**INTRODUCTION**

Wehmeyer (1996) defines “self-determination as acting as the primary causal agent in one’s life and making choices and decisions regarding one’s quality of life free from undue external influence or interference” (p. 632). Self-determination predicts positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Students with intellectual disabilities at high levels of self-determination have increased academic achievement (Erickson & Noonan, 2015). Similar effects were found for students with ADHD and learning disabilities (Konrad et al., 2007). In addition to academics, self-determination increases quality of life for individuals with disabilities (Mcdougall, 2009; Powers et al., 2012). Self-determination predicts employment and community involvement for adults with disabilities (Powers et. al., 2012; Shogren, 2015). Given the many benefits of self-determination it is essential to promote the skill within educational settings. Of particular importance is the promotion of self-determination in institutions of higher education.

**METHODS**

The Academy for Adult Learning (AAL) is offered by Temple University’s Institute on Disabilities. Adults with intellectual disabilities are enrolled in academic courses as well as a seminar, which promotes skills necessary to achieve in the post-secondary environment. The weekly seminar focuses on career development and self-awareness, as well as fundamental computer and Internet proficiency.

The current mixed-method, longitudinal study follows students enrolled in the AAL through their two-year experience at Temple University. Utilizing both observations and the ARC self-determination scale, developed and normed by Wehmeyer and Kelchner (1995) the study seeks to determine the ways in which self-determination is promoted within the program. The study has concluded its first year and is now entering its second year.

The object of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of a university-based postsecondary program for adults with intellectual disabilities in developing self-determination, specifically autonomy, self-regulation, psychological empowerment, and self-realization.

**PRELIMINARY RESULTS**

The next two tables present results for sections of the ARC Self-Determination Scale for 11 AAL students as a group, then self-determination for each student individually. Percentiles in both tables are calculated based on Wehmeyer and Kelchner’s (1995) normed samples. Readers will notice that students as a group are strong in some categories (Self-Realization), but have room for growth in others (Psychological Empowerment). Individual students’ normed self-determination percentiles vary greatly. Further testing and observation will determine whether self-determination is supported or stymied throughout students’ time in the AAL program.

**REFERENCES**


