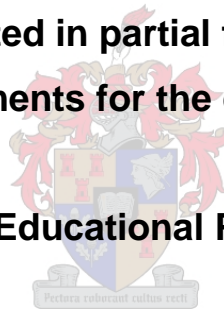


STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES' EXPERIENCES OF SUPPORT AND BARRIERS TO THEIR DEVELOPMENT AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

Elsabé CP Greyling

**Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of**

Master of Educational Psychology



at

Stellenbosch University

Supervisor: Prof R E Swart

March 2008

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

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ELLA BELCHER
Editor and Translator

46 Brandwacht Street
Stellenbosch 7600

TEL.: 021-8870572 / 083 2948393

FAX: 088-021-8870572

E-mail: ellab@myconnection.co.za

Member of the SA Translators' Institute

DECLARATION

Language editing of Master's dissertation

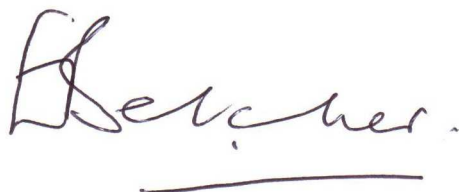
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OF SUPPORT AND BARRIERS TO THEIR DEVELOPMENT
AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

Candidate

Elsabé Greyling

It is hereby declared that this thesis was properly language edited by
Mrs E Belcher.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'E. Belcher', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Stellenbosch
25 October 2007

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ABSTRACT

Since 1994 the South African government has been committed to the transformation of the education system, including higher education. Higher education institutions have been encouraged to include individuals representing groups that had been excluded on the grounds of age, race, gender and, more specifically, students with disabilities. Within this transformation process, some of the biggest challenges higher education institutions face are policy changes, flexible curriculum delivery, alternative assessment procedures, the physical accessibility of the campus and the provision of support services for students with disabilities or special needs. Although policy development is an important stepping-stone, the reality is that proper practice, adequate awareness, and positive attitudes are required to effectively support and accommodate the diverse needs of students with disabilities.

The primary objective of this study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of how students with disabilities experience support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University. The study was also based upon the assumption that it is important to hear the voices of students with disabilities before any recommendations in terms of the existing strategy can be suggested. This study was conducted by means of qualitative research, and the methods of data collection consisted of individual and focus group interviews as well as a literature review. The research findings may be described as follows:

- Students with disabilities experienced both internal and external support and barrier factors and processes that impacted on their development.
- Internal support and barrier factors and processes include emotional, behavioural, beliefs, physical and cognitive aspects.
- External support and barrier factors and processes include peers, the faculty and department, university accommodation, the classroom and the university.
- Four overarching themes that emerged from the data of the participants, namely attitudes and awareness, communication, level of inclusion, and advocacy, were outlined.

The findings of the study have important implications for the support practices and training of academic staff and all role players at Stellenbosch University. Recommendations are also made to improve support services and the campus climate at Stellenbosch University to ultimately embrace diversity in order to offer an inclusive environment where the principles of equal opportunities, full participation and non-discrimination are dear to the heart of all the relevant role players involved in teaching, learning, service provision and policy making at Stellenbosch University.

OPSOMMING

Sedert 1994 het transformasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse onderwyssektor daartoe bygedra dat die onderwys – insluitend hoër onderwys – aan talle nuwe eise en uitdagings blootgestel word. Verder word hoëronderwysinstansies aangemoedig om groepe wat tradisioneel uitgesluit was op grond van ras, ouderdom en geslag, asook studente met gestremdhede, te ondersteun en te akkommodeer. Dus bring die transformasieproses onder meer beleidsveranderinge, kurrikulumaanpassings, alternatiewe assesseringsprosedures, die fisiese toeganklikheid van die kampus, sowel as die instelling van ondersteuningsdienste vir studente met gestremdhede mee. Alhoewel beleidsverandering 'n belangrike stap is, is dit op sigself nie voldoende nie. Die werklikheid bly steeds dat goeie praktyk, genoegsame bewustheid asook positiewe houdings uiteindelik nodig is om te verseker dat studente met gestremdhede se diverse behoeftes geakkommodeer word.

Die studie het ten doel gehad om diepgaande kennis te verkry van studente met gestremdhede se ervaring van ondersteuning en struikelblokke tot hulle ontwikkeling aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch. Die ondersoek is gebaseer op die aanname dat alvorens daar voorstelle aan rolspelers gemaak kan word ten opsigte van die huidige strategieë en tegnieke vir die ondersteuning van studente met spesiale behoeftes, dit belangrik is om eers na die stemme van studente met gestremdhede te luister.

Die studie is onderneem aan die hand van 'n kwalitatiewe studie. Data is hoofsaaklik deur middel van individuele en fokusgroep-onderhoude asook 'n literatuuroorsig ingesamel. Die navorsingsbevindinge het betekenisvolle insigte oor die ervarings van studente met gestremdhede van ondersteuning en struikelblokke tot hulle ontwikkeling opgelewer. Die navorsingsbevindinge kan soos volg opgesom word:

- Studente met gestremdhede ervaar beide interne en eksterne ondersteunings- en struikelblokfaktore en prosesse wat 'n impak het op hulle ontwikkeling.
- Interne faktore en prosesse sluit onder andere in emosionele, gedrags, oortuigings, fisieke en kognitiewe aspekte.
- Eksterne faktore en prosesse behels die portuurgroep, universiteits-akkommodasie, die fakulteit en departement, die klaskamer, asook die universiteit.
- Die vier oorkoepelende temas sluit in houdings en bewustheid, kommunikasie, inklusie, asook die bevordering van studente met gestremdhede se behoeftes ('advocacy').

Die bevindinge van die studie hou belangrike implikasies in vir beide die praktyk en die opleiding van akademiese personeel en alle rolspelers aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch. Aanbevelings word gemaak met die doel om die ondersteuningsdienste sowel as die kampusklimaat te verbeter sodat diversiteit uiteindelik gevier word om sodoende 'n inklusiewe omgewing te skep waar die waardes van gelyke geleentheid, volle deelname en geen diskriminasie na aan die hart lê van alle rolspelers wat betrokke is by onderrig en leer, asook ondersteunings- en beleidontwikkeling aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

ACRONYMS

ADA	Americans with Disability
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CSCD	Centre for Student Counselling and Development
DoE	Department of Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
PBP	Professional Board for Psychology
INDS	Integrated National Disability Strategy
NCSNET/NCESS	National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and National Committee on Education Support Service
ODP	Office of the Deputy President
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK)
WHO	World Health Organisation
UID	Universal Instructional Design
DSU	Disability Service Unit
HAI	Historically advantaged institution
HDI	Historically disadvantaged institution

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CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Recently, there has been growing interest in the philosophy of inclusive education. Dyson and Forlin (1999) state that inclusion stems from two interrelated but distinct processes. Firstly, it is a reconstruction of notions of disability, especially in the light of human rights and social justice. Secondly, it is the broad social, economic and educational developments that influence the role of education in modern societies. Dyson (2001:1) however, states that inclusion appears to be a term that is universally understood, but that "there is no common accepted notion of inclusion, but a range of varieties of inclusion", for example inclusion-as-placement, inclusion-as-education-for-all, inclusion-as-participation and social inclusion. Each of these varieties has three main principles in common: social justice, educational equity and school responsiveness. Therefore, it is important that "inclusive education keeps in mind the broad principles in the light of context and local circumstances and the meaning of inclusion is best understood by means of contextual analysis" (Dyson & Forlin, 1999:39). In order to understand the origin of inclusion and from where the underlying principles of inclusion stem, it is important to look at the international movement of inclusion. Furthermore, it is possible to trace back a set of historical developments of which inclusion is the most recent manifestation.

Since, the 1960s a series of events have contributed to the move towards inclusion. Until then the medical model was used to diagnose learners' abilities and to categorise learners with special education needs accordingly. Learners' disabilities were assumed to be within the learners. In the 1960s a number of Scandinavian countries started a trend that became known as mainstreaming or integration. This means placing learners with disabilities in the mainstream education system. This notion soon spread to other developed countries like the United Kingdom, the USA, Italy and Spain (Engelbrecht & Jansen, 2004). The new approach to disability was one that concentrated on abilities (strengths) and not disabilities (weaknesses), on equality instead of segregation and neglect (Engelbrecht, 1999). Integration however, did not require that the curriculum be adapted for all learners. It merely focused on a small group of learners. Differences were still being stressed. For example, learners with disabilities had different instruction time in different classrooms (Engelbrecht,

1999). A movement towards inclusion implied that radical changes within systems had to take place in order to accommodate all learners – not to force the learners to fit into the system, as had been the case with integration.

The World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand in 1990, marked an official turning point for education worldwide. At this conference the emphasis was placed on inclusive education. This conference was followed in 1994 by a world conference on Special Needs Education held in Salamanca, Spain. During this conference a document called the *Salamanca Statement on Principles and Practice in Special Needs Education* was drawn up. The Salamanca Statement was sanctioned by 92 countries (including South Africa) and 25 organisations (Engelbrecht & Jansen, 2004), thus serving as a key document in guiding inclusive developments internationally. By now, inclusive education had become a global trend (Engelbrecht & Jansen, 2004:21). Along with this trend came the call for more democratic approaches towards learners with diverse educational needs and a global endeavour to achieve social justice and basic human rights. It can therefore be said that inclusive education incorporates reconceptualised values and beliefs and not just a set of practices. The values that underpin inclusion are those of mutual acceptance, respect for diversity, and a sense of belonging and social justice (Swart & Pettipher, 2005). While these developments were taking place abroad, radical changes were taking place in South Africa. Thus, it is clear that international movements regarding the development of inclusive education directly influenced educational policies and practices in this country.

In South Africa, before 1994, the South African Education Department was divided into 18 racially divided education departments. Each department had its own policy concerning learners with diverse educational needs and not all departments even made provision for these learners. Disadvantaged communities were completely marginalised. Special schools for learners with impairments, such as hearing, visual, cognitive or physical impairments, were established in the more privileged education departments. The move towards improving education for learners with special needs became evident when a democracy was established in 1994 and a process of education transformation began. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (hereafter referred to as 'the Constitution') recognises that people with disabilities have been discriminated against on the basis of their disability and that the creation of equity for them entails redressing past inequity. In addition, the overall policy framework that informs equity of access and participation for students with disabilities in South African higher education draws on the central principles of equity and non-discrimination to create a more just society that values and respects every member, as outlined in the Constitution (CHE, 2005). These values and principles are entrenched in various policy documents relevant to people with disabilities, such as The Integrated

National Disability Strategy (INDS) (ODP, 1997), The Education White Paper 3 on the transformation of the higher education system (DoE, 1997a), The National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001b), and The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001a). Both the South African disability movement and the South African government approach disability from a social model. This model sees the circumstances of people with disability and the discrimination they face as a socially constructed phenomenon which is not related to the impairment of a person with a disability. Moreover, these policy documents firmly state that institutions need to accommodate students with diverse learning needs and remove the barriers that hamper the development of all learners. Therefore, adequate mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that institutional and appropriate curriculum transformation occurs and support is provided. Although legislation requires higher education institutions to include students with disabilities, on ground level proper practice and resources are necessary to ensure that students actually get the support and accommodations they need in order to participate equally. This process requires that institutions, including Stellenbosch University, will address several burning issues like physical accessibility, support services, curriculum delivery and assessment procedures.

Fuller, Healey, Bradley and Hall (2004) caution us against talking of students with disability as though they are a homogeneous group. Students with disabilities have diverse support needs. Thus, the issue of diversity within different categories of disability creates complications for policy as well as practice. Fuller et al. (2004:316) argue that "unless we recognise the complexity in understanding disabled students' needs, demonstrate willingness and ability to accommodate those needs, it would be easy to think that legislation will in itself create, or have created, a higher education environment that can accommodate the support needs of students with disabilities." Therefore, legislation does not necessarily lead to proper practice and action, and consideration should be given to support individual needs and transformation of institutional barriers. Furthermore, an integrated support service is essential to register and address individual students' support needs. I echo this notion and argue that although policy development is an important stepping-stone in addressing past inequity, policy does not ensure that people with disabilities participate fully and that they will have equal opportunities. In many cases students with disabilities might experience support as a matter of 'grace and favour'. Although units or divisions for student support services are crucial in providing individual support and in addressing institutional barriers, they should not be seen as the exclusive providers of support to students with disabilities. Not only does the institution as a whole remain responsible for transformation, but all relevant role players are responsible for creating an inclusive environment of embracing differences, rather than just accepting or tolerating students with disabilities.

According to Shevlin, Kenny and McNeela (2004), appropriate support systems are crucial in ensuring equal access for students with disabilities in teaching and learning. The commitment of the institution to facilitating support and participation depends on its willingness to change admission, curricular and assessment procedures as well as the physical accessibility of the institution (Shevlin et al., 2005). Many students with disabilities experience barriers to learning and development. A barrier is described as any aspect, either internal or external to the student, which causes an obstacle or impediment to their learning, development or participation in higher education. According to Dowrick, Anderson, Heyer and Acosta (2005), students with disabilities struggle with obtaining basic alternative arrangements such as rescheduling classes to accessible buildings for wheelchairs users, providing Braille or electronic text for students with visual impairments. These authors advise that institutions should coordinate disability support services and programmes to educate faculty, peers, and employers about support systems, accommodation, and the rights of individuals with disability (Dowrick et al., 2005). Moreover, it is widely noted that barriers, like the attitudes and willingness of the academic staff to provide arrangements, affect the progress of students with disabilities in higher education. According to Fuller et al. (2004), students with disabilities reported that their disabilities impacted on their learning in lectures. Furthermore, they experienced difficulty as a result of lecturers' unwillingness to allow their lectures to be tape-recorded, failing to provide user-friendly handouts and unrealistic expectations of reading work. Many students encountered barriers with regard to assessment such as examinations, and particularly oral presentations. Moreover, students wanted clarity as to what services were available for their support within the institution. Some students noted that it was difficult to find available advice and assistance for learning and assessment. Prior research therefore shows that various support and barrier factors exist in the learning environment of students with disabilities, and that these barriers impact on their development. This study will specifically investigate the experiences of students with disabilities with regard to support and barriers to learning in the context of Stellenbosch University.

Stellenbosch University as a higher education institution is committed to welcoming and accommodating a broader range of students that are representative of the South African society as a whole. The key principles and values, like equity, non-discrimination and an appreciation for diversity, are entrenched in various policy frameworks of this institution. In the policy regarding students with special learning needs or disabilities, the term 'disability' is used to refer to a person with a verifiable physical, non-visual, and/or psychological limitation(s) that negatively affects his or her daily activities in a specific way. The implementation of this definition is based on the social model of disabilities, in which the

focus is placed on the environment and its components as potentially limiting factors in terms of participating and engaging in activities, rather than on the diagnostic manifestation of the disability itself. The university also expresses its wish to provide support and accommodation to a large spectrum of the South African society. The university undertakes to maintain a central office, namely the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities), to employ persons to coordinate and promote support and accessibility to provide equal opportunity and participation for students with special needs or disabilities.

This study aims to accord due attention to the theory of the key conceptualisations of disability, for example the medical model, the social model and the psychological basis of disability. Moreover, the eco-systemic model is useful in explaining the interaction between individuals and contexts. The main aim of the eco-systemic model is "to show how individual people and groups at different levels of social context are linked in dynamic, interdependent, and interacting relationships (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 1997:43). Furthermore, the constructivist perspective sees knowledge as actively constructed by an individual and also acknowledges the interaction of individuals in their social context (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002). Students with disabilities are therefore seen as active agents who are making meaning of their lives within and through their social contexts. Thus, these two influential theoretical perspectives emphasise the importance of social context, and illustrate the strong influence that social context has on development, specifically in the case of students with disabilities at Stellenbosch University. In addition, these theoretical perspectives provide the basis for understanding the complexity of the interaction of students with disabilities in the context of Stellenbosch University. For the purpose of this study I preferred to use the broader term 'development'. Instead of just examining academic development I examined how support and barriers relate to other aspects of development to provide a more holistic understanding. However, not all aspects of development were addressed in this research study.

