Exploring the Issues Students with Learning Disabilities Encounter as they Transition into College

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Exploring the Issues Students with Learning Disabilities Encounter as they Transition into College

The College at Brockport
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Mentor: Dr. Algernon Kelley

Introduction
The transition from the secondary learning institution to the collegiate setting is already a challenging task to navigate. It becomes a much more daunting task for a student who has a learning disability. The primary focus of this research is to gain insight into the various obstacles and issues related to improving the transitioning of incoming freshmen with learning disabilities into the collegiate setting. With knowledge gained from this research, we hope to design a step-by-step plan to ensure a smooth transition from the secondary learning institution to the collegiate setting.

Research question
How can the transition of secondary students with learning disabilities to the collegiate level be improved?

Methodology
- Literature review of the various laws and best practices regarding students with learning disabilities enrolled in primary and secondary schools
- Examine both local school district and federal databases regarding enrollment of students with learning disabilities in primary and secondary schools
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
  - Hold annual IEP (Individual Education Plans) meeting to find supports for the student to become successful
  - Used at the primary and secondary level
  - Support team consist of parent/legal guardian and education professionals
- Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act
  - Used at the collegiate setting
  - Requires one to self-advocate
  - Different institutions follow different guidelines
  - Evaluation is out of pocket, if needed. The average cost for an assessment ranges from $750 to $2,800

Data
- This table shows the number of students diagnosed with a disability from 1976 to 2016
- The number of children with a learning disability decreased in the early 2000’s, while those being diagnosed with autism increased
- Over the past three years, the number of students diagnosed with learning disabilities has increased

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1976 | 100
| 1990 | 200
| 2010 | 300

Recommendations to Improve Student Transition
- Student should take college readiness classes in the 9th grade instead of during their junior or senior year of high school
- Ensure that students know and understand their own learning disability
- Teach students how to self-advocate during their annual IEP meetings
- Teach students the various laws related to students with disabilities so that they will know what services colleges should provide for them
- Get acquainted with adaptive learning technologies as early as possible

Conclusion
- The population of students with learning disabilities is on the rise
- Proactive measures should be put in place in high school and college to assure students with learning disabilities that college is an option for them
- Students who have knowledge of the law and who know how to self-advocate will be more willing to disclose that they have a learning disability when they enter college

Future Works
- Survey secondary and collegiate staff
- Research more on autism and other disabilities that can affect learning

References
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