

Transition to Employment of University Students with Disabilities: Factors for Success*

Transición al empleo de estudiantes con discapacidad: componentes para el éxito

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* Artículo de investigación

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ABSTRACT

This study presents the results of the implementation of a training program on employment search strategies to 10 disabled students, while 10 similar students acted as controls. Following its implementation, participants in the program showed better academic / labor self-concept, had more information on the next steps in the search for employment and 4 had succeeded in finding employment. The positive assessment they made, coupled with the demand from disabled students for initiatives like this, suggest measures such as this be included in the activities of university counseling services.

Keywords

university; job training; new technologies; transition; professional orientation

RESUMEN

En este estudio se aplicó un programa de entrenamiento en estrategias de búsqueda de empleo a 10 estudiantes universitarios discapacitados, mientras que otros 10 actuaron como control. Tras la puesta en práctica de éste, los participantes en el mismo mostraban mejor autoconcepto académico/laboral poseían más información sobre los pasos a seguir en la búsqueda de empleo y 4 habían logrado incorporarse al empleo. La valoración positiva que hicieron, sumada a la demanda de los estudiantes discapacitados de iniciativas como ésta, sugieren la inclusión de medidas como la realizada entre las actividades de los servicios de orientación universitarios.

Palabras clave:

universidad; formación profesional; nuevas tecnologías; transición; orientación profesional

Introduction

Spain is undergoing an undeniable labor crisis, characterized by high unemployment, segmentation of labor markets and labor flexibility, all in an economy undergoing greater demands for competitiveness. It is overwhelmed because its development model fails to incorporate young, qualified people into the labor market (López & Seco, 2005), which makes the conditions of access to employment for people with disabilities even more difficult. Despite existing laws to facilitate access to employment, this group is one of those with the highest unemployment rates, as only one third of young people with disabilities have ever worked or currently work (Huete, 2010). There is still some work to be done in the preparation and placement of these young people in work, so it is necessary to pay special attention to the transition process necessary for a successful future, with planning starting in adolescence.

Among the aspects that should be given special attention in the process of employment of college students with disabilities are (Polo & López-Justicia, 2004): adequate self-concept and personal acceptance, resolution of conflictive social situations, and a basic repertoire of knowledge, among which the management of information technology and communication (ITC) is included.

A person's sense of self-efficacy to perform successfully the conduct required to produce certain results about something that interests them (Saura, 1995) is of great importance, and the role that this plays in self-concept is remarkable, as it determines expectations, influencing people's behavior (Elexpuru, Garma, Marroquín, & Villa, 1992). When people see themselves negatively, they expect negative and unfavorable treatment by others, in fact, many authors establish a close relationship between disabled people's self-concept and their options to integrate themselves in the different areas in which they would normally operate (López-Justicia, Fernández de Haro, Amezcua, & Pichardo, 2000, López-Justicia & Nieto, 2006; Machargo, 1997; Martínez, García, & Pérez, 2005; Polo & López-Justicia, 2012; Villa & Auzmendi,

1992), among which is employment (Crudden, 2009). Despite the dearth of literature in which this variable is analyzed in college students, however, it has been found that they showed a level of lower academic and emotional self-concept (Polo & López-Justicia, 2012) when compared to students without disabilities. Furthermore, when the role played by the level of education (college and non-college) in people with disabilities was analyzed, the level of self-concept was lower in those who did not have a college education (Fernández, López-Justicia, & Polo, 2007; López-Justicia, Fernández & Polo, 2005; López-Justicia, A. Fernández, C. Fernández, & Polo, 2011). Self-concept and social skills are psychosocial variables intimately related to human well-being (García & Cabezas, 1999). Social skills are a series of complex interpersonal behaviors; if they are appropriate, they result in greater personal and interpersonal satisfaction, in both the short and long term (Caballo, 2002). Social skills represent behaviors that, in specific situations, predict important social outcomes for children and young people (Gresham & Elliott, 1987). Numerous studies suggest the importance of working with social skills in people with disabilities, finding that sometimes they lack strategies, skills and competencies for social relationships (Alcantud, 2005; Gil, León, & Jarana, 1995; López-Cano, 2001, Medina & León, 1998; Pérez & Calvo, 2002; Ros, García, & Mendez, 2002). In the literature on disability in the university context, we can point to two study perspectives that analyze the role of self-esteem and / or social skills. On the one hand, there may be the fact that access to college itself helps to improve and expand networks (Polo & López-Justicia, 2008), while, on the other, other studies indicate that students with disabilities often have difficulties in social interaction, because among other problems, they may have episodes of irritability associated with their disabilities or communication problems with their peers and management staff and services (Alcantud, 2005). Some studies have explored the barriers faced by disabled students in the university context to enter the labor market (Campoy & Pantoja, 2003; Polo & López-Justicia, 2004; Vilà & Pallisera, 2002), concluding that what they needed