Few investigations of higher education provision for people with disabilities have been undertaken in South Africa (CHE, 2005). Furthermore, the CHE, (2005) acknowledges that disability comprises an important and often overlooked part of the definition of equity of access to higher education. According to the CHE (2005), there are two essential conditions to take into account when researching what students with disabilities experience when they try to access the higher education system in South Africa. Firstly, in 1997 the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy remarked on the dire lack of data on disability in South Africa, data that would allow government and relevant organisations to design, plan and implement strategies for people with disabilities, as well as to measure impact. The INDS states:

There is a serious lack of reliable information on the nature and prevalence of disability in South Africa. This is because, in the past, disability issues were viewed chiefly within the health and welfare framework. This led naturally to a failure to integrate disability into mainstream government statistical processes (ODP, 1997:1).

According to the CHE (2005) the lack of data on disability reflects the ineffective role that management information systems have had up to now, at different levels of both government departments and institutions that deal with disability. Higher education institutions are not obliged to provide data on students with disabilities as part of their submissions to the DoE. They also have a very uneven capacity to collect reliable data on disability in their own campuses in a systematic way. As a result no systematic central monitoring of disability in higher education has been in place. This situation undermines attempts to evaluate policy implementation in relation to students with disabilities. The CHE (2005) declared that it was necessary to take a different route, and called for quantitative and qualitative research in the field of disability in order to investigate support and accommodation practices for students with disabilities in higher education institutions and to analyse how these relate to the enabling or constraining circumstances found at institutions (CHE, 2005).

Moreover, the attention now focused on the difficulty experienced by people with disability in South Africa, especially black people with disability, who had been historically disadvantaged in a number of ways under the apartheid system, including exclusion from all levels of education (CHE, 2005). People with disability had been marginalised by the way the apartheid system and the government of the time understood and responded to disability. While the majority of white people with disability were disempowered by a system that saw them as a health and welfare problem (a medical model approach), black people with disability were even more disempowered as a result of poverty and violence resulting from the apartheid system. The CHE (2005) pointed out that research findings suggested that institutions needed to develop internal systems to identify students with disabilities, to understand their needs, and to monitor the extent to which their individual needs were being met. It also stressed the need to develop support mechanisms for academic staff and students with disabilities in order to facilitate teaching and learning.

The INDS accepts and explains the principle of self-representation. This principle has been central to the disability rights movement in South Africa. This means that the collective determination of people with disabilities must be used to inform the strategies of the government. In addition, when the principle of self-representation is recognised, the government acknowledges the advisory role of organisations of people with disabilities and their representatives in the decision-making processes. Since people with disabilities are

best equipped to change perceptions of and attitudes to disability, they should play a central role in the development of strategies and projects (ODP, 1997). Therefore, it is crucial to hear the voices of students with disabilities in higher education in view of the paucity of reliable data on disability in South Africa. Moreover, it is important for people with disabilities to express their experiences and needs through self-representation.

Fuller et al. (2004:303) confirm that, "despite the growing interest in issues of inclusion, the voices of students with disabilities themselves have hardly been heard". The study undertaken by Fuller et al. (2004) was one of the first systematic analyses of the experience that students with disabilities in higher education have of barriers to learning at the University of Gloucestershire. Furthermore, the experiences of people with disabilities at Stellenbosch University have not been documented.

The lines of enquiry pursued in this research stem from individual students with disabilities' experiences of support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University. Therefore, the focus is on how these individual students experience support practices of their diverse needs, and the impact thereof, on their development at Stellenbosch University. The interviewing method used in this qualitative research study allowed me to explore and describe students with disabilities' experiences of support and barriers to their development.

1.2 PURPOSE AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to understand how students with disabilities experience support at Stellenbosch University. Furthermore, the researcher aimed to understand the barriers students with disabilities experience at Stellenbosch University. The central research question that guided this study was:

What are students with disabilities' experiences of support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University?

To refine the central question, the following sub-questions were asked:

1. Who are these students?
2. What does support and accommodation of students with disabilities entail?
3. What are their experiences of the support?
4. What do they experience as barriers?

1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A research design is necessary to execute any research study. Thus, the research design is the framework of how the researcher intends to conduct the research study. It serves as a bridge between the research question and the execution of the research. The purpose and the paradigm of the study, the methodology, and the context in which the study took place should be cohesive (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The purpose of this study was to explore and describe experiences of students with disabilities in the context of Stellenbosch University. The type of research question, therefore, required that this study followed an interpretive paradigm within a qualitative research methodology framework, since the reality to be studied consisted of participants' subjective experiences of the external world (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:36), paradigms act as perspectives that provide a rationale for the research, and commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation. Furthermore, paradigms constitute the epistemological, the ontological and methodological premises of the researcher. Therefore, my goal was to understand how students with disabilities constructed their own meaning of the experiences they had in the context of Stellenbosch University (Neuman, 2000). I was involved in an active meaning-making process with the participants and used qualitative methods of data collection, for example individual and focus group interviews.

The research design of this study was classified as empirical research, using primary data resources that generated textual data within a less structured design with less formal regulations and control.

1.3.1 Selection of participants

Students with disabilities from the major categories of disabilities were selected to participate in this research study by using purposive and convenience sampling. The major categories of disabilities at Stellenbosch University are students with hearing impairments, visual impairments and physical impairments. Through the Centre of Student Counselling and Development of the University, 15 students with disabilities were notified of the project and

its purpose and then asked to register their willingness to participate. Ten students were willing to participate and they were contacted to arrange appointment slots.

1.3.2 Methods of data collection

The methods used by qualitative researchers exemplify a common belief that they can provide a deeper understanding of the social phenomena (Silverman, 2000). Through the use of interviewing (individual and focus group interviews) I entered another person's world, to understand the person's perspective (Patton, 2002). Thus I got an insider perspective of meaning and experiences of the participants.

1.3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

In this study it was very important to provide a framework within which respondents could express their own understandings in their own terms. The interview guide provided a framework to make sure all relevant topics were covered during discussion (Patton, 2002). This allowed more flexibility to explore certain subjects in greater depth. The interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Notes were taken during the interview to assist in formulating new questions or to go back to what had been said earlier, and interviews were transcribed verbatim (Patton, 2002).

1.3.2.2 Focus group interview

I conducted focus group interviews with students with disabilities, from the major categories of disabilities, to get an understanding of the experiences of support and barriers to their development. The focus group discussions uncovered divergent and convergent perspectives from the participants and contributed to the richness of data in this study.

1.3.2.3 Literature review

The literature review identified and analysed literature that correlates with students with disabilities' experiences of support and barriers to their development in tertiary education.

1.3.3 Data analysis

Data analysis is the systematic search for meaning and a means to process data. In other words, the process involves making sense of data (Merriam, 1998). Data analysis involves the process of transforming data to answer the initial research question (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The process of data analysis started during fieldwork. A qualitative researcher's effort is focused on interpreting and understanding the social world of the

participants (Mouton, 1996:168). Therefore, I did not seek to build substantive theory and used the constant comparative method to construct categories, subcategories and overarching themes as explained in Merriam (1998). This process involves three steps, namely scanning the data, organising the data and presenting the research findings.

1.4 STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION

The study is structured and presented as described below:

Chapter 1 provides the background, primary research question and the aim of the research study.

Chapter 2 offers an overview of the relevant literature. The literature focuses on the participation of students with disabilities in higher education as well as on the support services and such students' experiences of barriers to their development.

Chapter 3 describes the research paradigm. It is followed by the research design. The research methodology covers the qualities of qualitative research, the selection of participants, data collection methods, data analysis and data verification. The chapter concludes with the ethical considerations of the researcher during the research process.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings.

Chapter 5 consists of the discussion of the research findings, as well as the recommendations and the strengths and limitations of the study. Future research possibilities are also proposed.

1.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the context and purpose of the study were described and the research problem was clearly formulated. Furthermore, the research design and paradigm of the study, the research methodology, data collection methods and the data analysis were discussed. The chapter concluded with an outline of the process of investigation.

CHAPTER 2

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter, which presents international and local literature on disability, is organised in different sections. The first part focuses on understanding and defining disability and explores the influence of the medical, social and psychological models of disability on the definition, policy and social interventions for people with disabilities. From the social model perspective disability can be understood by focusing on the relationship and interaction between people with disabilities and the society or environment of which they are part. Furthermore, the way disability is viewed will influence the way in which society, institutions and systems are structured and organised to accommodate students with disabilities to ensure equal participation and non-discrimination. The focus subsequently moves to the theoretical framework of this study that comprises of both the eco-systemic and the constructivist perspectives. These two theoretical perspectives provide organised principles that, together with contextual knowledge, provide valuable insights into the development of a person with a disability in relation to his or her social context. The policy outlined in this study is based on the social model perspective. In the South African context, disability is seen as a development issue and principles such as equity and non-discrimination entrenched in the Constitution are applied to the experiences of students with disabilities. Policies in South Africa that frame students with disabilities' access to and participation in tertiary education are outlined in the next section. Equal participation and accommodation for students with disabilities not only influence policy but also greatly impact practice. Therefore, I argue that although policy development is a fundamental stepping-stone in any higher education setting, policy needs to be implemented in practice to be of any value. The literature on disability cautions that while legislation might well create a higher education environment that is sensitised to the support needs of students with disabilities this does not necessarily mean that the policies are implemented at grassroots level. This has made it necessary to investigate the experiences of students with disabilities regarding support at Stellenbosch University. In many cases universities comply with laws, but they struggle to provide appropriate accommodations to support students with disabilities. In fact, higher education institutions throughout the world, and specifically those in South Africa, are faced with the challenge of addressing critical issues such as physical access, curriculum delivery,

assessment procedures and campus climate as well as providing support services for students with disabilities.

In this chapter I also discuss the importance of student disability support services and the campus environment. The campus environment consists of a variety of components or external factors that contribute to or detract from the different levels of an environment. Thus the focus of this section will be to illustrate how the different components (internal or external factors) create conditions of safety and security, active involvement and, lastly, conditions in which students with disabilities can experience full membership in their environment. In addition, I examine the structure and types of support services available for students with visual, hearing and physical impairments at universities internationally and specifically in South Africa. The type of services that are provided range from alternative assessment procedures, the provision of learning materials in alternative formats, personal assistance (for example sign language interpreters or note-takers), information communication technology, alternative arrangements for examinations, and physical access.

Finally, the barriers in the environment are discussed. Although efforts are made to accommodate students with disabilities, barriers like negative attitudes, a lack of awareness and information concerning available support services, difficulties with curriculum delivery, physical obstacles and educational support barriers may still contribute to the struggle of a student with a disability to obtain equal access and participation on tertiary level. Thus external barriers can influence an individual's learning and development.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING, DEFINING AND DISCOURSES

According to the literature it is not easy to define disability simply because the concept is multi-dimensional, with both objective and subjective characteristics. When disability is seen as an illness or impairment, it becomes fixed in an individual's body or mind. When interpreted as a social construct, disability is seen in terms of the socio-economic, cultural and political disadvantages that result from an individual being excluded. Miller and Sammons (1999) aptly state that the development of first-person language emphasises the person rather than his or her disability. For example, instead of referring to such a person as "a disabled student" it is more respectful and accurate to say "a student with a disability". Furthermore, our understanding and interpretation of what disability is determines whom we define as having a disability, the prevalence of disability in our society and ultimately what is needed at both systems and institutional level to ensure equity for students with disabilities. The most commonly cited definitions are those of the World Health Organisation (1980) and Miller and Sammons (1999), which draw a three-fold distinction between the following words,

labels or terms used to describe disabilities. The following definitions have been derived from these abovementioned sources:

- **Impairment:** An impairment is a missing, deficient, weakened or damaged body part or function. Thus, it is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function. For example, a person who has a loss of vision or wears glasses has a visual impairment.
- **Disability:** A disability is any restriction or lack of ability to perform one or more major life activities because of an impairment. Major life activities include having intact senses, interacting with others, having full range of movements, being able to learn and work or care for oneself in hygiene and homemaking etc.
- **Handicap:** A handicap is a disadvantage or any obstacle that makes a person's progress difficult or prevents him or her from doing something, for example social obstacles, such as other people's negative attitudes or physical obstacles such as inaccessible buildings or transportation. A handicap is therefore, a function of the relationship between a person with a disability and their environment.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA, 1990) defines a disability as a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, b) a record of such impairments, or c) being regarded as having such impairment.

According to these definitions an individual with a disability has difficulty performing one or more major life activities because of an impairment that is psychological, physiological or anatomical in nature. Therefore a person with a disability can experience various obstacles or barriers such as cultural, physical or social barriers in the environment that hamper their progress and development. This can result in a loss of or limited opportunities to take part on an equal level with others.

The fact that definitions of disability and definitions of higher education vary from country to country complicates matters. Therefore, I found the code of practice of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, 1999) of the United Kingdom a good guideline for my study. The code helps higher education institutions achieve equitable and appropriate provision for students with disabilities. It follows no particular model but suggests that institutions should keep in mind that there are many different ways of defining disability and that disability covers a wide range of impairments, including physical and mobility difficulties, hearing impairments, visual impairment, learning difficulties such as dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems. Students with disabilities are not a homogeneous group and their

support needs may differ considerably from student to student. Some of these impairments may have few, if any, implications for the student's life or study, and others may have little impact on day-to-day life but may have a major impact on a student's study, or vice versa. Institutions will need to ensure that their provision and structures take into account, as far as possible, the full range of needs which students with disabilities may have, and that their provision is sufficiently flexible to cater for individual changing needs throughout their period of study (QAA, 1999). International and local literature on disability clearly promotes the understanding of the medical model, the social model and psychological model of disability and their influence on the definition of disability.

According to Naicker (1999), both international and local trends regarding disability have undergone major shifts such as the shift from a medical discourse to a rights discourse that influenced the movement towards inclusive education in South Africa to a large extent. According to Fulcher (1989, cited in Naicker, 1999) there are four kinds of discourses in the field of special education. Firstly, the medical discourse links impairment with disability and the disability is thought of as an objective attribute, not a social construct. Secondly, the charity discourse implies that recipients of special education are seen as in need of assistance of others, and are dependent on others and therefore in need of institutional care. Thirdly, the lay discourse relates to hatred, ignorance, fear and prejudice and has to do with the isolation of people who have a 'different' physical appearance. Lastly, the rights discourse is committed to broadening full membership to all people and it stresses equal opportunity, independence and self-reliance.

2.3 MEDICAL, SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

Over the last 20 years there have been challenges to dominant perceptions of and attitudes to people with disabilities (CHE, 2005). The understanding of the different models of disability influences the perceptions and approaches to disability, both internationally and locally. The dominant way of understanding disability and the attitudes and responses to people with disabilities is referred to as the medical model of disability. According to the Council for Higher Education (CHE), the medical model perspective "focuses attention on the nature of the person's impairment and the degree to which this impairment may or may not prevent the person from carrying out various tasks or participating in activities in ways regarded as normal" (CHE, 2005:2). Thus, when defining disability by referring to the medical model, the focus is on the impairment and the deficits of the individual rather than on the barriers in society that are preventing an individual from participating fully. This way of

looking at disability has contributed to ongoing discrimination and marginalisation of people with disabilities. On the contrary, when the focus is on the impairment and the degree to which a person cannot undertake activities in the 'normal' way, less attention is given to issues of discrimination and the rights of people with disabilities. In this way, according to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), disability becomes something that is "imposed by society when a person with an impairment is denied access to full economic and social participation" (SAHRC, 2002:10, cited in the CHE, 2005).

