ students with disabilities. Since that point, my personal and academic commitments to disability justice grew, fueling my desire to conduct the study. My position as a white researcher within a predominantly white institution also potentially limited the rapport, I was able to build with students of color. For instance, though I structured interview questions to be open-ended, and I asked broadly about social identities including and beyond disability and LGBTQ+ identities. Participants of color might not have seen the interview as a space to deeply discuss their racialized experiences on campus (though several participants did discuss this and intersections of race/ethnicity, disability, and LGBTQ+ identities). Clarity and reflection upon my positionality and ongoing role in and reactions to the study, as recorded in reflective memos, also aided in my attempts to balance reflexivity and subjectivity as I analyzed data and wrote findings.

Findings

This section offers a brief context for the *chronopolitics* at the university under study (Sharma, 2014, p. 6), followed by findings presented in three sections: (a) calculating time to graduation; (b) resisting and accommodating temporal expectations; and (c) lacking energy, lacking time. The tempo of life on the campus in this study appeared to be picking up, evidenced by the particular chronopolitics of the university, which began a coordinated effort to increase the four-year graduation rates of undergraduates. The timeline for doctoral students also began to compress, with the implementation of six-year funding limits. These trends, though increasingly common in higher education (e.g. Smith, 2012), profoundly affected campus discourse at this particular university. The timely graduation policy, partially a product of political pressures in the state to move a large number of students through the institution in a short time span, "assumes a future in which students are projected as good, neo-liberal, employable subjects" (Clegg, 2010, p. 346). Thus, time spent at the university beyond four years became cast as selfish wallowing, a delay of proper entry into the labor market and a failure on students' parts to immediately become the "robots, technocrats, and trained workers" that represent the ends of neoliberal higher

education (Giroux, 2014, p. 31). This push to move in lockstep with peers to graduation presented troubling implications for those students usually labeled as underprepared for higher education. This discourse implied that those who graduate in four years have an identity and belong to the collective; those who do not, represent failure — a failure of the individual for running out of time and failing to organize their time in a responsible way, ignoring structural inequalities that accompany temporal demands (Sharma, 2014). Though administrators may have noble goals to reduce student debt, this individualized account of time absolved the institution of responsibility for students' failure.

Calculating Time to Graduation

Participants described the ways in which they operated on their own timelines and rejected standard expectations of the time it took to complete a project, organize an activist agenda, or graduate. The university's campaign for undergraduates to complete their degrees in four years, and for graduate students to reduce their timelines to graduation, came up repeatedly during interviews. Overall, students felt that the pressure to graduate in a shorter time ignored the differing experiences and backgrounds of a diverse student body, particularly the obstacles that might prevent students with disabilities and LGBTQ+ students from finishing "on time."

Students noted and critiqued the university's "timely graduation" campaign. Ella identified as a white/Chicana trans woman who experienced depression and anxiety and spoke passionately about the four-year graduation push and its impact on students.

> Apparently, you're supposed to come to the university knowing what you're wanting to do. Day one, you come in and know what your major is and you start chipping away at it in the beginning and that nothing will ever happen to you in these four years—as if everything exists in a vacuum and we can detach ourselves form the world and be here. It doesn't work that way.

As a first-generation college student, Ella said she did not know what to expect at the university or the importance of declaring a major early in her time as a student. She described a need for coming to terms with her temporality that could not always match the tempo of the university:

> Attendance is such a huge thing. … There are only a few excuses, like there's been a death in the family or you have been injured, all these things. I'm like, "Well, I have not been injured but I can't function in the way that you require me to function today," and it's like, that's not okay. I know, for me, because I did have semesters where I couldn't go to class and I had to withdraw.

Ella displayed determination to continue with her education, on her own timeline. When not in class, Ella preferred to spend her time in the LGBTQ center, which she found to be a safe and comfortable space.

Beyond accommodations for documented disabilities, which some participants found rigid and inflexible, university policies did not account for trans- and queer-identified students unable to get out of bed due to depression or trauma. Aurora shared these sentiments: "I missed a lot of class last semester because I just could not go in. I was just either panicked or sleeping. That's a really hard thing to explain to someone. So I usually didn't, and paid the price for it." Aurora, who identified as trans, non-binary, and polyamorous, did not always find the LGBTQ center on campus welcoming, remarking that they would not want to spend time in the space during a conversation about suicide prevention because it would trigger their anxiety.