from the University was further information and advice on strategies and job search techniques and training in new technologies. In this line, we would highlight the value of the role of ITC because if it is useful in people without disabilities, it is even more so in those that suffer from them since they give rise to profound changes in different areas and aspects of adult life, such as education and employment (López-Justicia & Chacón, 2004). The international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which came into force in 2008, sets out the obligation to take appropriate measures to ensure access for these people, on equal terms, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications technology (CERMI, 2011), and in this way to give them access to the labor market. In recent decades outside the university context, there has been a boom in the study of the processes of employment of young people and adults, from the moment that career guidance has been recognized as a key strategy in the context of actions aimed to encourage the integration and, therefore, prevent labor and social exclusion (Donoso & Figuera, 2007). In this regard, a number of studies have addressed the process of employment of people with intellectual disabilities focusing on the form (Egido, Cerrillo, & Camina, 2009; Hernández, Cerrillo, & Izuzquiza, 2009; Ortiz & Vidal, 2010; Vidal & Cornejo, 2012). Moreover, there have been initiatives for this group in various universities in the form of programs aimed at improving their quality of life through the exercise of the right to education in the university environment before starting work; job training tailored to their individual characteristics and needs to enable them to perform meaningful work for themselves and for society (Izuzquiza, 2005; Izuzquiza, Cerrillo, De la Herran, De Miguel, & Ruiz, 2005; Pegalagar & Xandri, 2015). Other programs to facilitate the employment of people with visual, auditory or physical disability (Flórez, 2008; Godachevich, Iglesias, & Chavez, 2005; Sánchez, 2006; Vélez, 2009; Zondek, 2002) have also emerged. Outside Spain, the universities have increasingly undertaken more vocational programs or guidance services, however, programs specifically targeting

people with disabilities are scarce; although in other non-university contexts the integration of this group has been facilitated (Beadles, McDaniel, & Waters, 2000; Certo & Luecking, 2006; Dempsey & Ford, 2009; Herzog & Falks, 1990; Miller, 2010; Reagon, 2011; Saunders, Leahy, McGlynn, & Estrada-Hernández, 2006). Indeed, it seems obvious that it is the universities themselves who propose vocational education programs that enable the making of experiences of social and satisfactory employment possible. For this reason the University of Granada designed a training program as a course to develop skills in seeking employment with college students with disabilities from the data provided by a previous study conducted (Polo & López-Justicia, 2004). This activity is intended to enhance these students' capacity to acquire knowledge and personal and professional skills necessary to actively seek that work whose features are most adequate in helping to organize a systematic and effective search. Furthermore, this study seeks to understand the impact of the implementation of the program on some important variables in finding employment: self-concept and social skills.

Methods

Participants

The course was attended by 20 disabled students studying the degree in Psychology, Pedagogy and Teaching. The criteria that were used for belonging to the program were as follows:

a) that they were students who had shown difficulties in employment search techniques and strategies, as well as in new technologies.

b) that, preferably, they were enrolled in the penultimate or final year of the degrees in Psychology, Pedagogy, Psycho-pedagogy or Teaching.

We proceeded to assign them to two groups (experimental and control) of 10 students each, who were assessed at two time points: prior to the implementation of the program and then after it. To ensure equivalence of the two groups we resorted to random assignment to each of the groups, so that they had the same probability of

appearing in either of them. Finally, the groups were constituted:

The experimental group ($n = 10$) consisted of 3 men (30%) and 7 women (70%). 50% (5) were under 24 and half were older than 24 years (5). Regarding the type of disability, 50% (5) had visual impairment, 40% (4) physical and 10% (1) hearing.

The control group ($n = 10$) was composed of 2 men (30%) and 8 women (80%), of whom 30% (3) were under 24 years and 70% (7) over 24. As for the type of disability, 30% (3) suffered a hearing disability, 30% (3) visual and 40% (4) physical.