The alternative way of viewing disability is informed by the social model. Both the South African disability movement and the South African government approach disability from a social model perspective. A social model perspective turns the attention away from identifying people with disabilities to identifying and addressing the barriers in society that restrict their full participation in everyday life. Thus, from this perspective, disability can be understood by focusing on the relationship between persons with impairments and the society or environment of which they are part. Therefore, the response to disability is the restructuring of society for it to be able to deal appropriately with people with disabilities. In the higher education context this refers to the relationship between the student with a disability and the process of teaching, learning and support. Therefore, it is important to determine whether any barriers in higher education institutions or society are hampering the emergence of conditions to create opportunity for full participation in higher education. This implies that certain mechanisms need to be put in place to create an environment where all students, including students with disabilities, can participate equally in the process of teaching and learning.

In the field of disability studies, many activists have strongly advocated the social model of disability as opposed to the medical model. However, the disability academic and activist, Tom Shakespeare, has recently critiqued the social model of disability and has called for a more pluralist approach. According to Shakespeare (2006:2), "[d]isability results from the interplay of individual and contextual factors. In other words, people are disabled by society *and* by their bodies." He argues that rather than reject research in medical sociology or social care, disability studies once again need to engage with the important questions of what disability is, and how the lives of people with disabilities can be improved.

There has also been a call to investigate the psychological aspects in the conceptualisation of disability. The issues with which psychology as a discipline engages are therefore increasingly being taken into consideration. This serves as a foreground to the conceptual understanding of disability in relation to key concepts and issues regarding human health and wellness within the field of positive psychology or psychofortology. Marks (1999 cited in

Naidoo, 2006) considered a more encompassing, psychosocially orientated conceptualisation of disability and defined disability as "the complex relationship between the environment, body and psyche, which serves to exclude certain people from becoming full participants in interpersonal, social, cultural, economical and political affairs" (Marks, 1999 cited in Naidoo, 2006:596). In view of a particular interest in the experiences of students with disabilities it is valuable to consider the psychological aspects related to disability as well as the relationship between the individual and the environment. Therefore it is important to take a closer look at the theories behind inclusive education and to understand an individual's development in relation to the social context. Swart and Pettipher (2005:9) state that "the major challenges of the education system are to understand the complexity of the influence, interactions and interrelationships between individual learners from an ecological systems theory or system change perspective". Without an understanding of the complexity of interaction between individuals and the systems in which they function, it is impossible to grasp the true nature of inclusive education and barriers to learning.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two influential theoretical perspectives, namely the eco-systemic perspective and the constructivist perspective, relate specifically to this research study. These models reflect on the importance of social context on development of individual people (Donald et al., 2002). The eco-systemic model is a combination of the ecological and systems theories. The ecological theory emphasises the interdependence and relationships between an organism and its physical environment. These relationships and the underlying connections are seen as a whole, as each entity within the ecological system is dependent on and influenced by the other entities (Ackermann, 2000 cited in Engelbrecht & Jansen, 2004). The systems theory is similar, as it views different levels of the social context as 'systems' where the functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between the parts and each part affects the other in repeated cyclical patterns (Engelbrecht & Jansen, 2004). Thus the different systems such as the peer group, the community, the university and the broader social system form significant aspects of the student's social context.

Although this eco-systemic model illustrates the dynamics of the various systems well, Bronfenbrenner (1979, cited in Swart & Pettipher, 2005) proposes a more detailed bio-ecological model, which further helps to clarify the interaction between an individual's development and the social systems. Swart and Pettipher (2005:10) aptly state that: "This in turn reminds us why the general challenges of development cannot be separated from the more specific challenges of addressing social issues and barriers to learning". Subsequently, understanding the origins, maintenance and solutions to barriers to learning and

development cannot be separated from the broader social context and the systems within it. This would include the individual (Swart & Pettipher, 2005). According to this model, there are four main interacting dimensions to consider when trying to understand development in context (Swart & Pettipher, 2005).

- person factors, such as behavioural tendencies that either encourage or discourage certain kinds of reactions from others, for example the individual's personality;
- process factors, such as the patterns of interaction that occur in a system, for example interaction that takes place in the family;
- contexts, such as families, schools, classrooms and local communities; and
- time, like changes over time due to maturation in the individual as well as changes in the environment.

The environment or social context is conceived as "a set of nested structures contained inside the next like a set of Russian dolls" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979 cited in Swart & Pettipher, 2005). These nested structures include the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. These systems all interact with the chronosystem. The various systems are briefly explained below.

- The microsystem is the individual's immediate environment and is characterised by those individuals with whom people have continuous contact. All people influence each other reciprocally in the context of the family, the school and the peer group. Proximal interactions take place here and refer to the face-to-face, long-term relationships that shape lasting aspects of development (Donald et al., 2002).
- The mesosystem is comprised by a group of associated microsystems which affect each other (Donald et al., 2002); for instance, the family, school and peers will interact with one another. This may be referred to as the local neighbourhood or community.
- The exosystem is the environment in which the learner is not actively participating or involved, but which may greatly influence the learner by what happens in these systems. Examples of exosystems would be the education system, health services, the media, the parents' places of work, or community organisations (Donald et al., 2002).
- The macrosystem include the attitudes, beliefs and values that are inherent in the systems of a society or culture, and which may influence any of above systems or be

influenced by them, for example social justice and democracy (Swart & Pettipher, 2005).

- The chronosystem is the developmental time frame that spans across the interaction between these systems and their influence on individual development, for instance the developmental process of a family together with a child who is in the process of development (Swart & Pettipher, 2005).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, cited in Swart & Pettipher, 2005) theory highlights the complexity of the interaction and interdependence of multiple systems that impact on individuals, their development and learning (Swart & Pettipher, 2005). Barriers to development and learning arise from a dynamic interaction between internal and external systems factors best viewed on a continuum. Practically, this means that when a learner is having difficulties or any other system is in trouble, a person who is thinking ecosystemically will never debate whether the cause or solution is within a single system, but will take the interdependence between them all into consideration (Swart & Pettipher, 2005). Moreover, it is crucial to grasp that barriers to learning and development are not only situated in individuals, but in the interaction between systems and the continuum of contributing internal and external factors (see Fig. 4.1). Internal factors are those situated within the individual as a system, for instance as would be the case with a student with a physical impairment. External factors are in the environment and external to the individual, for example negative attitudes from peers.

Another approach that is also in line with the inclusive philosophy is the constructivist perspective. Constructivism is a contemporary theoretical perspective that sees knowledge as actively constructed, and not merely transferred. Constructivism is similar to the ecosystemic model and acknowledges the interactions of individuals in social context. Individuals are seen as active agents who are making meaning of their lives within and through their social context (Donald et al., 1997). Donald et al. (2002) note that constructivists believe that the power individuals have to change things within the systems is limited by two important factors, namely 1) the position of the individuals within the systems of which they form a part and the position of the systems themselves in relation to the whole system, and 2) the personal characteristics and the development of the individuals.

The constructivist view of learning and human development is relatively new. It underpins the inclusive education teaching and learning approaches and is crucial to the understanding of inclusion as a whole. Engelbrecht (1999) argues that the values, understanding and behaviour of individuals are difficult to understand if they are separated from the social context in which they are situated.

Finally, the different approaches to disability and the eco-systemic and constructivist perspectives impact practice and policy frameworks. In South Africa a social model of disability has underscored the government's approach to addressing disability issues since 1994, as captured in the 1997 White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS). Furthermore, a report entitled Quality Education for All: Overcoming Barriers to Learning and Development states that higher education institutions should develop the capacity to address diverse needs and barriers to learning and development. This includes not only learners with disabilities, but all learners (DoE, 1997b).

2.5 POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The overall policy framework that underscores equity of access and participation for students with disabilities in South Africa's higher education system draws on two principles outlined in the South African Constitution. Firstly, non-discrimination is addressed in the Constitution and recognition is given to people who were disadvantaged by unfair discrimination (RSA, 1996). The Constitution makes provision for measures targeted at redressing this disadvantage so that all people can celebrate these rights. Secondly, it recognises that people with disabilities have been discriminated against on the basis of their disability and therefore that equity is essential to address past inequity. Furthermore, the commitment to non-discrimination and the formation of equity have been essential in the creation of various policy documents and specifically policy dealing with disability.

The Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) is a fundamental policy document based on the Constitution that frames disability issues and ensures that these issues are integrated into different spheres of functioning, such as the political, economic and social functioning of South Africa. The INDS (ODP, 1997) strongly advocates the adoption of a social model approach to disability and involves recognising, understanding and addressing disability as a human rights and development issue. In the INDS the social model approach is explained in the following way:

The social model of disability suggests that the collective disadvantage of people with disabilities is due to a complex form of institutional discrimination. This discrimination is fundamental to the way society thinks and operates ... [it] is based on the belief that the circumstances of people with disabilities and the discrimination they face are socially created phenomena and have little to do with the impairment of disabled people. The disability rights movement believes, therefore, that the true 'cure' to the 'problem' of disability lies in restructuring society (ODP, 1997:11).

In this document "a human rights and development approach to disability focuses on the removal of barriers to equal participation and the elimination of discrimination based on disability" (ODP, 1997:10). The focus should be on the stairs leading into a building that disable the wheelchair user, rather than on the person using the wheelchair.

The INDS (ODP, 1997), which is informed by the Constitution, provides the basis for the way disability issues and the human rights of people with disabilities are understood and addressed in the legislative and policy framework in South Africa. Moreover, the policy frames for the higher education system address issues of equity and redress within this system. White Paper 3, on the transformation of the higher education system (DoE, 1997a), confirms that one of the transformation processes is to build a higher education system that "[p]romotes equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress of past inequalities" (DoE, 1997a:14). Therefore, the changes for higher education outlined in White Paper 3 are viewed through the lens of an equity paradigm where the need for redressing previous inequity, overcoming unfair discrimination and creating a fair and just higher education system is recognised. Other strategies and principles are also of great value, especially those that suggest that the equity agenda involve the way institutions are organised and structured, as evident in the National Plan for Higher Education (2001).

In the National Plan for Higher Education (2001b), students with disabilities are recognised as those who have been disadvantaged by the apartheid higher education system. Therefore, the government commits itself to increasing accessibility to higher education for students with disabilities as an important step in redressing the inequity of the past. Realising this objective, the plan states that "[t]he Ministry, expects institutions to indicate in their institutional plans the strategies and steps they intend taking to increase the enrolment of non-traditional learners, including clear targets and time frames" (DoE, 2001b:28). Although increasing enrolment is crucial to creating equity, so is equal attention to issues of participation within institutions and creating opportunities for success. The National Plan for Higher Education (2001b) refers to the importance of mechanisms, such as academic support and development, to ensure that all students are able to participate equally in the process of teaching and learning and success.

The challenge equal participation poses for the higher education system is captured in the joint report of the National Committee on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services. The report, entitled Quality Education

for All: Overcoming Barriers to Learning and Development (DoE, 1997b:126), states the following:

The primary challenge to higher education institutions at present is to actively seek to admit learners with disabilities who have historically been marginalised at this level, providing them with opportunities to receive the education and training required to enter a variety of job markets. Alongside this is the challenge to develop the institution's capacity to address diverse needs and address barriers to learning and development. This includes not only learners with disabilities, but all learners. This requires that adequate enabling mechanisms be put in place to ensure that appropriate curriculum and institutional transformation occurs, and that additional support is provided where needed.

These commissions led to the publication of White Paper 6, entitled Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, to create educational opportunities for students who have not been able to access existing educational provision or have experienced learning difficulties, and consequently the education system has failed to 'accommodate their learning needs' (DoE,2001a:6). These learning and support needs arise from external or internal factors such as socio-economic deprivation, visual impairments, physical impairments, hearing impairments and health impairments. Therefore it is expected that the education system develop the capacity to provide for the 'broad range of learning needs among the learning population in time' (DoE, 2001a:17).

White Paper 6, like the INDS, supports the notion of equal opportunities by removing barriers that restrict participation and by creating an inclusive education system. The practical implications are that barriers such as physical access and curriculum delivery that limit access to educational provision and prevent equal participation in the process of teaching and learning should be removed. Therefore, strategies aimed at building the capacity to cater for the full range of learning needs should be put in place. Throughout White Paper 6 emphasis is placed on changing attitudes, overcoming prejudice, developing flexible teaching and learning programmes that respond to the diversity of learning needs, and putting in place mechanisms that can provide additional support to those learners who may require it (DoE, 2001a).

It is clear that higher education institutions have a moral and educational responsibility to ensure that they have effective programmes in place to meet the teaching needs of the students they admit. This requires that institutions should integrate academic development programmes and support services strategies into their overall academic and financial planning (DoE, 2001b).

For this purpose Stellenbosch University has developed a policy regarding diversity specifically for students with disabilities to ensure equal participation and opportunities. Vision 2012 (SU, 2000) of Stellenbosch University describes a culture on campus that welcomes diversity. Furthermore, the principal value of equity is set out in the Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century (SU, 2000). The institution hereby addresses critical issues of physical access and support services for students with disabilities.

Although policy development is a fundamental stepping-stone in any higher education setting including Stellenbosch University, Fuller et al. (2004); Dowrick et al. (2005) and Shevlin et al. (2004), caution us to think that legislation will create, or has created, a higher education environment that can accommodate the educational needs of students with disabilities. MacLean and Gannon (1997:217, in Fuller et al., 2004), argue that "while the Australian government's Disability Discrimination Act of 1992 makes it unlawful to exclude people with disability, it does nothing to support people with disability to achieve positive support from the university community. It also fails to specify what might be 'reasonable support'". Similarly, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires "colleges and universities to make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities so they can have equal opportunity to receive education" (Lightfoot & Gibson, 2005:270). Thus, the support of students with disabilities will ultimately be influenced by what the institution considers 'reasonable', based on financial resources and perceptions of what necessary support services or accommodations are. Lightfoot and Gibson (2005:270) specify that a 'reasonable accommodation' is a modification of a course, field placement, or other educational activity to allow equal participation and equal access to education. Therefore, reasonable accommodations in the classroom might include note taking, flexible testing, interpreters, text on tape, or tutoring.

Yet, Lightfoot and Gibson (2005) state that there are several disadvantages when reasonable accommodations are used as the only means to ensure equal participation. Firstly, students with disabilities are responsible for disclosure and to get documentation of proof, in order for them to obtain an accommodation. The absence of documentation can result in a student not getting support. Secondly, when making disability a special category just to legitimise accommodation needs, students and faculty members are compelled to focus on the student's disability instead of on his or her ability. According to the social model of disability this emphasis on the student's limitations shifts the focus away from the institution's inaccessibility. Thirdly, the requirements of designing accommodations for individuals result in accommodations being added onto already developed curriculum rather than building the accommodations into, for example, a social work course. Finally, when accommodations are supplementary to the curriculum, students without documented

disability are not allowed these accommodations but may very well also benefit from a curriculum with built in accommodations to ensure accessibility for all students in a particular programme.

According to Nelson, Dodd and Smith (1990, cited in Lightfoot & Gibson, 2005), many universities comply with laws like the ADA, but they are still not clear on making effective and appropriate accommodations to support students with disabilities. Tinklin, Riddel and Wilson (2004) stress that although provision is made through policy, in practice the onus is on student support services to provide individual support to get around institutional barriers rather than on changing the institution. In addition, the institution as a whole should be responsible for creating an inclusive environment of embracing differences, rather than just accepting or tolerating a student with a disability.