While experiencing disability may extend a student's timeline to graduation, participants noted that the university's promotion of a standard time-to-graduation also negatively influenced their academic careers and constructed them as outsiders on campus. A sixth-year senior and a white gay man, Carlo, described his journey through college with ADHD and depression as having "contributed to my longevity in college." As a transfer student, he also described feeling separated from the institution and out of sync with the timeline followed by most of the student body. Carlo echoed Ella's words, while acknowledging the rationale for the university to create a four-year graduation campaign.

> For the majority, I think it can be kind of you know helpful and constructive to say, okay, this is the natural time frame I have to get things done. But if you don't fall under that umbrella, for whatever reason—some of the smartest people [I know] are in their early thirties getting their undergrad. These people are brilliant … and yet they're not out in four years.

The four-year graduation push weighed heavily on Carlo and functioned as another signal that he did not belong to the mainstream on campus. He described himself as "not one of these model students" who earns a high GPA and graduates in four years. Carlo recalled attending an information session for students switching majors when a staff member revealed that students with a higher number of credit hours were unlikely to be granted a transfer because of the university's four-year graduation initiative. The comment made him feel further detached from the university:

> I'm not one of these model students. They place such an emphasis on GPA, on graduating in four years. I was at an internal transfer session, and they were talking about, "yeah, if you have over 75 hours you're probably not going to get in because higher ups are telling us to get people out in four years," and it's just little comments like that—subconsciously you're like, "that's not me." I can't do that in four years, I'm not like that. [These comments] accumulate over time to the point where you just feel like, "I'm not one of these students."

The pressure to finish also affected graduate students. Rodney remembered the mixed messages of finishing quickly juxtaposed with changing degree requirements when he began his doctoral program.

Resisting and Accommodating Temporal Expectations

Participants demonstrated awareness of the temporal expectations present at a rigorous university and described the ways in which they alternatively resisted them—by critiquing the expectations and becoming activists/advocate for queer and/or disabled students—and attempting to accommodate them by taking medications and setting schedules and routines. Diego, a graduate student with narcolepsy who identified as Latino/Chicano and as gay/queer, saw his university life as overscheduled, recounting days when meetings and class would begin in the morning and stretch through to the evening. Though not an unusual experience in higher education, lengthy days placed a particular strain on students who needed to consider their energy levels, waking hours, and medication regimens. Diego explained that he strongly disliked "the institutional culture of the university—the increasing movement to look at graduate students more as a completion rate, at time to completion; the way that students can easily fall through the cracks; the way that I see people treated by professors and administrators as cheap labor or as unqualified, or not as intelligent." To add to the strain, Diego felt compelled to advocate for LGBTQ+ students and students with disabilities in various spaces on campus, resulting in additional commitments that

he knew drained his energy but which he saw as politically important. A schedule that might simply be bothersome or tiring to some trying to live up to able-bodied norms of energy and productivity in academia can be disabling to those with particular impairments.

For some, medication allowed a finite time to focus on tasks they otherwise found difficult, but medication had its downsides as well. Working with a doctor to take medication related to ADHD, Christopher appreciated the benefits of being able to focus: "You're never not going to have ADHD but this will make it go away for four to five hours." Conversely, Christopher also felt that medication dulled the creativity he brought to his work in the fine arts (and which he associated with his identity as a gay man), requiring him to carefully plan and consider when he could devote his energy to particular projects required of him.

Despite attempts to accommodate the university's temporal expectations, strategies to manage manifestations of disability could end up limiting one's activism. Abby, a white graduate student with narcolepsy, detailed her process of making decisions about scheduling her time: staying in bed an hour longer or risking not being able to function; trying to avoid meetings and commitments in the early afternoon when she hits a low point, but often being unable to control her schedule; and adjusting to taking medication at set intervals to help control the low points. Abby said flexibility on the part of others in scheduling commitments made the biggest difference in her daily experience. However, she lamented that she could not fulfill a particular archetype of queer activism:

> I think there are also assumptions about queer life and its disruptive potential and all that, there are these assumptions about able-bodiedness like, "We should be taking to the streets and being queer in public places and celebrating it." A lot of that is tied into the whole culture of dancing and drinking and having fun until three in the morning or six in the morning, those kinds of things that are just off limits for me. Instead I end up looking a lot more like the domestic gay stereotype of being assimilated; I stay home a lot with my wife and my dog and watch TV.

