

Outcomes Study Results

Adaptech Research Network releases Canadian Study on the Academic Outcomes of College Students with Disabilities. Prepared by Jennison Asuncion, Catherine Fichten, Shirley Jorgensen, Alice Havel, Daniel Lamb, Crystal James, Maria Barile, Dawson College, Montreal, October 2003.

The Adaptech Research Network has recently expanded its research interests to include looking at the factors that help or hinder the academic success of postsecondary students with disabilities. Case-in-point is our newest research report entitled, "Students with Disabilities at Dawson College: Success and Outcomes" (adaptech.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/pubs/PAREA_2k3.pdf). For this report, we conducted a twelve-year archival study which examined the student records of 653 students with and 41,357 students without disabilities. We looked at first-time registrants who attended Dawson College between 1990 and 2002. Dawson College is the largest English-language junior/community college in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. It receives recognition for funding by the Quebec provincial government as one of three main centers providing disability-related services to students. For our research, we defined a student with a disability as someone who registered with the college's Services For Students With Disabilities. This required documentation of the disability and entitled the student to disability-related support services from the college.

We examined four success outcome criteria: graduation rates, average grades in the first semester, course pass rates (percent of courses taken that were passed), and course success rates (percentage of students passing 100% of the courses they registered in). The results show that students with both physical and learning disabilities had graduation rates that were virtually identical to those of non-disabled students, although students with disabilities took approximately one semester longer to graduate. When average grades and course pass rates were examined, students with disabilities generally did at least as well, and in some cases significantly better than their non-disabled peers. The overall trend for grades and course pass rates was for students with learning disabilities/attention deficit disorder (ADD) to have similar or slightly poorer outcomes than the non-disabled sample, and for students with all other disabilities to have similar or slightly superior outcomes. Males had poorer results than females with

respect to all indicators. This was true for students both with and without disabilities.

Visit our web site at (www.adaptech.org) to download either the entire report or the executive summary in English or in French in a variety of formats. For more information about the study, contact Catherine Fichten, Ph.D. via e-mail at catherine.fichten@mcgill.ca, or by phone at 514-931-8731 #1546.