2.6 STUDENT DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES AND CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

Based on the policy development previously discussed, many higher education institutions both internationally and locally, and more specifically Stellenbosch University, have been encouraged to include individuals representing groups that had been traditionally excluded on the grounds of gender, age, race and disability. Thus, students with disabilities form part of the diversity scope. Although diversity poses certain challenges for higher education institutions everywhere, this inclusion will contribute to the wider democratic notion of building a more just society that embraces diversity.

The challenge higher education institutions face when responding to campus diversity impacts on every aspect of academic life, for example from "student access and support, staff recruitment and retention, to academic program development and the social learning environment on campus" (Harper & Cross, 1999 cited in Mandew, 2003:71). The practical manner in which institutions approach diversity ranges from an attitude of tolerance of difference to celebration of diversity and lastly, to diversity as a strategy for embracing and accommodating or engaging differences. According to Mandew (2003:71), "campus diversity should not be construed as the exclusive preserve of student services. The challenge of campus diversity is the business of the whole institution ... however there is a need to recognise the crucial role that student services can play in fostering a diverse campus climate." A diverse campus climate will be beneficial to all students at the university. According to Schneider, 1997; Smith, 1997 and Tatum, 2000 (cited in Mandew, 2003:81), students reap various benefits, both educationally and in terms of democracy and

citizenship, from a diverse campus climate and from diversity programmes. These benefits are indicated below:

- Diversity requires and expands democratic values.
- Students are prepared for effective participation in a diverse country and a pluralistic world.
- Students exposed to diversity interventions in and outside the classroom demonstrate the greatest engagement in active thinking processes, growth in intellectual engagement and motivation, and growth in intellectual and academic skills.
- Students who have participated in diversity programmes have the most meaningful and enduring relationships across the identity divide long after they have graduated.
- Students who belong to various diversity-driven institutional organisations, support groups and associations increase adjustment and attachment to the institution.
- Prejudicial attitudes are decreased among students who take part in inter-group dialogue programmes.

Moreover, campus climate is defined by the institutions' attitudes, customs, policies, traditions, values and behaviours of faculty, students, administration and staff. Campus climate with regard to disability plays an important role in the academic success and overall university experience of students with disabilities. There are many noticeable signs of a negative campus climate such as a climate where students with disabilities feel verbally or physically threatened. An inhospitable environment will make the minority feel marginalised and isolated from the mainstream of the institution. Generally speaking, the majority of students are unaware of the experiences of the minority groups on campus and they frequently react negatively to minority student behaviours. Thus, it is important to recognise these negative signs and address the problems in order to improve campus climate. Moreover, creating a positive climate is best achieved when it is recognised that the responsibility belongs to everyone in the campus environment (Green, 1989 cited in Denis & Pieterse, 2006).

In order to foster a campus climate that is beneficial to students with disabilities and their success it is crucial to recognise the factors that students with disabilities believe have led to successful education and support. In a report by Nelson, Smith, Appleton and Raver (1993), the following six psychological belief factors or internal factors were identified as important: discipline and effort, acceptance of disability, personal ambition, self-confidence, prior

knowledge and experience and ability. The four sociological factors or external factors identified were family support, interaction with other students, interaction with staff, and university support services. Clearly, many of these factors for success, whether personal or social, are strongly influenced by the campus climate of a university. For instance, attitudes, behaviours and values of other students and faculty, and their willingness to be flexible in order to embrace differences, will definitely affect academic success for students with disabilities. The reactions and attitudes as well as the level of acceptance of fellow students and staff can influence how students feel about their disability. Thus the ongoing interaction between the internal and external factors influences an individual's development.

The commitment and attitudes that many student affairs professionals have in promoting diverse campus environments and the actions and attitudes of academic staff should be consistent with the values of inclusion to create more inclusive communities (Belch, 2000). Therefore, if student affairs professionals reflect attitudes and values of embracing differences rather than merely tolerance, a more inclusive community can be created. Belch (2000) claims that although access to higher education can be seen from a legal perspective, core values in student affairs and services provide an equally convincing moral lens from which to observe working with students. Values of community, human dignity and equality are worthy in working specifically with students with disabilities.

The influence of organisational structures developed by student affairs and student support, influence the way in which academic staff identify their roles in relation to students with disabilities. Schroeder (1999:9) in Belch (2000) suggest that increasingly diverse student populations have led institutions to create highly specialised hierarchical organisations that have led to "compartmentalization and fragmentation, often resulting in functional silos or mine shafts". On many campuses, offices or centres for underrepresented groups have been created, for example disability service offices. However, Belch (2000) cautions against thinking that staff members who are not located in those centres are relieved from their responsibility to understand and address the diverse support needs of students with disabilities. The same concern arises when the student affairs department appoints a liaison officer to a special programme like the disability service office. The liaison officer should not be the only person to provide services to students with disabilities (Nutter & Ringgenberg 1993, cited in Belch, 2000). According to Belch (2000:13), "[i]t must be a shared and collaborative responsibility". The campus as a whole should reflect values and attitudes of embracing difference in order to create an inclusive community. Therefore it is crucial to examine the campus climate and to gain understanding of how the individual interacts in his or her environment. For this reason, an understanding of any human environment starts with the identification of essential features or components.

These components create a variety of environmental conditions on campus and enhance student learning (Belch, 2000). The four sets of components include physical, human aggregate, organisational and participants' social constructions of social climate and culture that shape the experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities. These components are discussed below.

The physical components of the campus environment, both natural and synthetic, shape attitudes towards the experiences of students with disabilities in institutions, and influence such experiences. Physical components and artefacts such as artwork, posters and signs send important nonverbal messages to participants about the campus culture (Belch, 2000). The challenge therefore is to create mirrors that reflect the diversity on campus.

Human aggregate components are those related to the collective characteristics of the people in an environment. Whether demographic (for example gender, age, or race) or psychosocial (for example personality or learning styles), human aggregate characteristics create features in an environment that reflect varying degrees of differentiation (such as type homogeneity) and consistency (such as type similarity) (Belch, 2000). This could be the case in an environment dominated by a single group and attracting individuals with the same dominant features (Belch, 2000). The experience of anyone in the environment depends on the extent of congruence with this dominant group. Furthermore, if an environment is irreconcilable with an individual's values, attitudes and expectations, the likelihood of the person leaving the environment increases (Belch, 2000). Universities therefore need to become more inclusive and should cater for a wide spectrum of differences – more specifically for students with disabilities.

Organisational components arise from the many decisions made about environmental purposes and functions – for example, who is in charge. To become organised one has to answer questions about the environment and create structures that define the organisation's characteristics of an environment (Belch, 2000). For instance, an environment can be dynamically organised, flexible in design, informal and less centralised or an environment can be static, centralised, formal and rigid. Universities are also organised environments and must maintain satisfaction among all the participants (Belch, 2000).

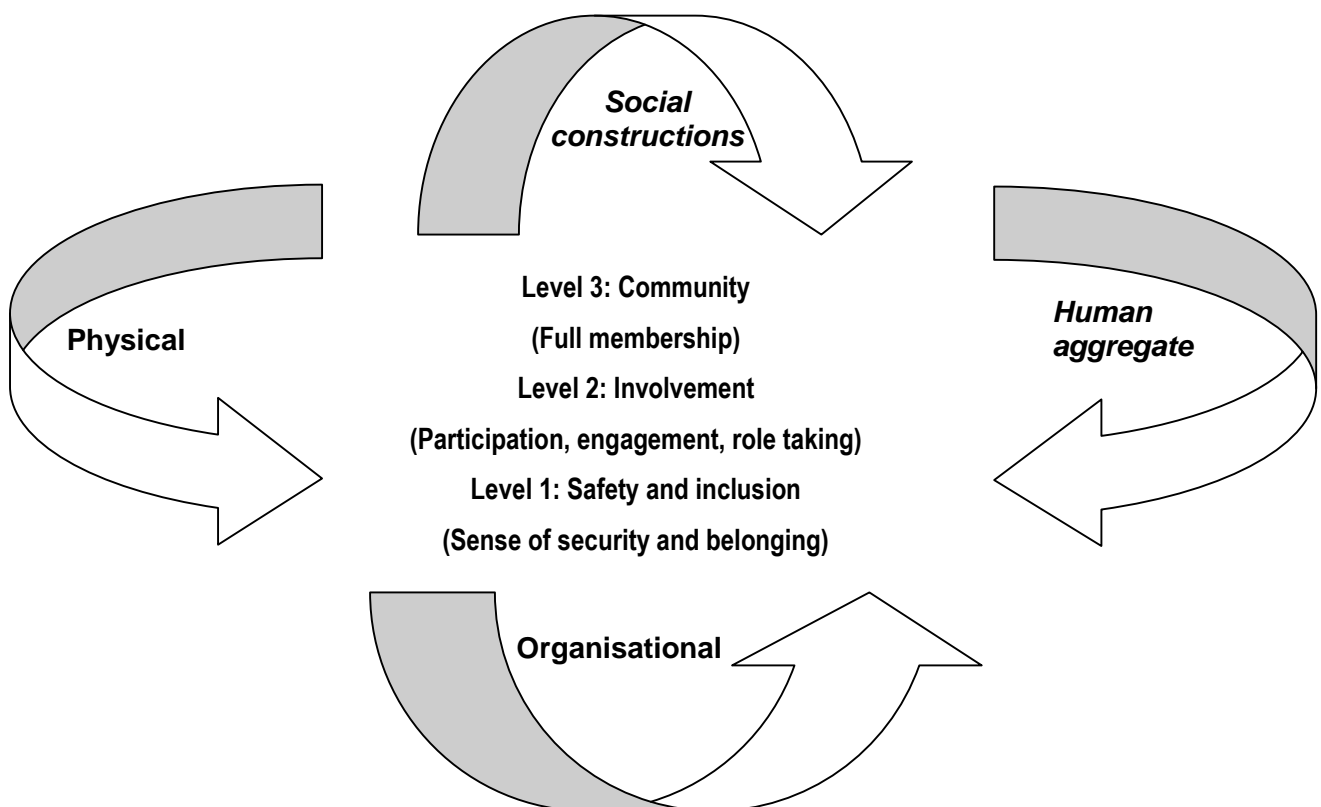
The socially constructed components reflect the subjective experience or social constructions of participants in the environment. The constructivist perspective believes that environments are best understood through people's collective perceptions of them, as manifested in social climate and culture. Therefore, the experiences of students with

disabilities are valuable reflections of campus climate and how accessible and supportive the environment is.

Strange and Banning (2000) in Belch (2000) posited an equivalent hierarchy of environmental conditions and purposes to the model of human development and motivation by Maslow (1968) cited in Belch (2000), wherein the safety and inclusion of participants must be first priority, followed by the structures that promote involvement, and then conditions that offer full membership in a community of learning. Of particular interest is how physical, human aggregate, organisational, and constructed components on campus might detract from or contribute to the safety, inclusion, involvement, and communal experience of students with disabilities.

The hierarchy of Strange and Banning (2000) in Belch (2000) has been adapted (Figure 2.1) to illustrate the ongoing interaction of environmental components (internal and external factors and processes) that determines human development.

External factors and processes



Internal factors and processes

Figure 2.1 Model: A hierarchy of learning environments:

Adapted from: Environmental components (Belch, 2000:24)

An understanding of an environment, particularly a campus environment, starts with the identification of important components like human aggregate, physical components, social constructions and organisational structures. These components in Figure 2.1 will be discussed in terms of their contribution to or detracting from the different levels of a learning environment. The ongoing contribution or detracting relates directly to support and barriers students with disabilities might experience in an environment. Therefore, administrators are to ensure that the physical, organisational and human aggregate and socially constructed components of the campus environment create conditions of safety and security and ensure inclusive environments. The campus environment should engage students in significant learning experiences through meaningful roles and active involvement. Lastly, although safety and involvement are essential conditions for educational purposes, they are not enough for ensuring an integrated learning experience for students. Students with disabilities need to experience full membership in a learning community. Belch (2000:23) asserts that "goals, structures, resources, values and people come together for the purpose of fulfillment and self actualization".

Level 1: Safe and inclusive environments

Strategies to promote campus safety and inclusion involve aspects that are physical as well as psychological in nature, for example a sense of belonging. The physical components of campus environments are relevant to the safety and belonging of students with visual, hearing and physical impairments, but physical accessibility and accommodation alone do not ensure conditions of safety and inclusion.

The physical design of an institution may convey powerful nonverbal messages. For example, the absence of lifts or adjusting the curb instead of building proper curb cuts can communicate a strong message of mere tolerance rather than an embracing of differences and diversity.

The power of campus culture and other socially constructed dimensions of the environment influence perceptions of safety and inclusion. Organisation structures shape the sense of safety and inclusion of students with disabilities, for example support services that provide support and accommodations to students with disabilities.

The human aggregate perspective looks at the congruence between the individual and dominant human characteristics in the environment. A variety of unwelcoming behaviours from others, lack of recognition, devaluing of abilities, limited opportunities to participate and hostile and harassing remarks will most certainly limit safety and inclusion of students with disabilities and become barriers to their development.

Level 2: Involving environments

The second level in the hierarchy proposes that involvement engages participation in roles and responsibilities so that opportunities are offered for individual growth and development. Firstly, students need to be actively involved in their learning environment. Strange and Banning (2000) cited in Belch (2000:26) state that "involving environments include physical features of human scale, flexible organisational designs, and the capacity for encouraging interaction and responding to individual needs". Thus, the physical features of an involving environment will include easily accessible buildings and classrooms, available parking, lifts, ramps as well as computer technology rooms with adaptive programming for students with disabilities to be actively involved in their learning environment. Furthermore, organisations should be flexible in design to accommodate participants' individual differences and learning styles and abilities. An involving environment will provide the necessary support services and alternative arrangements to students with disabilities. In accordance the social model perspective emphasises the removal of societal barriers in order to create environments of ability.

The socially constructed dimension of an involving environment would entail that students with disabilities participate in various cultural artefacts such as campus rituals and traditions, clubs and organisations. The human aggregate component of an involving environment celebrates diversity and difference, and peers, staff and other role players have awareness of and reflect positive attitudes towards students with disabilities, welcoming their unique and valuable contribution to the campus climate.

Level 3: Communal environments

Community in an environment becomes evident when participants take up significant roles over time and contribute to the ethos and culture of the university. "Conditions of community thrive when space is available for a group of individuals who share common characteristics and interests, when flexible organisational designs invite participation, role taking, and decision making and when artifacts of culture extend and support community visions and purposes" (Strange & Banning, 2000 cited in Belch, 2000:27).

The human aggregate component of a communal environment will invite students with disabilities to take part whether in the form of student clubs or in a campus-wide event such as a marathon. Furthermore, the socially constructed dimension of a communal environment will contribute to students with disabilities' experience of being valuable and socially integrated members of the institution. Equal opportunities to participate in clubs, organisations and advisory boards are offered for students with disabilities in a communal

environment. The physical environment will enable students with disabilities to take part in teaching and learning by using technologies such as screen readers, screen-enlarging programs, touch screens and voice recognition. These adaptive technologies may offer new levels of participation as learning environments become more accessible and flexible. A flexible organisational design will ensure that students with disabilities have access to a flexible curriculum and will use alternative assessment procedures to accommodate individual differences and learning styles. For example, a student with a visual impairment can be assessed by means of an oral examination or by using adaptive technology.