Abby concluded that her day-to-day experience felt "less disruptive in a political way" than she would have desired.

Desi, a biracial trans and queer-identified undergraduate student in the hard sciences who identified with Asperger's syndrome, recounted his daily experience as one of stress and deadlines. Living on campus with a roommate offered Desi little respite after a stressful day; stress and a lack of sleep could often lead to experiencing panic attacks, yet he felt he still needed to push himself to attend class and study.

> Sleeping less just … takes such a toll on your well-being. As a person who experiences panic attacks, it's even worse. I've had days where, especially on test days … all day I'm about to have a panic attack and I'm sleep deprived. I have no idea what's going on anymore because I'm so withdrawn. I still have to go to class. I still have to study. It's just a never-ending cycle. It's so draining.

Desi also described the challenges of keeping up with academic work and commitments to co-curricular activities, including an LGBTQ student organization he valued. He elaborated:

> Last semester, for about two months after I was struggling a lot with [the LGBTQ] organization, I kept pushing myself too far and trying to take on more than I should have. I passed this threshold and I wasn't able to fully recover and get back up to full steam, I guess, for a few months. It affected my grades. It affected my social

> life. It definitely affected my mental health. I was not in a good place for a long time.

Students emphasized the need to set a regular schedule to help manage temporal demands on campus. Miranda discussed the importance of routine, but also limitations dictated by Lyme disease and other disabilities. “I like to have as much routine as possible, but I’m only on campus certain days. I can only do certain things certain days because of my pain levels, so sometimes I have plans to do one thing and I can’t because I can’t get out of bed that day or whatever.” Miranda described increasing pain after sitting for several hours and being nearly unable to function by the end of a long day. Miranda developed strategies to navigate her daily experiences on campus, such as developing checklists: “I get cognitive fog and memory impairment from my condition so I keep a list of everything I’m going to do every day, and I check everything off.”

Other students in the study spoke of the need to set a regular schedule. Marie, a white undergraduate student with depression and anxiety who identified as lesbian, spoke to the importance of routine in maintaining her mental health on a daily basis, resulting in less social interaction than she might like: “Meeting with people, going to a new place, planning all of that is so super exhausting for me. It’s a lot of planning and building up the energy in order to do that.” Marie lamented that sticking to a regular schedule limited her spontaneity and social life, but that she would rather adhere to her daily plan.

Lacking Energy, Lacking Time

Disability often operated on an unpredictable timeline, a problem compounded by a rigid schedule and time requirements within the university as well as by experiencing anti-LGBTQ+ bias. One participant, Sandy, reflected on having “off days or months or weeks.” Being outed as lesbian to a parent triggered episodes of anxiety and depression: “I realized I was gay, got outed, tried to commit suicide, dealt with anxiety and depression, just got back in the school, started having seizures. It was just sort of this whole whirlwind of anything that could go wrong was going to go wrong.” Multiple participants in the study shared the experience of being occasionally unable to get out of bed, some noting the connection between trauma experienced as queer people and their anxiety and depression. Faculty members and peers took for granted the ability to consistently attend class, according to Kristen, a white graduate student who identified as queer/bisexual and with depression and anxiety. She said she shares her “mental health struggles,” because she wants others to know “that sometimes it’s really hard for people to get out of bed. It’s not just like, I showed up, I’m here, great. No, there’s no motivation, there’s no energy, I feel like crap.” Madison, a queer graduate student who identified as poor and with multiple psychiatric and medical disabilities, echoed Kristen’s words, describing being overwhelmed by the prospect of a new day.