All the participants signed informed consent forms detailing especially the ethical considerations, such as anonymity and the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Instruments

The following instruments were used:

To assess self-concept, we used the self-esteem scale *Self concept Form 5 (SCF5)* (in Spanish *Autoconcepto Forma 5*), by Garcia and Musitu (2001). SCF 5 is based on a multidimensional self-concept, a perspective that currently has considerable empirical support. It consists of 30 statements to which a value from 1 to 99 is assigned, according to the degree of agreement with the content of each sentence. It measures five dimensions of self-concept: academic and work, social, emotional, physical and family. This test was chosen because it is easy to administer and can be applied to adults with different academic levels: moreover, the factorial structure of the scale of items successfully confirmed the theoretical dimensions; the components accounted for 51% of the total variance (coefficient of Cronbach's alpha of 0.81) and the five dimensions had intercorrelations between 0 and 0.32.

The social skills assessment was made using the *Social Skills Scale (SSS)* designed by Gismero (2002) and called in Spanish *Escala de Habilidades Sociales*. It consists of 33 items, 28 of which are written negatively showing a lack of assertiveness or social skills deficits and 5 of them positively. It has four alternative responses. It consists of six factors: Ex-

pressing oneself in social situations; defense of one's rights as a consumer; expressing anger or displeasure; saying no and cutting interactions; making requests and initiating positive interactions with the opposite sex. The reasons why this instrument was chosen were that it allows individual or collective application, in both adolescents and adults, and at the same time it is an instrument with high internal consistency, as expressed in a high reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.88$) in which all items, with just some minor exceptions, have weights of 0.40 or higher on the first unrotated factor.

For the evaluation of the socio-personal and employment situation the *Scale of Transition of the Physically and Sensorially Disabled to Employment*, and called in Spanish *Escala de Transición de los Minusválidos Físicos y Sensoriales al Mundo Laboral*, drafted by Research and Educational Development of Guidance Group (2003) was used, designed for application to college students with disabilities and disabled workers with a university degree. This instrument includes the following sections: identification variables (11 items), physical variables in the workplace (10 items), physical barriers in the study site (8 items), social and occupational variables (19 items), and socio-professional variables (11 items). The responses to each of the sections correspond to the perception the participants had about the different variables according to the following scale: 1, strongly agree, 2: agree, 3 disagree.

The coefficient of reliability, as the internal consistency of the scale obtained by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was significantly high ($\alpha = 0.84$). The main reason it was selected was because it included items assessing socio-personal and occupational variables. In addition to the variables listed, the scale contains a number of items that help describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample, namely: Age, Gender, Marital Status, Type of disability, percentage of disability, place of residence, Employment status, Means of transport used.

The training program, *Course of Strategies and Resources for Access to Employment for University Students with Disabilities* (Polo & López-Justicia, 2008), collected on a CD format, includes one vir-

tual module and five modules requiring personal attendance focused on counseling and training in the identified deficit areas (Polo & López-Justicia, 2004). A summary of the contents of the different modules is presented below:

Introduction. The first step in the employment search process requires devoting some time and effort to define the participant's objectives and making some decisions.

Self-knowledge. Having defined the personal and professional characteristics, an attainable career goal was set, a goal around which to plan the whole process of employment search. Therefore, self-assessment was proposed in this module.

Tools for the search for work. Practically speaking there are four basic tools: the letter of introduction, the telephone, the résumé and Information Technology.

Job Search on the Internet. Three formats for internet job search were distinguished: web pages from government agencies, which provide information on public employment; business, organization, and professional association websites that disseminate their own job boards, as well as specialized portals for those seeking employment.

Resources for social inclusion. This module was intended to inform the students of the main resources for insertion into the labor market and self-employment. Among the initiatives for paid employment a resource guide for public and private employment initiatives was presented (e.g., a list of private schools in the area, Associations, etc.), as well as self-employment. The virtual module consisted in students performing a series of exercises based on the contents of the modules included on a CD. These tasks were supervised by email and tutorials.

Finally, we designed a questionnaire assessing these activities for the students to complete, and included an assessment of four aspects: 1. Course features (objectives, reasons for attendance, information received, etc.). 2. Features of the speakers (clarity of explanation, ability to resolve questions, etc.). 3. Facilities (room, furniture, lighting, etc.) 4. Barriers to participation and suggestions for future activities. The four blocks are composed of

items that consist of various response alternatives whose scores range from 1-10.