To conclude, institutions committed to enhance the experiences of students with disabilities must encourage policies, practices and programmes that secure, include, involve and invite all students, regardless of individual differences, into the community. This requires the design and creation of environments of ability through the provision of sufficient and effective support and accommodation (Belch, 2000). Furthermore, a positive campus climate will enhance the academic success and the development of students with disabilities. The following section addresses the structure of support services across different institutions. The support needs for students with visual, hearing and physical disabilities will be discussed in particular, since students with these impairments constitute the major categories of disabilities at Stellenbosch University. This study particularly focuses on students with disabilities experiences' of support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University and focuses on a population of students with visual, hearing and physical impairments.

2.7 STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT AT UNIVERSITIES

The organisation and structure of support services across universities might vary considerably. For many students with disabilities, the Disability Service Unit (DSU), Diversity Office or Disability Support Service is the first point of contact. These units work to facilitate access and ensure participation to the university for students with disabilities. This involves making 'reasonable adjustments' (as discussed in the policy framework 2.5) and to provide support for students with disabilities to ensure full participation and equal opportunities.

The DSU requires that all students needing service register with the DSU before the support services can be provided. This process generally involves the verification of the disability through appropriate medical documentation. Furthermore, support needs are discussed and decisions are made about what adjustments are appropriate for each individual student. Also, confidentiality issues are discussed and at some universities, specifically the Australian National University (ANU) (2006), a DSU card is issued.

The DSU card provides a mechanism for students to verify their disability with staff without having to disclose unnecessary details about their disability. Therefore, information about a disability can be kept completely confidential, and the DSU can act as a filter for verifying the disability and making recommendations regarding adjustments to other sections of the university. The DSU at the Australian National University established a list server for students registered with the DSU. The list is called ANU disability, and is used for the distribution of information that may be of interest to students. Students who are subscribed to the list can also send messages, providing or seeking information. This improves the communication across the institution.

Students with disabilities that will need support and alternative arrangements, range from students with a hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical impairment, health impairment (such as chronic illness), learning impairment, or psychiatric disability. Although universities, both locally and internationally, may organise support in slightly different ways, many universities follow similar trends in order to accommodate and support students with a specific disability according to their needs. Therefore, it is useful to look at types of support for students with visual, hearing and physical impairments for the purpose of this research study. The type of support needed and services provided at four international universities, namely: Northumbria (2006), Central Queensland (2006), Middlesex University (2006) and Australian National University (2006), for students with visual, hearing and physical impairments will be discussed next.

2.7.1 Students with visual impairments

Students with disabilities are often seen as a homogeneous group, but when considering accommodation and support one has to look at each student's individual needs. Although, students who are blind or wear glasses have a visual impairment, their support needs might be very different. In fact, differentiation among students with visual impairments and any other impairment imposes certain challenges for policy and practice. Students with visual impairments may need orientation and mobility training in order to locate student services, buildings and classes as well as the library on campus. A personal reader or note-taker can be arranged to assist in lectures. Furthermore, some students use adaptive computers such as text-enlarging software, a voice synthesiser, a text-scanner reader, video magnifiers and zoom text on computers. Braille of large documents or putting information onto tape format can assist other students with visual impairments. In addition, organising alternative arrangements for examinations and assignments such as extra time, using a computer or

* These universities were selected because they indicated support needs of students with disabilities according to visual, hearing and physical impairments.

having the question paper in Braille, large print or tape format, are used to support students with a visual impairment (Northumbria, 2006; Central Queensland 2006; Middlesex University 2006).

2.7.2 Students with hearing impairments

Students with hearing impairments (persons who are deaf or have a degree of hearing loss) may share common accommodation and alternative arrangements in the same way as students with visual impairment. They may, for example, have a note taker and make alternative arrangements for examinations and assignments. Additionally, a sign language interpreter who has knowledge of the subject area could assist some students, whose first language is sign language, in lectures. Furthermore, students could arrange for a sign language interpreter to be present at student meetings, forums, club and societies' events to promote communication. The DSU often advises students with disabilities to talk to lecturers and tutors about their specific needs at the beginning of the semester. It has been reported that certain universities, such as Northumbria (2006), Central Queensland (2006) and Middlesex University (2006), have hearing loops in the lecture theatres as well as voice recognition software where students with hearing impairments are involved in lectures. Moreover, some universities offer some kind of language, learning and study skills support to assist with assignments, and provide individual tutoring for these students.

2.7.3 Students with physical impairments

According to the literature, physical accessibility of campuses varies enormously. Legislation and policies require universities to provide access to all buildings and facilities, but in reality many buildings were not designed to provide full access to students with a physical impairment (persons who have a loss of mobility or limited movement of their arms or legs). Changes to buildings in order to make them more accessible include replacing manual or heavy doors with automatic doors, new lifts or ramps, fixing up ground surfaces, installing hand rails, especially on steps, and levelling of pavements. If classes are held in inaccessible rooms, arrangements need to be made, for example rescheduling of classes in an alternative, suitable room. Similarly, rest rooms and toilets need to be modified by installing hand rails, changing the handle or lock on the cubicle, installing lever taps, adjusting the position of the sinks or lowering hand dryers. At some universities, such as Central Queensland University (2006), there is a private, quiet place where students can go to lie down or rest when they suffer from fatigue due to extreme physical strain on their bodies.

Furthermore, transport and parking often cause problems at many universities, since parking for people with disability is often insufficient, far from buildings and lecture rooms or in a position close to a sidewalk, making it difficult to get in and out of a vehicle as a result of limited space for a wheelchair. The availability of wheelchair accessible equipment is another concern. Seating in lecture rooms are often fixed tiered benches, and stools in laboratories or workshops may be too high. Therefore, alternative arrangements need to be made, for example a table could be placed in a room in order to take notes, adjustments could be made to benches, adaptive or alternative keyboards could be supplied in computer rooms and photocopiers in libraries could be adjusted to a lower level. The provision of any map of access routes, lifts, ramps and toilets would be useful to ensure accessibility of the campus. Attendant care is a service seldom offered by universities. This could cause major problems for students who may need assistance with toileting or eating. Also, university hostels are often inaccessible and need adjustments such as ramps, lifts, automatic doors and adjustments to bathroom and toilet facilities.

Moreover, the DSU should offer ongoing training and awareness workshops to staff and students regarding disability, in order to make any attempt to assist a student with a disability a collaborative community effort and not just the sole responsibility of the DSU, disability advisor or disability liaison officer. Additional services rendered, by the DSU, to students with disabilities, at Northumbria University (2006), include the following:

- Advice on Disabled Students' Allowance, and support in applying for this
- Information and advice about services in the university and local community
- Advice on the use of the Support Worker Service or alternative
- Ongoing individual support
- Support and guidance for study related issues
- Support and advice for academic and support staff.

Many institutions in South Africa have been surveyed in order to establish trends in the provision of support to students with disabilities. According to the CHE (2005), the levels of provision range from well-resourced units or programmes with large staff to one-person offices that struggle to provide support to students with disabilities. Furthermore, the CHE (2005) claims the location of the support for students with disabilities in the structure of an institution suggests its importance to the institution as well as the institution's level of awareness about disability, ability and willingness to commit resources to its support

structure. Adequate financial resources are a key element in creating an enabling learning environment for students with disabilities. Therefore, the supply of financing from the main budget (or from external funds if dependent on outside financing) reflects an institution's willingness to facilitate access and assert equity for students with disabilities.

2.8 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Research reported by the CHE (2005) was based on the responses of 24 public higher education institutions to students with disabilities. Institutions were asked about support they currently offered. Table 2.1 shows these responses by institutional type and history: Historically advantaged institutions (HAI) and historically disadvantaged institutions (HDI). Table 2.1 presents a classification of the technical services offered at the 24 institutions surveyed. According to the results, 18 institutions provide teaching and learning support for students with disabilities, 4 institutions do not provide support and 2 were unresponsive.

Table 2.1: Provision of teaching and learning support for students with disabilities, by institutional type and history (CHE, 2005:23)

	Technikons		Universities		Total			
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	%	No	%
HAI	5	1	8	1	13(15)	87%	2(15)	13%
HDI	0	3	5	1	5(9)	56%	4(9)	44%
Total	5	4	13	2	18(24)	75%	6(24)	25%

In this table those institutions that did not answer the question have been included in the 'No' response ($n=24$).

From the information collected through the questionnaires and the interviews it seems that the staff currently responsible for providing teaching and learning support and disability units or programmes have four main roles in the institution: technical support, mediation, advocacy and life orientation (CHE, 2005).

The technical role involves the direct provision of various teaching and learning support services to the students with disabilities on campus as listed in Appendix A. (CHE, 2005:27). According to the CHE (2005), the list should not be regarded as an overview of the full degree of provision across all the institutions or, in fact, at any one of the individual institutions.

The mediating role applies to both the academic staff and the support staff, and they may have to intervene and find a solution when students experience problems with lecturers. Students with disabilities are encouraged to develop a good relationship with their lecturers so that they can make their needs known.

The advocacy role involves both formal and informal activities. These are aimed at strategic engagement with the institution to put disability on its agenda. This includes raising awareness, among both academic staff and institutional planners, of students with disabilities' need to participate in decision-making forums on campus.

The life orientation role is essential to prepare learners to participate in higher education, both academically and as adults, in ownership of various life skills. Institutions may have different organisational and structural arrangements in terms of support. Some institutions have a separate disability unit or disability programme that supports students with disabilities, while other institutions support students with disabilities as part of the student affairs or student services. Since the nature, extent and organisational form of support may vary considerably across institutions, the organisational and structural arrangements of support will influence the structure and roles of the staff responsible for providing support to students with disabilities.

Staff responsible for providing teaching and learning support are employed in two different kinds of capacity. In some institutions, especially those that have individual disability units or programmes, staff are employed to manage or deliver a specific service to the students with disabilities. In institutions where the provision is integrated into broader student services, staff support for students with disabilities may be part of a broader set of responsibilities related to general student support. According to the CHE (2005), the staff responsible for the direct provision of teaching and learning support for the different categories of students with disabilities and the different responsibilities they assume are management and coordination staff, technical staff, administrative staff and volunteers. Although certain staff members of an institution are specifically assigned to assist students with disabilities, the campus as a whole should accept the responsibility to accommodate and support students with disabilities.

Many institutions shared the sentiment that a policy within an institution that addresses the level of provision of teaching and learning support to students with disabilities acts as an important implementation mechanism. The CHE (2005) notes that from the responses of participants a theme of "reasonableness" emerged. The concept of 'reasonable accommodation' referred to in 2.4 is not new in the area of disability rights internationally or

in South Africa's legislative and policy framework. However, the CHE (2005) states that in the academic environment the term 'reasonableness' is not only influenced by the cost implications but also by perceptions of and attitude to what is needed in order to ensure success and throughput rate for students with disabilities. I agree with the CHE (2005) that attitudes of tolerance rather than embracing differences in a learning environment will impact on the level of provision and support offered at an institution and that ultimately it will influence the experience and success of students with disabilities. Moreover, the inflexibility of the academic environment when accommodating and supporting a broader range of teaching and learning needs might create barriers for students with disabilities to participate fully.

2.9 BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

In Shevlin et al. (2004) the obstacles to access and participation for students with disabilities in higher education have been classified into five broad categories: physical, information, transition to higher education, assumptions of 'normality' and levels of awareness. Adreon and Durocher (2007) report that the type of barriers students may encounter across various domains include those related to socialisation, communication, independent living skills, academic functioning and self-advocacy. Other authors, including Shevlin et al. (2004), discuss barriers to access and participation, and elaborate on these categories. The themes most commonly cited, throughout the literature will be discussed below. They include physical, information and outreach, attitudinal and awareness, curricular and educational support barriers. An overview of the themes is listed in Appendix B.

2.9.1 Physical barriers

According to the results of a study done by Shevlin et al. (2004), participants indicated that they encountered access difficulties at every level in college life. As reported in prior research by Borland and James (1999), Tinklin and Hall (1999) and Holloway (2001) in Shevlin et al. (2004), difficult physical access constituted a major barrier to participation at university for students with disabilities despite the notion that difficulties faced by students with physical and sensory impairments are regarded as the most amendable.

These authors indicate that many teaching spaces and a great deal of access to buildings remain inaccessible, For example, Tinklin and Hall (1999) in Shevlin et al. (2004) specifically reported that institutions offered limited library access. According to Fuller et al. (2004) students with a visual impairment found the library daunting because the reading made browsing and finding books difficult. Access to learning centres and buildings is often

problematic for students with mobility difficulties through lack of a lift and automatic doors or very heavy doors. Students report that accessible toilet provision has an effect on their participation in lectures and examinations because it is sparse and remote. Furthermore, parking on campus is often cited as problematic for students with disabilities because there are often not enough accessible spaces or they are far from the buildings. Moreover, when construction projects take place students with mobility difficulty may find it challenging to navigate around the building sites and to find an accessible route.

Shevlin et al. (2004) reported that accommodation and transport issues were complex and inadequate. The availability and accessibility of accommodation both on and off campus for students with disabilities will influence the level of dependency on family members and peers. There is not much literature with recommendations on how to improve accessibility. The onus is on each institution committed to supporting students with disabilities to evaluate campus structures and climate and to make the necessary amendments to improve physical access and achieve full participation.

2.9.2 Information and outreach barriers

A study by Haller (2006) investigated what universities provide and do not provide in their general recruitment materials about disability-related topics, as well as what campus disability service materials provide. Based on this research several recommendations can be made:

First, admission offices need to communicate people with disabilities' request for information to the campus Disability Support Service (DSS) offices. This will assist prospective students in their quest to obtain the necessary information on support services and accommodations they need to see in order to decide if the campus provides the services and access they might require. In Fuller et al. (2004) and Dowrick et al. (2005) students noted that they had difficulty in finding out about available advice and support for learning and assessment. They also indicated that student support services should provide more information and greater outreach to students. The explanation that was given was that although their disability had been disclosed, there was no mechanism in place within the institution for the information to be provided routinely to tutors. This information will assist tutors when supporting students with disability according to their individual needs.

Dowrick et al. (2005) state that there appears to be an increasing need for disability services offices to improve procedures for facilitating student disclosure to faculty. Thus in order to improve the conditions, it is suggested that there be a more comprehensive network of support services on campus, working cooperatively to support students with disabilities and

educating peers and faculty. In addition, diversity workshops and training for first-year students could provide all students with information on necessity and potential availability of support and accommodations for students with disabilities.

On many campuses the DSS and admissions offices are separate and they have little interaction and coordination, which seems to result in limited information on disability included into recruitment materials. Therefore, it is suggested that the admissions offices have an employee who liaises with the DSS office or a DSS employee who only works with admissions to attend to recruitment. Related to this it is crucial for the admission and DSS offices to partner to produce high-quality brochures and other materials that will convey a very powerful message of disability awareness and inclusion on campus.

Moreover, on national level a guidebook could be developed that would discuss the disability support services at various institutions, and their level of disability friendliness. This resource could serve high school students with disabilities and benefit their image as they are portrayed as having potential and deserve to be recruited like any other prospective students. Finally, "access to information for both the students with disabilities themselves and for lecturers is evidently an important basis for ensuring the key principles of variety, flexibility, quality and equality can be achieved" (Fuller et al., 2004:316).

