

# THE LEARNING & TEACHING OFFICE

# MONTHLY DIGEST

ISSUE NO. 16

SEPTEMBER 2011

The Monthly Digest is produced by Ryerson University's [Learning and Teaching Office](#) for distribution via the LTO's [Teachnet](#) mailing list. It highlights new scholarly publications in learning and teaching, as well as recent news from the world of higher education.

## *In this issue...*

- Active Learning in Higher Education
- Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability
- Remedial and Special Education
- Journal of College Reading and Learning
- International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

## *Active Learning in Higher Ed.*

*The relative benefits found for students with and without learning disabilities taking a first-year university preparation course*

By Maureen J. Reed, Deborah J. Kennett, Tanya Lewis, and Eunice Lund-Lucas

“Positive outcomes have been reported for university preparation courses for students without disabilities. Little is known about whether these courses can offer the same benefit to students with learning disabilities and whether the inclusion of psychosocial factors, in addition to academic skills, would benefit both groups. First-level students with and without learning disabilities were tested on variables known to influence academic performance at the beginning and end of a university preparation course. Results revealed that students entering university with and without learning disabilities have similar challenges. Both groups showed increases in attentiveness, and academic and general resourcefulness

after the course. Students with learning disabilities experienced greater gains in academic self-efficacy in comparison to their non-disabled peers. The study showed benefits in including psychosocial measures in a university preparation course, and that integrating students with learning disabilities into the course could help to alleviate the limited resources of disabilities programs.”

## *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*

*Postsecondary Students Who Have a Learning Disability: Student Perspectives on Accommodations Access and Obstacles*

By Stephanie W. Cawthon and Emma V. Cole

“Students with Learning Disabilities (SLD) face unique challenges when entering postsecondary education after high school. A successful navigation of postsecondary context requires knowledge of one’s own disability and needs as well as access to what resources may be available at the institution. The purpose of this study was to gather SLD perspectives on accommodations use and obstacles they faced in gaining access to services. A total of 110 undergraduate students at a selective, four-year public University completed an online survey as part of a research subject pool requirement. The study collected information about the following areas: (a) accommodations use, (b) opportunities/barriers faced during transition, (c) knowledge students had regarding their disability and available services, and (d) self-advocacy strategies. Results indicated that

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this student population might not have used the University resources to the extent that they were available, pointing towards a potential need for greater awareness of campus resources. However, it was also true that students generally knew the implications of their disability and were utilizing many of the same resources that they did in high school. The article concludes with implications for education professionals who serve SLD.”

### *Remedial and Special Education*

#### *The Effects of Disability-Focused Training on the Attitudes and Perceptions of University Staff*

By Christopher Murray, Allison Lombardi, Carol T. Wren

“This investigation examines the relationship between prior disability-focused training and university staff members’ attitudes toward students with learning disabilities (LD). A survey containing items pertaining to prior disability-focused training experiences and attitudes about students with LD was administered to 300 university staff members. Responses from 112 participants indicated that staff who had not received any form of prior training had greater interest in receiving training regarding LD and had insufficient knowledge to support students with LD. In contrast, staff who had received some form of prior training reported greater scores on general knowledge and sensitivity toward university students with LD. Analyses of training type indicated that staff who had previously participated in disability-related workshops and coursework reported the most positive attitudes, followed by staff who had participated in other forms of training. Total number of training types experienced, time spent engaged in training activities, and the amount of time elapsed since training experiences predicted different aspects of staff members’ attitudes and perceptions as well as their satisfaction with prior training. The implications of these findings for future disability-focused professional development efforts within postsecondary settings are discussed.”

### *Journal of College Reading and Learning*

#### *Academic Support and College Success for Postsecondary Students with Learning Disabilities*

By Peter F. Troiano, Julie Ann Liefeld, Jennifer V. Trachtenberg

“The relationship between degree of academic support center use and college success was examined in a population of 262 college students with learning disabilities. Five years of attendance data and graduation rates were examined to evaluate the predictive influence of academic support center use on college student outcomes. Results indicated that students who had higher levels of attendance in an academic support center had higher overall grade point averages and higher rates of graduation. That is to say, students with learning disabilities who attended learning support centers regularly were more likely to have higher grades and graduate college than those who did not.”

### *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*

#### *Do We Practice What We Preach? The Teaching Practices of Inclusive Educators in Tertiary Settings*

By Andrea Reupert, Brian Hemmings, John Connors

“In this study, the practices and views of lecturers who teach inclusive education to trainee primary school teachers are examined in relation to their own inclusive teaching practices as they pertain to working with students with a disability. This examination draws on interview data gleaned from nine university lecturers. These data provide important information about inclusive education practices in higher education institutions generally and, in particular, education faculties. The results of the data analysis indicate that even though all the lecturers self identify as inclusive educators and adopt various inclusive teaching and assessment practices, barriers exist that impede inclusive practice.”

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