Procedure

The first step in carrying out the study involved contacting the staff in charge of "Social Intervention Program for Students with Disabilities", of the Social Care Office of the university concerned, who referred us to the General Secretariat to provide data on the number of students with disabilities. Since 1992/93 the office of the Vice Chancellor for Students has been working with these students in order to facilitate their integration and participation in the University. It called for all university students with physical and / or sensory disabilities to a meeting to explain the objectives and content to be developed and posed the possibility of participating in the study voluntarily, in the first or second call. At the same time the degrees were grouped into Humanities, Social Sciences and Law, or into Health Sciences.

In the first call only students of the degrees of the Humanities, Social Sciences and Law, all related to the educational context, were summoned. Participants were students of Psychology, Pedagogy, Psycho-pedagogy and Teaching. The second call is planned for this academic year and will involve students studying Health Sciences degrees. This structure was decided on as it was more appropriate to work with a small and homogeneous number of students. However, students enrolled in Health Sciences degree programs raised the possibility of taking the course in the second round, which would confirm the initial impact of the program carried out.

Each participant signed an informed consent form, which detailed aspects referring to the ethical of the research, especially those relating to confidentiality and anonymity and their right to withdraw from the study.

After the briefing session, participants were assessed using the Scale of Transition of Physically and Sensorially Disabled to Employment (Grupo de Investigación y Desarrollo Educativo de la Orientación, 2003), the Self-Concept Form 5 (García

& Musitu, 2001) and the Social Skills Scale (Gismero, 2002).

Of the total of 38 college students with physical and/or sensory impairment who were evaluated, 20 were selected as meeting the criteria for participation in the program. We randomly ascribed them to 2 groups (experimental and control) of 10 students each and they were evaluated in two stages: pre- and post-intervention.

After the pretreatment assessment was concluded, participants in the experimental group were convened via telephone giving them the course start date. Based on an analysis of needs identified, a course had been designed that as a training program or resource guide would facilitate their transition to the labor market. The program was carried out in the computer room of the Faculty of Education at the University concerned, which has the necessary adaptations for students with disabilities. This activity, credited with a total duration of 30 hours, consisting of five attendance modules and a virtual module.

The attendance modules were given over 5 days, each of the 5 modules being developed on one day. The total duration was 15 hours, in the morning or evening. The virtual module consisted of performing a series of exercises for the attendance modules (e.g. self-assessment questionnaire, preparation of the European Résumé, etc.). These tasks were supervised by email and tutorials. The total duration of this module was also 15 hours. The program or guide, collected on CD format, was given to each of the participants at the start of the course so that simultaneously they were attending the sessions and completing the different tasks addressed in the sessions. After the implementation of the guide, they had to fill out a questionnaire assessing the activity. It should be noted that previously the Vice Chancellor of Students had made the necessary arrangements for participants to receive a certificate of attendance.

Once the treatment program has been applied, both groups were tested again for self-concept and social skills (post-treatment measures). 3 months after its termination (estimated time needed to make use of the resources offered by

the guide and therefore able to join the workforce) the participants were called again for them to know and evaluate the results of the study, using the scale of transition to employment. This was done in order to know whether there had been any change in their employment status. The students with disabilities who were part of the control group were invited to participate in the second round, to be made in the current academic year, along with students of Health Sciences degrees.

Results

The statistical analysis consists of two parts, the first based on descriptive frequencies and percentages and a second inferential. In this case, given the small size of the groups and the absence of normal distribution of data in some variables (confirmed by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test), non-parametric tests were used. Specifically, to contrast the differences between the two groups, self-concept and social skills, Mann-Whitney U test was used. For the structuring, management and analysis of data we used statistical software package Windows SPSS version 20. In order to organize the results according to the different measures used they are grouped under the following headings: Results in knowledge scores and search for employment strategies: Given the volume of information provided by Transitional Scale we will describe in percentage terms only those variables of identification (11 items) which provide information on the change produced in the process of the transition from the pre to post-treatment phase in the experimental group since there were no differences in the control group. These results are grouped into three categories: employment, means used in incorporation into the labor market and training needs (see Table 1).