2.9.3 Attitudinal and awareness barriers

Attitudes play a powerful role in the access and participation of students with disabilities. Kennedy (2000:17 in Haller, 2006) argues that "attitudinal barriers are considered much worse than the architecture barriers. They might put a ramp to the stage of the theater, but their policy doesn't allow students with disabilities to audition for the play." Furthermore, Collins (2002) in Shevlin et al. (2004) reported that students with disabilities identified attitudinal issues as the most significant barrier to progress. In research studies by Tinklin and Hall (1999) and Holloway (2001) in Shevlin et al. (2004), students with disabilities were faced by a variety of responses from academic staff, ranging from supportive to unhelpful. Shevlin et al. (2004) reported that positive staff attitudes were reflected because of a personal interest in disability issues rather than because of institutional training or policies. Furthermore, Shevlin et al. (2004) state that even in the same university, levels of awareness varied considerably between different departments and that this reflects the lack of embedding of institutional support for students with disabilities. For instance, "variability between different departments in providing access to notes indicates the systemic failure at college level to implement supportive policies on a widespread basis throughout college" (Shevlin et al., 2004:26).

Staff attitudes contribute significantly to the learning experience of students with disabilities. In Fuller et al. (2004) and Dowrick et al. (2005) instances were reported where lecturers did not make accommodations for students with disabilities. This failure to be flexible or understanding could be because they did not know about the disability, because staff were unwilling or unable to accommodate their needs, or because they did not have an adequate awareness of support needs of students with disabilities (Dowrick et al., 2005). Students mention that when they experienced positive teaching and attitudes from staff, the difference was noticeable. These attitudinal and awareness difficulties also spread to the social lives of students with disabilities. Both peers and staff often question the accommodations given to students with disabilities and uninformed attitudes create suspicion of disability 'claims' and support provision (Shevlin et al., 2004; Dowrick et al., 2005).

Many policy documents of higher education institutions state that it is the responsibility of students with disabilities to disclose information regarding their disability in order to receive the necessary support and accommodation they might need. In a study by Johnson (2001) the stories of students with disabilities show that even in a college that is committed to serving students with disabilities, success depends on how willing students with disabilities are to ask for help and use the help available.

Although it is the responsibility of the students to disclose their disability they are more likely to do so in an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity. Dowrick et al. (2005) and Shevlin et al. (2004) express the concern about disclosure, being given the stigma of accommodations, fear of unfavourable treatment and the wish not to be treated differently to peers. Dowrick et al. (2005) mention that disclosure was much easier for students and staff when a letter from the disability services office of the institution was given that explained their disability and required accommodations.

Borland and James, cited in Shevlin (2004:17), note that "institutional policy may explicitly support the social model of disability, but this can be contradicted through the everyday experiences of staff and students that are based on the medical model assumptions. Placing disability support under the umbrella of student welfare tends to reinforce the medical model assumptions that the student principally requires care."

2.9.4 Curricular barriers

When students were asked about barriers to learning related to their disability, 44 per cent reported barriers connected to their disability that impacted on their learning in lectures. Students report the unwillingness of lecturers, for example, to allow their lectures to be tape-recorded, lecturers having unrealistic expectations about the amount of new reading that

students can manage or failing to provide user-friendly handouts. Seventeen per cent of students also reported barriers in using available information technology (IT) facilities due to poor quality and non-availability of computers, with some lacking software such as voice recognition or anti-glare screens. IT facilities were also considered noisy and hot (Fuller et al., 2004).

Moreover, barriers in relation to forms of assessment were also reported by many students with disabilities. Thirty-four per cent reported having difficulty with written coursework, 30 per cent considered examinations to be a barrier, and 12 per cent mentioned that oral presentations were particularly challenging (Fuller et al., 2004).

In the study by Shevlin et al. (2004), participants were asked about whether disability was included in course content. Shevlin et al. (2004:28) aptly state that "course curriculum in all disciplines require consideration to ensure that they register the diversity of humanity ... it also applies to the treatment of people with disabilities in course content ... promotion of an inclusive mindset that affirms the identity of humanity is an issue for at least any course of study that leads to specific roles in the community". Thus, curriculum development is fundamental to the promotion of an inclusive attitude among staff and students.

Lightfoot and Gibson (2005) presents a new framework for providing universal access to all students in social work education: Universal Instructional Design (UID). This framework promises to go beyond adapting already developed social work curricula to fit the needs of an individual student with disability to building in accommodations in curriculum design that promote a more inclusive environment for all students. The four components of UID in social work education include:

- developing a welcoming classroom and field environment;
- focusing on essential components of course and field curriculum;
- using multi-modal instruction methods and incorporating natural supports; and
- providing flexible means of evaluation.

A welcoming classroom and field environment can be achieved by encouraging student-lecturer interaction, thus ensuring that there are many ways of communication, and by modelling a climate of trust, support and respect. Blackboard, WebCT, or other classroom management software can be useful in increasing communication lines between students and lecturers. Lightfoot and Gibson (2005) as well as Johnson (2001) maintain that lecturers can make classes welcoming to students with disabilities by inserting an accommodation policy or statement in their syllabus, to provide students with knowledge on accommodations. For example: "Note-takers, reading and books on tape can be provided for

students who require such assistance. In addition, extra time on examinations, in a distraction free environment can be provided for students who require it. If you have a disability and you have not yet spoken with counselors in the special student service office, you are invited to contact them" (Johnson, 2001:2).

The focus on essential components of the curriculum provides a baseline of knowledge and skills required for student mastery of a course or field placement. By referring to accreditation standards, departmental guidelines and course objectives and outcomes, the lecturer will be able to develop essential components and then decide on the accessibility to all students and methods of how to make components accessible to all students.

A variety of instruction methods such as small and large group discussions, multi-media and individual reflection is good teaching practice and will benefit all students. Lecturers can make sure course material is available to all students. For example, lecture notes can be posted on the Internet. On the contrary, Curriculum Transfer and Design (2000) in Lightfoot and Gibson (2005) confirms that accommodations asked for by students with disabilities are accommodations that can benefit many students. In turn, lecturers need to respond to a variety of support needs to accommodate students' individual learning needs and provide flexible means of evaluation of the course components, such as written assignments in class, home assignments, on-line quizzes or learning modules.

Variety and flexibility of the curriculum and other aspects relating to learning are crucial because students – particularly students with disabilities – have different needs. Therefore, educational support such as assistive technology, mentors and university support services, should address barriers to learning and development in tertiary education.

2.9.5 Educational support barriers

Assistive technology and faculty mentors were considered important supports in tertiary education in the studies of Dowrick et al. (2005), Fuller et al. (2004) and Shevlin et al. (2004). Furthermore, the importance of student disability services and the need to improve coordination across support services emerged: "Students repeatedly mentioned individual counselors or staff who offered support" (Dowrick et al. 2005:43). Although disability support providers offered students a precious link to the university's services, students preferred individualised support services. They indicated that "tertiary support service providers should focus on each individual's need rather than on a formula according to the individual's disability" (Dowrick et al., 2005:44).

Moreover, when students were asked to comment about the university's environment, participants stated that a gap existed between policy and practice and claimed that disability policy often does not lead to practice. Students felt they had to advocate for basic accommodations (Dowrick et al., 2005; Shevlin et al., 2004; Fuller et al., 2004).

2.10 CONCLUSION

Although significant progress has been made to increase the throughput rate of students with disabilities in tertiary education, there is still much to be done. Many students face difficulties in acquiring and receiving support. Moreover, disability policy often does not lead to practice at tertiary level. Many students with disabilities still need to advocate for basic accommodations. Negative attitudes, communication and information problems, physical barriers, unsatisfactory curriculum delivery and inadequate educational support systems are still major barriers to success for students with disabilities. Further progress can be made through the increased coordination of disability support services and programmes to educate faculty, peers and future employers about support, accommodations and rights of individuals with disabilities. Although student support services play a crucial role in supporting students with disabilities, the whole institution is responsible for creating an inclusive environment where they can experience community and attitudes of embracing diversity and accommodating differences. The research design and methodology of this study will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 1, the aim of this study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of students with disabilities' experiences of support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University. This chapter provides a description of the research design and the four components thereof. These are the research paradigm, purpose, context and methodology. The research methodology for this study, including the selection of participants and the chosen methods used to answer the research question, is discussed. The data analysis and data verification processes are also addressed. Finally, the relevant ethical considerations are discussed.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A clearly defined research problem is a crucial prerequisite for any study to be undertaken. However, the research design is necessary to execute the research study and answer the research question. According to Mouton (2001:55), a research design is a blueprint of how one intends conducting the research. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:29) state that a research design can be seen as a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research question and the execution of the research. They further point out that this 'framework' should be coherent in order to provide valid answers to the research questions (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:33). The research design can only be consistent when the purpose and the paradigm of the study, the methodology and the context in which the study takes place are cohesive, as shown in Figure 3.1. The purpose of this study was to record the experiences of students with disabilities in the context of the Stellenbosch University. This study is situated in an interpretive research paradigm and therefore, within a qualitative research methodology framework. The methods of data collection, for example interviewing, were used.

Figure 3.1 is a graphical representation of the logic and cohesion of the research design in this study.

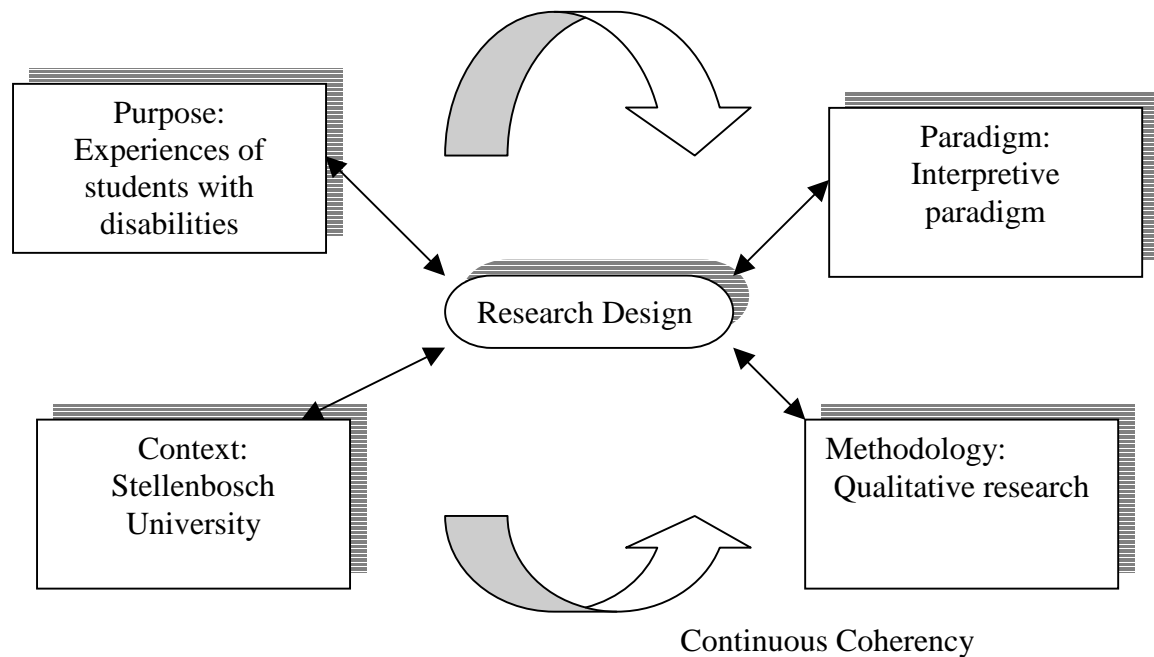


Figure 3.1: Research Design

Adapted from Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:33)

The classification of the research design follows the following four principles (Babbie & Mouton, 2001):

- It is important to distinguish between empirical studies and non-empirical studies. This study is empirical, because it involves studying persons functioning in real life.
- A distinction between primary and secondary data is important. Primary data refers to data collected directly by the researcher. This approach was used in this study.
- This study made use of textual data, generated through interviewing, rather than numerical data.
- A further distinction deals with a structured versus a non-structured design. In this qualitative study the focus was on rapport, trust and participation to enhance the validity of the design. A less structured research design was used.

In summary, the research design of this study can be classified as empirical research, using primary data resources to generate textual data within a less structured design and therefore, less formal regulations and control.

3.2.1 Research paradigm

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), the research paradigm is central to the research design and influences the way the research questions are asked and how they will be studied. The research question should fit logically within the paradigm. Paradigms act as perspectives that provide a rationale for the research and commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:36). Guba (1990:17, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:19) refers to a paradigm in the following way: "The net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm, or an interpretive framework, a basic set of beliefs that guide action." According to the above, paradigms, specifically the interpretive paradigm, consist of the following three dimensions as described in Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:6) and Mertens (1998).

- Ontology refers to the question: What is the nature of reality? A fundamental assumption of the interpretive paradigm is that reality constitutes subjective experience. Thus there are multiple constructs to reality and perceptions of reality might change throughout the process of research (Mertens, 1998). This study explored the subjective experiences of students with disabilities at Stellenbosch University. The aim was therefore to discover the multiple perspectives of the participants from the standpoint of their unique contexts, backgrounds and (dis)abilities.
- Epistemology specifies the nature of knowledge. Epistemology of interpretivism refers to a concern to explore and understand the social world using both the participants' and the researcher's understandings (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Knowledge is, therefore, multiple, subjective constructions of meaning. In this study I was concerned with the different ways students with disabilities subjectively constructed their experiences of support and barriers to their development. As the researcher I was therefore involved in an interactive meaning-making process with students with disabilities at Stellenbosch University, each influencing the other.
- Methodology specifies how the researcher may go about practically constructing and co-constructing knowledge and insight (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:6). The researcher that works from the interpretive paradigm prefers to use personal and interactive means and methods to gather data (Mertens, 1998). In this study, qualitative methods such as individual and focus group interviews were best suited to capture the multiple meanings of the students.

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), the interpretive research paradigm assumes that people's subjective experiences are real, that we can understand others' experiences by interacting with them and that qualitative techniques are best suited for this goal. Neuman (2000:71) supports this notion and states that "for interpretive researchers, the goal of social research is to develop an understanding of social life and discover how people construct meaning in natural settings". Thus, in this paradigm the assumption is made that data, interpretation and outcomes are rooted in people and their contexts.

This study adopted an interpretive paradigm since the reality to be studied consisted of a student's subjective experiences of support and barriers at the Stellenbosch University.

3.2.2 Purpose of the study

This research aimed to analyse and describe the experiences of students with disabilities at the Stellenbosch University regarding support services and barriers to their development. This study also aimed to contribute to the field of disability, more specifically, students with disabilities in higher education in South Africa, extending or confirming the reader's knowledge and enhancing the reader's experience regarding the topic; for example how students experience the services and barriers to their development, to adapt and change practices of support and enhance access and participation of all students.

Few investigations of higher education provision for people with disabilities have been undertaken in South Africa (CHE, 2005). To date very little research has been conducted regarding students with disabilities in higher education in South Africa, and focusing specifically on their experiences. Fuller et al. (2004:303) confirm that "despite the growing interest in issues of inclusion, the voices of students with disabilities themselves have hardly been heard". The study undertaken by Fuller et al. (2004) was one of the first systematic analyses of the experiences that students with disabilities in higher education have of barriers to learning at the University of Gloucestershire. Therefore, the lack of research and context of increased concern provides the rationale for this qualitative research study. This study aims to document the experiences and to hear the voices of students with disabilities at Stellenbosch University regarding support services and barriers to their development.

Prior to this research a pilot study was conducted. The purpose of the pilot study was to investigate students with disabilities' experience of assessment with regard to alternative arrangements and support at Stellenbosch University. Three students from the faculty of education were selected and interviewed. The sample included a student with a hearing impairment, a visual impairment and a physical impairment. During this pilot study I became more knowledgeable and aware of students with disabilities' experiences in higher

education, specifically at Stellenbosch University. Interviewing allowed the students to express their opinions and uncover critical issues such as the campus climate, accessibility, hostel accommodation, the attitudes of peers, the willingness of lecturers to make accommodations and provide services, students' and staff's awareness of disability issues and support needs, teaching and learning, social interaction of students with disabilities, societies and clubs available and participation, knowledge of policy documents as well as coordination of support services in the institution. Although the purpose was to focus on assessment procedures, the students' experiences included far more than was initially anticipated. Therefore, the research question was changed to explore the experiences of students with disabilities across faculties more broadly than merely focusing on assessment procedures.

