



International Conference on Geographies of Health and Living in Cities: Making Cities Healthy for All, Healthy Cities 2016

Assistive Technology and Educational Services for Undergraduate Students with Disabilities at Universities in the Northern Thailand

Theeratom Lersilp^{a,*}

^a*Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, 202 Chang Pueak, Mueang, Chiang Mai 50300, Thailand*

Abstract

This study examined the provision, usage, and needs of assistive technology and educational services for students with disabilities in higher education. Data were collected from a questionnaire completed by one hundred and forty undergraduate students with disabilities, who had enrolled in universities located in northern Thailand. The results of this study indicated that educational services provided more access to these students than assistive technology. Furthermore, students with disabilities utilized assistive technology and accessed educational services for different reasons. Additionally, the use and needs from assistive technology were explored for students with each type of disability.

© 2016 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of Healthy Cities 2016

Keywords: Educational service; Assistive technology; Students with disabilities; Higher education

1. Introduction

Human rights and equality are being promoted for people with disabilities, and therefore, opportunities for such students to study in a higher education system are increasing. Providing assistive technology and educational services can support students with disabilities, who face barriers in learning and participating with their peers in universities. In fact, access to these mechanisms is a way to enhance opportunities for this group of people¹.

The meaning of “assistive technology” in this study is support in helping students to learn in a general education classroom. This might include a one-on-one aide, highlighted classroom notes, and equipment such as tools, hardware,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: theeratom@hotmail.com

software, etc. In the same way, the meaning of “educational service” is supporting service or providing assistance to students eligible for educational services throughout the district, according to their individual needs for increasing the potential of disabled students, for example, a sign language interpreting service for deaf students, and reading service for blind students and students with learning disability. Assistive technology and educational services can help people with disabilities to maximize their potential and ability to achieve individualized objectives. Although regulations of assistive technology, media and educational services are developed continuously for students with disabilities, they do not fully benefit them. These students could be helped to live with high technology and educational services by adapting themselves to take more time in learning, training, accessing and using these mechanisms. It would be more beneficial for students with disabilities if they used assistive technology and educational services until they have fully developed their skills.

In Thailand, many undergraduate students are diagnosed with disabilities, and receive medical and educational rehabilitation service. They understand their rights to obtain assistive technology and educational services, especially for those with disabilities in a higher education system. Such students inside the system have more opportunities to use these facilities than those outside it, as the Disability Support Service (DSS) team in each university coordinates and works with related organizations in order to support student rights. However, assistive technology and educational services cannot state that students will achieve full benefit from using them. As a result, the objectives of this research were to explore the provision, usage and needs of assistive technology and educational services.

2. Method

This was a quantitative study conducted in six universities located in northern Thailand. The instruments of this study were developed by researchers and processed for content validity by suggestions from three related specialists. An assistive technology and educational services checklist was developed in three parts for their provision, usage and needs, of which quantitative data were analyzed by descriptive statistics.

3. Results

The participants of this study were undergraduate students with disabilities, who had enrolled in higher education in northern Thailand. A total of 140 undergraduate students with disabilities participated in this study. They comprised 64 males and 76 females. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 26 years, with an average age of 21.1 years. Most of the students were registered with a legal disability certificate (79.29%). Additionally, the participants in this study included seven types of disabilities, i.e. 27 students with visual disability, 52 with hearing disability, 45 with physical disability, 4 with intellectual disability, 2 with learning disability, 7 with multiple disabilities and 3 with autism.

The results indicated that educational services provided more than assistive technology to undergraduate students with disabilities. Results regarding “Environmental Access” found that educational services provided “independent living on campus” mostly to students with hearing disability, while providing less to those with visual disability. On the other hand, “transport” was the service least provided. Regarding “service facilities”, the results found “coordination between teachers and the DSS”, as being the same as “meeting between the DSS and students with disabilities”. In addition, the service facilities in which students with visual disability accessed the most, needed the use of a classroom for activities such as note-taking and IC recording. The use of a classroom was required also for sign language interpretation and note-taking for students with hearing disability, and again for building modifications for students with physical disability (Table 1).

Besides educational services, the provision of assistive technology was given mostly to students with visual disability, but those with learning disabilities, including intellectual and multiple disabilities, were given much less. However, all of the students with disabilities used assistive technology to some degree. Students with visual and physical disabilities used assistive technology at a high level, while those with hearing disability used it at a moderate one. In addition, the use and needs from assistive technology for students with visual disability mostly involved an IC recorder and a personal computer with braille keyboard. At the same time, students with hearing disability needed the use of electronic lesson materials, and those with physical disability mostly needed a plain trolley or electric wheelchair. On the other hand, students with learning disability, including intellectual disability and autism, had less need of a reading aid (Table 2).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4401326>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4401326>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)