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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



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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?

Limitations

- Time frame in which the research was performed
- The time delay which is required to accurately collect and report data used for this research may not reflect current trends
- How the data is populated due to some schools and districts selectively choosing what to report

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

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
- Survey students in transition
- Research more on autism and other disabilities that can affect learning.

References

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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 204.30. Children 3 to 21 years old served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, by type of disability: Selected years, 1976-77 through 2015-16

Type of disability	1976-77	1980-81	1990-91	2000-01	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 ¹	2008-09 ¹	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Number served (in thousands)														
All disabilities	3,694	4,144	4,710	6,296	6,718	6,687	6,597	6,483	6,481	6,436	6,401	6,429	6,464	6,555	6,677
Autism	—	—	—	93	223	258	296	336	378	417	455	498	538	576	617
Deaf-blindness	—	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Developmental delay	—	—	—	213	339	333	357	354	368	382	393	402	410	419	434
Emotional disturbance	283	347	389	480	477	464	442	420	407	390	373	362	354	349	347
Hearing impairment	88	79	58	77	79	80	79	78	79	78	78	77	77	76	75
Intellectual disability	961	830	534	624	556	534	500	478	463	448	435	430	425	423	425
Multiple disabilities	—	68	96	131	141	142	138	130	131	130	132	133	132	132	131
Orthopedic impairment	87	58	49	62	71	69	67	70	65	63	61	59	56	52	47
Other health impairment ²	141	98	55	303	570	610	641	659	689	716	743	779	817	862	909
Preschool disabled ²	—	—	390	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Specific learning disability	796	1,462	2,129	2,860	2,740	2,665	2,569	2,476	2,431	2,361	2,303	2,277	2,264	2,278	2,298
Speech or language impairment	1,302	1,168	985	1,388	1,468	1,475	1,454	1,426	1,416	1,398	1,373	1,356	1,334	1,332	1,337
Traumatic brain injury	—	—	—	16	24	25	25	26	25	26	26	26	26	26	27
Visual impairment	38	31	23	29	29	29	29	29	29	28	28	28	28	28	27

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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.

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