According to Willig (2001), one or more research questions guide a qualitative research study. A research question in qualitative research is "open-ended" and cannot be answered by simply saying 'yes' or 'no' but provides "detailed descriptions" (Willig, 2001:19). This qualitative research study was guided by an open-ended research question in order to provide the researcher with rich descriptions, insight, and knowledge.

Specifically, the focus of the study was to address the following research question:

What are students with disabilities' experiences of support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University?

To refine the central question, the following sub-questions were asked:

1. Who are these students?
2. What does support and accommodation of students with disabilities entail?
3. What are their experiences of the support?
4. What do they experience as barriers?

3.2.3 Context

South African higher education institutions, specifically the Stellenbosch University, have been encouraged to facilitate the wider participation of marginalised groups within society. This has led to a movement that promotes the inclusion of individuals representing groups traditionally excluded on the grounds of gender, age, race and disability within higher education. The interest in inclusion brought about the development of a policy framework for South African higher education as discussed in Chapter 2. The National Plan for Higher

Education of 2001 states that higher education establishments should provide more effectively for the needs of students who experience barriers to learning, specifically those that are intrinsic to disability. These institutions have to indicate which steps and strategies, within what time frame, are in place in their respective institutional planning for the accommodation of such students.

The Stellenbosch University Vision 2012 (SU, 2000) describes a culture on campus that welcomes diverse people and ideas and students. Furthermore, the Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond (SU, 2000) describes the institution's plans for addressing critical issues such as physical accessibility for students with disabilities.

Stellenbosch University currently has a population of 136 students with disabilities. In the policy for students with special learning needs/disabilities, the term 'disability' refers to a person with a physical, non-visual and/or psychological limitation (or limitations) that negatively affects his or her daily activities in a specific way. Therefore, the university undertakes to provide support and accommodation for students with special learning needs/disabilities by maintaining a central office, namely the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities). In cooperation with the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) the following divisions are also involved in the support process of these students: The Division of Academic Support, The Centre for Student Counselling and Development, Humarga, the Department of Sport Science/Bureau for Sport, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, the student committee Dis-Maties and Student Affairs. Moreover, Stellenbosch University has been encouraged to develop a policy regarding diversity, specifically for students with disabilities. Issues such as admission and registration, accommodation, support services, the physical accessibility of facilities, the university societies and clubs and grievance procedures are addressed. (See the policy document for students with disabilities at Stellenbosch University in Appendix C (SU, 1997).

3.2.4 Research methodology

Research methodology is concerned with the process of the research and the tools and procedures that are utilised during the research process, for example data collection, data analysis and data verification. Mouton (2001:55) describes research methodology as "the systematic, methodical and accurate execution of the research design where various methods and tools are used to perform different tasks". A qualitative research methodology was selected, as it would enable the researcher to interact directly with students with disabilities by means of conversation.

Qualitative research is based on the view that individuals interact in their social worlds to construct their own reality (Merriam, 1998:6). This study focused on the experiences of students with disabilities regarding support and barriers at Stellenbosch University. Sherman and Webb (1988:7) in Merriam (1998) state that "qualitative research implies a direct concern with experience as it is lived or felt or undergone". Furthermore, in contrast to quantitative research which studies a phenomenon to investigate parts, qualitative research can make known how all the parts are integrated to form a whole. It is "an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there ... what their lives are like ... and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting ... the analysis strives for an in-depth understanding" (Patton, 1985:1, cited in Merriam, 1998).

The characteristics of qualitative research are described as follows:

- Qualitative research implies a concern with meaning that people construct from their world and their experiences. "This understanding is an end in itself, so it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of the setting, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting" (Merriam, 2002:5).
- During qualitative research the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
- Qualitative research involves fieldwork, which means that the researcher must go to the setting or institution to observe behaviour, experiences and perspectives in their natural settings.
- Qualitative research uses an inductive strategy. This type of research involves building abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than testing existing theory. The inductive researcher "hopes to find a theory that explains their data" (Goetz & Le Compte, 1984:4, cited in Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research findings are typically in the form of themes and categories.
- Qualitative research focuses on process, meaning and understanding, and "the product of qualitative research is richly descriptive" (Merriam, 1998:8).
- The qualitative study is "emergent and flexible, responsive to changing conditions of the study in process" (Merriam, 1998:8).

Qualitative research provides the reader with rich, descriptive data regarding the topic. The purpose of this study was interpretive and descriptive in nature. I collected data through interviews. Thereafter, I analysed the data in order to generate themes and categories. The above characteristics of qualitative research were duly applied in this study. The application of these characteristics will be expounded in subsequent sections and chapters.

According to Merriam (1998), the five types of qualitative research commonly found in education are the basic or generic qualitative study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory and case study. In this study a basic or generic qualitative approach was taken which exemplifies the characteristics of qualitative research discussed in Section 3.2.4. This research study focused on students with disabilities' experiences of support and barriers at Stellenbosch University.

3.3 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Qualitative researchers generally work with small groups of people. The composition of the group of participants should provide in-depth knowledge and insight of the phenomenon under study. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling were used in this study. Merriam (1998) explains that purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to understand a phenomenon and must therefore purposefully select participants who are "information rich cases". Therefore, participants included should be knowledgeable, willing to participate and readily available. According to Willig (2001:58), purposive sampling takes place when the group of participants is "homogeneous", and they share the "experience" of a particular situation.

Although, the students formed a "homogeneous" group in terms of the context and the label of disability they share at Stellenbosch University they were individuals with unique experiences and different voices. In this study, students with disabilities were viewed as a heterogeneous group and included participants from the major categories of disability at Stellenbosch University: physical, sensory and visual impairments.

Stellenbosch University has a population of 136 students with disabilities in different categories. Students with disabilities were selected from the above three major categories of disabilities as representatives of the broader population of students with disabilities at Stellenbosch University. Thus through the representation of different categories of disabilities data richness could be obtained by revealing convergent and divergent perspectives of the participants. The unit of analysis referred to by Patton (2002) was these students' experiences of support and barriers at Stellenbosch University.

Three individual interviews and two focus groups interviews were held at different times during the research process. (Interviewing will be discussed later in the chapter in more detail. Please see 3.5.2.) Through the student support services, students with disabilities were notified of the project and its purpose and then asked to register their willingness to participate. Students identified as willing participants were contacted to arrange appointment times.

Although 15 participants were selected from these major categories, 10 students with disabilities participated in individual and focus group interviews. The researcher relied on the students' willingness and therefore students' availability and time constraints influenced their participation. (See Table 3.1 for the biographical information of the participants in this study.)

Table 3.1: Biographical information of all the participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Grade Programme Faculty /	Year of 1st Registration	Type of Disability	Onset	Residence	First Language	Population
Student 1	Male	25	B Music Art & Humanities	2001	Blind	Birth	University accommodation	Afrikaans	White
Student 2	Male	27	M Comm (Psychology) Economy & Business Science	2005	Partially Sighted	7 years	Private	Afrikaans	White
Student 3	Female	22	BA Hons. Psychology	2004	Blind	Birth	University accommodation	Afrikaans	White
Student 4	Female	22	BEd IV Education	2004	Partially Sighted	Birth	University accommodation	Afrikaans	White
Student 5	Female	21	BA Sport Sciences Arts & Humanities	2003	Partially Sighted	11 years	Private	Afrikaans	White
Student 6	Female	21	BEd Education	2007	Cerebral Palsy	Birth	University accommodation	Other	White
Student 7	Female	23	B.Comm Hons Economy & Business Science	2003	Cerebral Palsy	Birth	University accommodation	Afrikaans	White
Student 8	Female	24	B. Social Work	2004	Cerebral Palsy	Birth	University accommodation	English	White
Student 9	Female	19	BA Humanities	2007	Hearing impairment	Birth	University accommodation	Afrikaans	White
Student 10	Male	44	MTh. Theology	2004	Deafness	Birth	Private	Afrikaans	White

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The methods used by qualitative researchers exemplify a common belief that they can provide a deeper understanding of the social phenomena (Silverman, 2000). During the process of data generation various methods and tools are designed to generate relevant data that will help to answer the research question. I used different methods of data collection, namely a literature study, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group interview with students with disabilities. The purpose of the interviews was to get an "insider" perspective about meaning and experiences of the participants. According to Merriam (1998:28), a qualitative study does not claim any particular methods of data collection or data analysis. Any and all methods of data gathering, from testing to interviewing, can be used in a qualitative study. The different methods of data collection used in this study will be described.

3.4.1 The literature review

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) describe a literature review as the identification and analysis of literature that correlates with the researcher's project. Merriam (1998) emphasises the value of the literature review when it integrates, synthesises and criticises important research regarding a specific topic. The literature review can identify the general theoretical framework of the study, and suggest possible research questions. Neuman (2003:96) states that the "literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge accumulates and that people learn from and build on what others have done."

According to Mouton (2001:87), a literature review is important for the following reasons:

- to ensure that one does not merely duplicate a previous study;
- to discover what the most recent and authoritative theorising about the subject is;
- to find out what the most widely accepted empirical findings in the field of study are;
- to identify the valuable instrumentation that has proven validity and reliability; and
- to ascertain what the most widely accepted definitions of key concepts in the field are.

In this study, the literature on the participation of students with disabilities in higher education regarding support and barriers provided a framework. The literature was collected through scholarly journal articles, books, policy documents and the Internet. The literature shed light

on certain aspects of disability, such as barriers to learning, campus climate and types of alternative arrangements and support services at various international universities. Furthermore, legislation and policy regarding disability, both local and international, were examined in order to provide a framework for development of inclusion and transformation of higher education institutions in South Africa and abroad, and specifically Stellenbosch University. Moreover, in order to identify the valuable instrumentation that has proven validity and reliability, a thorough literature review was conducted regarding the research paradigm, the research design and the methodology for this study.

3.4.2 Interviews

Merriam (1998) and Patton (1987) refer to interviews as a means of gaining access to important information regarding people and their experience of the world. It also helps understand a person's perspective. I (the researcher) had the opportunity to hear participants express their views and opinions in their own words (Kvale, 1996:1). I (the researcher) like the fact that when I come to know another I come to know myself (Fontana & Frey, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The process of interviewing as "active" in nature led me to a contextually bound mutually created story (Fontana & Frey, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The focus of interviews moved to include the *how and what* of people's lives (Fontana & Frey, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I knew that important consideration should be given to reflection "not only about what the interview accomplishes but also about how the interview is accomplished", which would help to unravel the ways in which the text was created (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995 cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:697). In this study interviews were conducted to understand how students with disabilities experienced their world and to hear them express their opinions and views in their own words in order to create a contextually bounded story. The structure of interviews depended on the manner in which the questions posed to the participants were developed prior to the interview (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The interview formats of this study included semi-structured individual and focus group interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by making use of an interview guide that was developed before the scheduled interview. According to Patton (2002), this strategy allows flexibility in probing and exploring certain subjects in greater depth. The interview guide provided a framework to cover all relevant topics relevant to students with disabilities. The topics were based on support services, campus climate, university accommodation, teaching and learning, assessment procedures, policy and collaboration at Stellenbosch University. It was very important to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own

understandings in their own terms and where the interviewer was free to probe and ask questions that would illuminate a particular subject (Patton, 2002).

The interview guide approach was used to cover specific topics and issues that were specified in advance. The sequence and wording of the questions were decided upon in the course of the interview (Patton, 2002). (See the interview guide provided in Appendix D.) According to Patton (2002), the outline of the interview guide increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes the data systematic for each participant. Furthermore, logical gaps in data can be anticipated and can then be covered. Patton (2002) mentions that a weakness of the interview guide approach is that important and salient topics may be missed. In addition, the flexibility of the interviewer in sequencing and wording of questions can result in substantially different responses from different perspectives, thus reducing the comparability of responses.

The interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the participants. Note taking took place during the interview to assist in formulating new questions or to go back to what was said earlier. The focus group and individual interviews were transcribed verbatim to capture the verbal data for use during later analysis (Patton, 1987).

I also used focus group interviews to generate verbal data. According to Willig (2001:29), a focus group is really a group interview that uses the interaction among participants as a source of data generation. The data produced from the focus group discussion conveys the sharing of experiences with each other regarding the topic. In this study the focus groups were used to explore the topic further from what was gained in the individual interviews.

Focus group interview were used to increase the credibility of this study and to provide a "deepened understanding" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The concept of crystallisation is explained in Section 3.6.1. Similarly, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) state that from discussion in a focus group, individual responses become refined and sharpened, and move to a deeper and more considered level. Patton (2002) points out that different focus groups conducted will provide a variety of perspectives and increase confidence in whatever patterns emerge. In this way patterns and themes can be verified.

According to Patton (2002) and Fontana and Frey (1991 cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), focus group interviews have several advantages and limitations for qualitative inquiry. One advantage of focus group interviews is that interaction among participants enhances data quality. Furthermore, the participants tend to provide checks and balances on each other and in this way false or extreme views are eliminated. In addition, focus groups are enjoyable to the participants and they can share similar or diverse views. Therefore, the

extent to which there is a relatively consistent, shared viewpoint or diversity of views can be quickly assessed. Focus groups also have limitations. For example, facilitating and conducting a focus group requires group process skills beyond just asking questions because of the group dynamics that are present. The facilitator needs to manage the interview in order to prevent domination by one or two participants. Those participants who realise that their viewpoint is a minority perspective may not feel free to speak up and risk negative reactions from other participants.

I conducted two focus group interviews with participants from the major categories of disabilities. The focus group interviews were conducted at different times in the research process. Three students with disabilities participated in the first focus group and four in the second.

During the focus group interview, the facilitator guided the interview by means of an interview guide to cover relevant topics and to structure questioning.

3.5 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

According to Creswell (1994) and Patton (2002), the process of data analysis in research is eclectic, because there is more than one method to use and no precise terms to describe varieties and processes of qualitative analysis. The process of data analysis started during fieldwork. Data analysis is the systematic search for meaning and a means to process data. In other words, the process involves making sense out of the data (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative researcher's effort will focus on interpreting and understanding the social world of the participants (Mouton, 1996:168). Data analysis in a qualitative study begins by bringing together and organising all the information about the case, for example the interview transcripts, reflective memos and field notes (Patton, 2002). Yin (1994) in Merriam (1998) calls this organisation of material the database and says that it is used to locate specific data during intensive analysis. Patton (2002) also notes that the case record includes all the major information that will be used doing the analysis of data.

Data analysis is a complex process that involves movement between inductive and deductive reasoning, between descriptions and interpretations. According to Patton (2002), the early stages of qualitative analysis are typically inductive in an effort to develop a codebook or possible categories, themes and patterns during content and thematic analysis. This process is called "open-coding" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998 in Patton, 2002:453). A second coding of qualitative data after "open-coding" is called "axial coding". During this process the researcher organises the codes, develops links among them, and discovers key analytic

categories (Neuman, 2003). Furthermore, the meanings or insights that one gains from thematic analysis constitute the findings of a study. Mouton (2001:108) confirms the above by stating that the aim of analysis is to understand the various elements of one's data and to identify patterns or themes in the data.