Results of analysis in self-concept. After the Mann-Whitney test was applied, the results show significant differences between the two groups in the dimension of self-concept academic employment ($z = 3792, p < 0$), that is, participants in the experimental group showed higher scores than those in the control group, evidencing the change experienced after implementing the program (see

TABLE 1
Results of the Scores of Knowledge and Strategies for Seeking Employment of the Experimental Group

Experimental Group (EG)	Pretreatment	Posttreatment
Employment Situación	90% (9) of the EG were students during the pretreatment phase and 10% (1) combined study and work.	60% (6) of EG remained students during the posttreatment phase, 30% (3) combined study and work, and 10% (1) had found employment. Thus, after participation in the program the employment situation had improved for 4 of them, practically half of the participants.
Means used for incorporation into employment	This refers to the intervention of family/friends (10%/1), training centers (10%/1), public employment service (10%/1).	The EG used internet (10%/1), business practices (10%/1), employment exchange (10%/1), press advertisements (10%/1), or public employment service (10%/1).
Training needs	80% (8) indicated that ITC could facilitate the transition to employment; 60% (6) business practices; how to write the <i>résumé</i> (60%/6), or how to conduct themselves in an interview for work (60%/6); 40% (4) specialization courses. Finally, 30% (3) mentioned language learning courses.	They only referred to the language courses (40%), since they had received training in New Technologies and employment seeking strategies, such as how to write a <i>résumé</i> or conduct themselves at an interview for work.

Source: own work

TABLE 2
Differences in self-concept between the experimental group and the control group

	Pretreatment				Posttreatment			
	EG	CG	Z	p	EG	CG	z	p
Academic/ employment	12.1	8.9	-1.21	0.22	15.5	5.5	-3.79	0
Social	11.3	9.7	-0.60	0.54	13.2	7.8	-2.04	0.4
Emotional	8.75	12.25	-1.32	0.18	10.95	10.05	-0.34	0.73
Family	8.85	12.15	-1.24	0.21	12.35	8.65	-1.4	0.16
Physical	10.5	10.5	0	1	11.85	9.15	-1.02	0.3

Source: own work

TABLE 3
Results of Wilcoxon test for Self-concept

	z	p
Academic/ employment	-2.8(a)	0.005
Social	-1.95(a)	0.05
Emotional	-2.8(a)	0.005
Family	-2.8(a)	0.005
Physical	-2.54(a)	0.01

Source: own work

Table 2). In other dimensions no significant differences were found. Table 2 shows the evolution of the scores in the different dimensions of the pre-

implementation training program and following the implementation of this self-concept is shown, it can be observed, regardless of the level of statistical

significance in the post-stage treatment improvement occurs in all settings.

Then the intra-group differences in self-concept were analyzed using the Wilcoxon test (see Table 3) to test the effectiveness of the intervention program in the experimental group; the results showed significantly higher scores in the post-program than in the pre-program for all dimensions of self-concept.

Results of analysis in social skills. Following the same procedure as performed previously, the nonparametric Mann-Whitney test was applied, finding no significant differences in the factors analyzed (see Table 4).

Results corroborated the nonparametric Wilcoxon test, verifying that there were no significant differences between pretest and posttest (see Table 5).

Results of the assessment of the course. It is important to note that virtually all participants felt that the course was practical and realistic, respond-

ing to what was expected of it, giving an average score of 8.9, in a range of 1-10.

Discussion

According to the results in the identification variables of the Scale Transition of the Physically and Sensorially Disabled to Employment (Grupo de Investigación y Desarrollo Educativo de la Orientación, 2003), prior to participation in the training program carried out, we would highlight that college students with disabilities require more training in New Technologies, development of the resume and training for interviews and business practices. These results agree with those detected in previous studies (Campoy & Pantoja, 2003; Polo & López-Justicia, 2004, 2011; Vilà & Pallisera, 2002) pointing to the lack of training in these areas as the main obstacle in the process of transition to employment.

TABLE 4
Differences in social skills between the experimental group and the control group

	Pretreatment				Posttreatment			
	EG	CG	z	p	EG	CG	z	p
Self-expression in social situations	9.7	11.30	-0.61	0.54	11.20	9.80	-0.53	0.59
Consumer Protection Rights	11.35	9.65	-0.64	0.51	11	10	-0.37	0.70
Expression of anger of disagreement	10.85	10.15	-0.26	0.78	10.9	10.10	-0.30	0.75
Saying no and cutting short interactions	10.85	10.15	-0.26	0.79	10.05	10.95	-0.34	0.73
Making requests	12.25	8.75	-1.34	0.18	12.95	8.05	-1.87	0.06
Initiating positive interactions with the opposite sex	11.75	9.25	-0.95	0.33	10.85	10.15	-0.26	0.79
Overall	10.65	10.35	-0.11	0.91	12.15	8.85	-1.25	0.21

