

**Computer Technologies In Postsecondary Education for
Students With Disabilities /
Technologies informatiques dans l'éducation
postsecondaire des étudiants ayant des incapacités**

*Catherine Fichten, Maria Barile, Jennison Asuncion,
Darlene Judd, Christian Généreux, Iris Alapin, Myrtis Fossey, Chantal Robillard,
Jason Lavers, & Jean-Pierre Guimont*

Adaptech Project, Dawson College

*Affiliations: Dawson College, Jewish General Hospital, McGill University,
Concordia University, UQAM, Université de Montréal*

*Presentation on behalf of the Office of Learning Technologies at the TeleLearning '99 Conference,
Montréal, Québec. Available Oct. 29, 1999 on the World Wide Web:*

<http://omega.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/cfichten/telepres/> (PowerPoint & text slide show);

<http://omega.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/cfichten/telepres.pdf> (Adobe Acrobat);

<http://omega.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/cfichten/telepres.htm> (HTML)

Goals: AdaptCan Study

Evaluate computer technologies in the postsecondary education of students with disabilities

- Explore what technologies student computer users with various disabilities find useful
- Look at what educational and social goals are met by computer technologies
- Why do students who could benefit from computer technologies fail to use them
- How do contextual variables interact with individual differences in the use of computers
- Compare student and service provider perspectives

Method

Phase 1: Obtained broad notions about key issues of interest via 4 focus groups

- college & university students with disabilities
- faculty
- postsecondary disability service providers
- other concerned individuals

Phase 2: Compared student and service provider viewpoints via semi-structured phone interviews

- 37 students with disabilities
- 30 postsecondary disability service providers (all provinces & territories, French & English)

Phase 3: Fully explored the key issues and tested hypotheses in a questionnaire study

- 725 postsecondary students with various disabilities from across Canada

Highlights of Results

Most students with disabilities use computer technologies to help them succeed (95% of our sample)

- colleges have a larger proportion of students with disabilities than universities
- half of the students indicated they had two or more impairments or disabilities
- almost half of the students indicated they needed adaptations to use a computer effectively
- less than 60% of those who needed adaptations had these
- high cost of acquiring and maintaining computer and adaptive technologies was the most important and pervasive problem noted by computer users and non-users alike
- computers used at home were generally paid for by students themselves or their families
- most students were unaware of government programs to absorb or offset the high costs

Recommendations, Dissemination, and Funding

The full report discusses the findings and makes specific recommendations directed at four groups

- faculty
- government agencies
- developers and suppliers of computer technologies
- personnel providing services to students with disabilities

Availability

- Recommendations
English: <http://omega.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/adaptech/recalle.htm>
French: <http://omega.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/adaptech/recallf.htm>
- Executive summary
English: <http://olt-bta.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/publicat/Dawson79160exe.html>
French: <http://olt-bta.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/francais/publicat/Dawson79160exf.html>
- Full report
<http://omega.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/adaptech/olt99fin.pdf>
- Instruments and listing of specific hardware and software used by students
<http://omega.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/adaptech/olt99app.pdf>

Ongoing Research

- **ITAC Project:** concerns of cegep students and disability service providers (funded by PAREA)
- **ServStu Project:** exploration of college and university disability service provider concerns (funded by OLT)
- **F&C Project:** mainstream and inexpensive computer technologies for use in postsecondary education (funded by EvNet & SSHRC)

More Information

- Visit our bilingual web site <http://omega.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/adaptech>