> My day starts with me not wanting to get out of bed, because either I’m still tired, like I woke up and, even though I got a full night’s rest, I’m not refreshed and I’m still tired or I just look at the rest of the day, feeling completely overwhelmed and not wanting to have to start it. Once I get out of bed, I come to campus and either go to class or go to my office. I’m not as productive as I want to be. I have a hard time working without external deadlines and my adviser is very hands off, so it’s hard for me to set my own goals and actually to get them done.

According to Madison, a lack of energy and continuous expectations of normative productivity affected not only her university life but also her personal and social life, and her involvement in the queer community: “I love being queer… I like feeling like I’m a part of a community even if

I'm not actively involved it where I can relate to people similar to me."

Evidencing normative temporal expectations of productivity, students expressed a desire to have more energy to complete more tasks. Taylor, a white undergraduate student who identified as non-binary, shared that depression and anxiety "can be very debilitating at times." They expressed frustration about being unable to get out of bed on some days and the university's lack of openness to flexible schedules that would recognize the realities of living with particular impairments. In addition to negative impact on their studies, Taylor reflected on the limited time and energy brought on by their disabilities:

> It's hard for me, sometimes, to go up and keep giving all this energy whenever I need to take more energy than most people to take care of myself. … I have mental disabilities that limit how much I can do. It's very frustrating because I want to do more. I want to help more. I reach this threshold where if I push myself too far, I'm going to hurt myself more than is easy to come back to.

For Taylor, disability became a limit to fully investing in activist and political work on campus, including queer activism they engaged in.

Coming out as queer/disabled required not only energy, but time. As a functional matter, managing disability could require excessive time. Elijah recalled how much time management of his bipolar disorder took, time that he thought prevented from fully exploring his nascent identity as an openly gay man: "The bipolar identity was dominating 24/7 my life and the lives of everybody else that was within 15 feet of me; dealing with the other [gay] identity was impossible." Diego described a recent experience of seeing four doctors in one week and providing updates to the disability services office. Temporal experiences also related to sexuality, as Diego described coming out as a time-consuming performance:

> I get upset with the idea of coming out. … And I realize that it's more of like a Western, white male practice and, you know, there's some cultures where that just isn't seen, sort of practiced. So it's belaboring and it's ridiculous to have to assume that I have to come out, constantly. Because it's not something that I either want to do or feel like I have to do. Or it's like, it's annoying. It's time consuming. I consciously decided, you know I'm not going to tell anyone that I'm gay. I'm not going to perform that coming out for them.

As a practical matter, the coming out process required time and effort; a performance for others, but not benefitting self. He often opted out of this performance.

Discussion

In the beginning of this study, I did not actively consider the role of time in shaping the experiences of students with intersecting disabilities and gender and sexual identities. Yet, as I moved deeper into interviewing and analysis, time appeared all around: the time required to manage and perform various identities on campus; the one-size-fits-all timeline toward graduation; the cumulative effects of time spent managing mental health, chronic illness, and stigmatized queer identities — time not spent on other tasks and goals. This analysis suggests that temporal assumptions at work in academe ought to be acknowledged, critiqued, and transformed. Students set apart and marked as other, whether by disability, gender identity, sexuality, and other intersecting minoritized identities, often struggled to keep pace with the quickening chronopolitics of the university under study (Sharma, 2014). Students often saw themselves as out of sync with

the institution and out of time. For instance, when Ella faced injury or illness, she doubted university faculty and administrators would understand her need to function on a different timeline; similarly, Desi felt the need to keep pushing himself even when sleep deprived and experiencing panic attacks. Failure to keep with the tempo signaled as an individual failure of motivation and of time management and, thus, a failure of students to perform as neoliberal subjects (Giroux, 2014). Individualized failure, then, absolved the institution and its structures for setting the pace at the outset.