Source: own work

TABLE 5
Results of Wilcoxon test for social skills

	z	p
Self-expression in social situations	-1.2(a)	0.22
Consumer Protection Rights	-0.54(a)	0.58
Expression of anger of disagreement	-1(b)	0.31
Saying no and cutting short interactions	-1.2(a)	0.23
Making requests	-0.27(a)	0.78
Initiating positive interactions with the opposite sex	-0.66(b)	0.5
Overall	-0.16(b)	0.1

Source: Own work

To remedy these shortcomings, a training program was implemented and applied to ten university students with disabilities. After implementing the program four students found their first job, improved their employment situation and learned to apply resources in the search. These results are consistent with those obtained in other studies (Dorado, 2000; Herzog & Falk, 1990) in which participants emphasized that students' vocational programs achieved a high level of employability. While we cannot say categorically that their incorporation into the labor market was as a consequence of their participation in the program, it appears to have influenced it, as shown by the incorporation of four students into a job, de as appears from the group's assessment of the contributions made by the activities and the fact that students in the control group did not vary their situation.

The next goal in this study was to know the students' possible difficulties in one or more of the dimensions of self-concept and in the changes after participating in the program. Prior to participation it was noted that the experimental group showed a lower level of self-concept in all dimensions (academic, professional, social, emotional, physical and family), while after applying it, they achieved better scores; the academic-labor dimension being particularly significant, since this includes the perception that the person has of the quality of their performance as a student and as a worker (García & Musitu, 2001). We believe that this improvement may be due to the attention paid to this aspect, as module II (Self-knowledge) functions in this field, taking self-evaluation of the knowledge of professional qualities as the starting point in the search for work. Similar results were found by Elbaum and Vaughn (2001), although they differ partly from the study of Saunders, Leahy and Frank (2000), as no significant differences were found in this dimension of self-concept. However, there were indications which showed the tendency to change positively as a result of the program. In the case of the members of the control group no such differences were detected and there was even a decrease in the mean scores of some dimensions.

Although there is a dearth of studies linking academic self-concept and disability with attending college, it is known that the fact of having university qualifications marked the differences in this dimension in people with motor disabilities (López-Justicia, C. Fernández et al., 2005). Academic self-concept stands out as one of the most influential psychosocial variables at this stage of the life cycle (Carretero, Palacios, & Marchesi, 1998), and may prove to be an important predictor not only of students' performance, but also of physical and psychological vulnerability (Martin, 2007), associating it therefore with the presence of a disability. For these reasons it seems obvious that support services for students with disabilities should pay attention, among other aspects, to individual characteristics that affect this dimension (Escurra et al., 2005) as well as college students' expectations and satisfaction (Cabrera & Galán, 2002). This is especially so when authors like Dapelo and Toledo (2006) and Wentzel (1991, 1999) indicate that people's beliefs about their ability and self-efficacy determine their learning motivation and their success in this area.

Limitations

While a significant improvement in academic self-concept of students participating in the program was found, we cannot say the same regarding social skills. It should be noted that despite favourable changes occurring in the mean scores of three of the factors that make up the global test they did not reach statistical significance. Perhaps this may be because no specific module in the program was dedicated to social skills, since respondents initially showed no difficulties in the different dimensions evaluated. We are aware that they should have devoted an entire module to their workout, since other studies have highlighted its importance for people with disabilities (Gil et al., 1995; López-Cano, 2001; Medina & León, 1998; Pérez & Calvo, 2002; Ros et al., 2002); assuming this drawback as a limitation of the study.

Another limitation that we must record refers to the small sample size, which prevents us from gener-

alizing our results; as well as the dearth of research on the specific issue of the employment of disabled university students, which has prevented us from comparing the results of our study. Bearing in mind the aforementioned limitations we think that our work has the importance and value of a first study on the current state of the subject.

Finally, in general terms, it should be noted that the course provided an opportunity for training and employment, with excellent results, as the participating students showed by agreeing on the positive impact and personal encouragement achieved, as well as incorporating four students in employment.

The positive evaluation of the experience combined with the demands of students with disabilities for initiatives like this, seem reason enough to propose the inclusion of measures such as these in the actions of university counseling services. The scarcity of publications which treats this topic extensively in higher education is another of the reasons that justify the need to conduct studies that enable us to have a conceptual framework to strengthen this line of work (Abad, Álvarez, & Castro, 2008).

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