By detailing how they often did not meet the normative temporal rhythms of the university — experiencing “off days or months or weeks” in Sandy’s words — queer students with disabilities made visible the increasingly neoliberal expectations of the academy (Giroux, 2014), in which all worthy activity can be quantified and applied to ideal future employability and participation in the larger economy (Clegg, 2010). Students resented the notion of a standardized timeline to graduation, pointing out the variety of reasons they may take longer to finish their degrees — in essence, how they needed to operate on their own *queered* or *cripped* timelines in higher education to survive and avoid burning out. Several first-generation college students noted that they did not have knowledge of the hidden curriculum that would enable them to manage a university career effectively. The push to timely graduation represented a quickening tempo of university life. The emphasis on timely graduation especially took its toll on several students who described feeling disconnected and disengaged from the university and viewed as deficient, including Carlo, who saw himself as “not one of these model students” due to his timeline through higher education.

On an everyday level, students found it difficult to keep up with an expectation of an overscheduled university life (Mountz et al. 2015), with meetings and commitments stretching from early morning to late night. Chronic illness, medication, and side effects often added to the strain for some students as they navigated their own crip time/schedules (Samuels, 2017). Though many of the direct quotes from participants illustrated the day-to-day management of experiencing disability on campus, these experiences occurred within a context of students’ multiple identities, most notably including their experiences as queer and trans-identified individuals. Though participants less frequently pointed to everyday examples of queer temporalities relating specifically to gender and/or sexuality, students’ experiences related to their identities were cumulative and multifaceted. Such experiences occurred for students already marked as other by virtue of gender identity and sexual orientation, at minimum, and frequently by other intersecting marginalized identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status).

In addition, with a majority of the participants in this study identifying with psychiatric disabilities including depression and anxiety, it must also be noted that navigating homophobia and transphobia in society and on campus (in addition to intersecting forms of oppression including racism) negatively affected students’ mental health. Coming out to families of origin or organizing on campus against homophobia, transphobia, and racism cost time and could exact a toll on students’ mental health and academic performance (Vaccaro & Mena, 2011). A lack of flexibility and understanding on the part of faculty and administrators compounded the stress of dealing with the ebb and flow of good days and bad days. Students readily acknowledged the impossibility of all deadlines or bureaucratic procedures being flexible but argued that some beneficial changes could be made.

Conclusion

As a qualitative study, this research is specific to the participants and their environments. While the experiences related by student participants in this study may hold meaning and relevance for other students and populations within higher education, this study is not designed to make generalizations (Maxwell, 2013). Few previous studies have addressed the experiences of LGBTQ+ students with disabilities. Thus, while this study aims to make a contribution to a small body of work at this particular intersection of identities, it must be noted that LGBTQ+ and disability labels represent an enormous diversity of identity and experience. Future work might take up questions of how specific groups within these larger umbrellas experience higher education. As this study was conducted at a predominantly white institution and yielded a majority white sample, additional work can explore the racialized dimensions of ableism, homophobia, and transphobia on campus as experienced by LGBTQ+ people of color with disabilities. In addition, studies at other institutional types and in other geographic locations might add new insights to the phenomena explored in this study.

This study offers possibilities for faculty members, administrators, and student affairs educators to examine their own orientations to time and how they construct time in their institutions, courses, and programs. Students recounted occasional difficulty with consistently meeting rigid deadlines or attending class depending upon personal circumstances and experiences including depression, anxiety, and chronic illness. However, students generally sought flexibility and understanding from faculty and administrators rather than a complete abandonment of timelines and deadlines. Further, this study underscores the stigma many students felt by organized university campaigns to shorten timelines to graduation, including messaging that made them feel inadequate and excluded from general campus life. Senior administrators ought to carefully (re)consider the goals of a "timely graduation" policy and how communication of such a policy might affect students' sense of belonging.

Faculty members might reconsider expectations for their courses and whether and how these expectations align with learning outcomes of courses. The expanding use of technology in coursework (e.g., online asynchronous coursework), though not offering a panacea, does offer promise for more fully engaging all students. Administrators and practitioners might also consider the temporal expectations in their own work and their work with students. Particular offices on campus, such as disability services, can consider how to account for disability experiences that occur sporadically or inconsistently. At minimum — even without changing institutional policy — a consideration of queer and disability temporalities might encourage administrators and faculty members to more fully acknowledge the presence of diverse learning and working styles on campus, and attempt to become varied, flexible, and innovative in their instructional and interpersonal styles. Opening lines of communication with and among those who struggle with normative academic temporalities would be an important first step toward learning more.

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