The process of data analysis starts by systematically classifying the data in themes and category types. "The categories describe the data, but to some extent they also interpret the data" (Merriam, 1998:187). In this study, categories, sub-categories and overarching themes were constructed through using the constant comparative method of data analysis. The constant comparative method was used as explained in Merriam (1998). The method does just what the name implies, namely it compares constantly. Merriam (1998:159) explains that "[b]ecause the basic strategy of the constant comparative method is compatible with the inductive, concept-building orientation of all qualitative research, the constant comparative method of data analysis has been adopted by many researchers who are not seeking to build substantive theory".

I followed the steps of category construction as described by Merriam (1998):

- First I read the interview transcripts. During this reading process I made notes, comments, and queries in the margin. This process is referred to as "open-coding" by Strauss and Corbin (1998) in Patton, (2002:453).
- After working through the full transcript in this way, it was necessary to review the notes and comments in the margin and to try to group those comments and notes that seemed to belong together. Thus, codes were organised and linked to discover themes and categories. This process is referred to as axial coding (Neuman, 2003).
- I then moved to the next set of data, following the same procedure as was mentioned above. While moving through the process it was important to keep in mind the list of groupings extracted from previous transcriptions and to check whether they were present in the second set. Thus, a second list of comments or notes was derived and together with the first list they formed a master list of concepts derived from both sets of data.
- Clearly, the categories were abstractions from the data, and not the data itself.

Merriam (1998:183) mentions a number of important guidelines to determine the categories derived from the constant comparative method of data analysis that I kept in mind:

- The purpose of the research is reflected in the categories: "[I]n effect, the categories are the answers to your research question(s)."

- Categories should be comprehensive. All data relevant and important to the study should be placed in a category or subcategory.
- Categories should be "mutually exclusive". This means that a specific unit of data should only fit into one category. If the same unit fits into more than one category, more conceptual work needs to be done to improve categories.
- Categories should be "sensitising". Naming the category should be sensitive to what is in the data. The reader should be able to read the categories and gain a better understanding of the nature of the data.
- Categories should be "conceptually congruent". This means the same level of abstraction should characterise all categories at the same level.

A transcribed focus group interview is attached as Appendix E to demonstrate the process of data transformation. The process is shown by means of open-coding and axial coding. The categories and themes, according to students with disabilities' experiences of support and barrier factors, were identified as shown in Tables 3.2(a) and 3.2(b) below.

Table 3.2(a): Table of category types

Category Type	Category Type
Internal	External
The internal factors and processes are defined as the components and all factors within the person and are sub-divided into the following categories: emotional, behaviour, beliefs, physical and cognitive.	The external factors and processes are defined as the components and all factors outside of the person and are sub-divided into the following categories: peers, the faculty and department, university accommodation, the classroom and the university.

Table 3.2(b): Table of overarching themes

Theme	Attitudes and awareness	Advocacy	Communication	Inclusion
Description	Having knowledge or perception of students with disabilities' support needs and barriers to learning	The act of arguing for a particular cause or position with staff members, peers and lecturers to indicate support needs and accommodations.	Sharing of information regarding disability by means of disclosure as well as communication across the organisation between support services, faculty and administration	A philosophy that recognises and addresses disability as a human right and development issue and includes principles such as respect, equity, non-discrimination, access and full participation.

3.6 DATA VERIFICATION

All researchers attempt to produce valid and reliable data in an ethical manner. The verification of data refers to the process of checking the credibility, transferability and dependability of the research findings, and thereby the quality and the trustworthiness thereof (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Mertens, 1998). Each of these terms will be explained and related to my study.

3.6.1 Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Glaser and Strauss (1967), cited in Ritchie and Lewis (2003), in qualitative research, there have been efforts to move away from the quantitative concept of 'internal validity' and rather to use other terms such as 'credibility' or 'plausibility'. These terms refer to the 'correctness' of data and translate more appropriately for naturalistic enquiry. Furthermore, in qualitative research 'credibility' implies the extent to which the phenomenon studied is accurately reflected in the research findings (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Silverman, 2000). Babbie and Mouton (2001) and Mertens (1998) mention triangulation and consultation with an independent researcher as strategies to enhance the credibility of a research study. In this study, credibility was enhanced by the rich descriptions obtained by looking from different angles and discovering multiple meaning. Richardson (1997) in Denzin and Lincoln (2005) uses the crystal as an image in contrast to the triangle to understand credibility in the conduct of qualitative enquiry. The metaphor of a crystal "combines symmetry and substance with an indefinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations ... and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter ... reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns ... what we see depends on our angle of repose" (Richardson 1997:92, cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2005:208). Although crystallisation provides a "deepened" understanding of a particular topic under study there is no single truth and there is always more that we can learn regarding the topic by looking from different angles (Richardson, 1997 in Denzin & Lincoln 2005). I realised that there is always more to be learned regarding disability by looking from different angles, discovering the multiple layers of meaning and listening to different stories of people with disabilities. Thus there is no fixed point of reference that can be triangulated and far more than three sides to a story. A range of different methods (individual and focus group interviews) were used in this research study at different times, which provided for a more deepened and complex reflection of participants' experiences.

The constant comparative method of data analysis, as explained by Merriam (1998) and Silverman (2000) in Ritchie and Lewis (2003), is concerned with internal validation of the data. This involves taking hypotheses from data and testing them by constant checking and comparison across cases and individuals as explained in Section 3.5. Creswell (1998) emphasises the importance of seeking divergent perspectives from various participants. For that reason the themes that I identified in the individual interviews served as stimuli for the focus group discussions. In the focus group interview I sought the participants' perspectives on the produced data and themes were verified in this way. The consultation with an independent researcher also enhanced the credibility of this study. Merriam (2002:31) refers to consultation with an independent researcher as "[d]iscussions with colleagues regarding the process of study, the congruency of emerging findings with the raw data, and tentative interpretations". Thus, in order to improve the credibility of this study, I consulted with an independent researcher regarding own perceptions, insights and data analysis. The dependability of the study was further enhanced by my regular contact sessions with my study supervisor. This experience proved to be extremely helpful and led to greater insight into and awareness of the research process. For example, themes and categories were verified by means of coding by an independent researcher.

3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability is concerned with the extent to which the findings of the research can be applied to other groups within the wider population or to other situations or settings (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In other words, one should ask whether the findings can be generalised. Patton (2002, cited in Merriam, 1998:209) says the following in this regard: "Qualitative research should provide perspectives rather than truth, empirical assessment of local decisions makers' theories of action rather than generation and verification of universal theories, and context-bound extrapolations rather than generalizations."

Thus, the researcher's interest is not in statistical generalisation; it is primarily concerned with providing rich, in-depth descriptions of the research findings in order to make successful comparisons (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Furthermore, the selection of diverse participants contributes to the transferability of a study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In Section 3.3 the selection of participants is described and set out in Table 3.2 in order to show how the diversity of the participants was maximised. This study also provides rich in-depth descriptions of the research findings. Finally I explained the context, design, selection of participants and decisions of this study to the reader. Therefore the reader can make an informed decision about transferability to his or her specific context.

3.6.3 Dependability

According to Merriam (1998:2005), 'reliability' refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. Traditionally reliability was achieved when a measurement produced the same answer on different occasions (Willig, 2001). Merriam (1998) states that 'reliability' is problematic in social sciences simply because human behaviour, and specifically human experience, is never static. Lincoln and Guba (1985) in Ritchie and Lewis (2003) support this concern that the concept of 'replication' in qualitative research is difficult to obtain in view of the complexity of the phenomena being studied and because of the impact of context. Therefore, Lincoln and Guba (1985) in Ritchie and Lewis (2003) talk of "dependability" of evidence. Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Merriam, 1998) state that the question should not be whether findings will be the same again but whether the results are consistent with the produced data; therefore, whether the data is dependable. Furthermore, according to Bogdan and Biklen (1992) as cited in Swart (1994:174), the concept of reliability to the qualitative researcher means "a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than the literal consistency across different observations". Mertens (1998) states that the dependability of a qualitative study is enhanced by the researcher's use of clearly defined guidelines for data collection and data analysis. Mertens (1998:184) suggests that the researcher leaves a clearly defined "trace" or trail of evidence during data collection and data analysis to enable any person to evaluate the quality of the study. Maykut and Morehouse (1994:146) state that "this documentation allows you to walk people through your work, from beginning to end so that they can understand the path you took and judge the trustworthiness of your outcomes". In the study both the data collection and data analysis were described in detail in order to show the process of data transformation and to leave a "trail of evidence" (see Section 3.5). All the data collected through the interviews was kept in a database. In addition, the dependability of this study was improved when I consulted with a colleague as independent researcher as well as with my study supervisor to discuss my own perceptions, insights and analysis of data (Mertens, 1998). (See Section 3.6.1 in this regard.)

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In qualitative research, ensuring validity and reliability involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner (Merriam, 1998:198). Babbie and Mouton (2001) and Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) stress the need to consider the following ethical considerations: informed consent, voluntary participation, accurate information and confidentiality. Furthermore, a Professional Ethical Code (2006) was used to guide this research study. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and the Ethical Code of the Professional Board for Psychology

(PBP, 2006) points to the following principles in relation to ethics within the field of the social sciences and more specifically psychology:

- **Informed consent**

According to the Ethical Code for Psychologists (PBP, 2006), participants should be fully informed about the nature of the research and the responsibilities of each party involved as well as the research procedure. This ethical consideration was addressed in consent letters (one asking for individual participation and the other asking for focus group participation) circulated to each participant asking for their consent and informing them about the research procedures (Appendix F).

- **Transparency**

Deception of participants should be avoided at all times. The researcher should never deceive a research participant about significant aspects that would affect their willingness to participate. This would include aspects such as physical risks, discomfort or unpleasant emotional experiences (PBP, 2006). I explained the purpose and aim of the research study to the participants beforehand. The participants were informed that this study would imply a sharing of their personal experiences and perspectives in a group setting or individually.

- **Confidentiality and anonymity**

The Ethical Code also emphasises that complete confidentiality should be ensured regarding any information about participants acquired during the research process. Any personal data should therefore be kept anonymous at all times (PBP, 2006). This aspect was addressed in the aforementioned letters (Appendix F), as well as through the fact that the participants' identity would not be divulged in any discussion or presentation of the research.

- **Voluntary participation**

This principle emphasises that participants should feel free to choose whether they want to participate in the research or not (PBP, 2006). Thus, voluntary participation should be based on "full and open information" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:138). Participants should be informed that they are free to participate or to withdraw from the research. According to the PBP (2006), special care should be taken to protect participants from adverse consequences of withdrawing from participation. This aspect was addressed in the aforementioned letters (Appendix F).

- **Accuracy**

The guarantee that data is accurate is an important principle in the social science's ethical codes (PBP, 2006). The researcher shall not falsify or fabricate any results in any publication of research findings such as a book or journal article (PBP, 2006). Denzin & Lincoln (2000:140) note that "[f]abrications, fraudulent materials, omissions and contrivances are both nonscientific and unethical. Data that are internally and externally valid are the coin of the realm, experimentally and morally."

During the research process the researcher should act in accordance with the ethical principles at all times. I assured the participants of confidentiality and anonymity of the study. This was addressed in letters asking for the participants' consent and explaining the research process.

3.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the research design, research paradigm and research methodology of this study were discussed. The methods of data collection were explicated and the processes of data analysis and data verification were presented. Finally, the relevant ethical considerations were discussed. The following chapter will provide a thorough discussion of the research findings.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTING THE DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to answer the following question: What are students with disabilities' experiences of support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University? To do this the findings from the individual interviews and the focus group interviews were integrated to provide a holistic understanding of the experiences of students with disabilities. In order to understand the data the findings were structured according to categories and themes. The data elicited from the participants clearly fitted into two broad categories, namely internal and external support and barrier factors and processes. Figure 4.1 shows the continuum of internal and external support and barrier factors and processes. Four broad themes emerged from these factors. The categories, sub-categories and broad themes are discussed below.

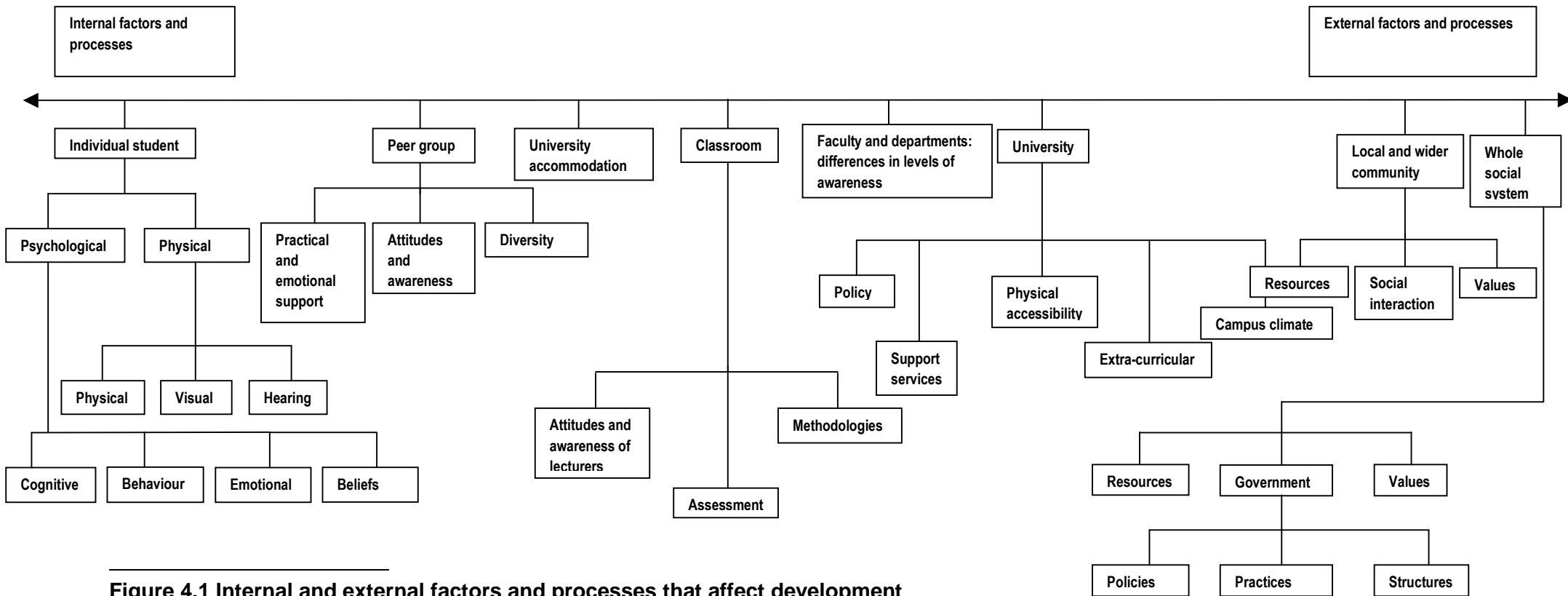


Figure 4.1 Internal and external factors and processes that affect development

Source: Adapted from Donald et al. (2002:56).

The **internal support and barrier factors and processes** are defined as the components and all factors within the person and are sub-divided into the following categories: **emotional, behaviour, beliefs, physical and cognitive**. The **external support and barrier factors and processes** are defined as the components and all factors in the environment and outside of the person and are sub-divided into the following categories: **peers, the faculty and department, university accommodation, the classroom and the university**. The four broad overarching themes are **attitudes and awareness, communication, level of inclusion, and advocacy**. These themes overlap to some extent, but taken together provide a comprehensive study of the participants' experiences of support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University. The categories and themes, according to students with disabilities' experiences of support and barrier factors, were identified as indicated in Table 3.2(a) and 3.2(b) (See Appendix E for an overview).

My intention is to make it clear to the reader what the internal and external factors and processes of support and barriers entail. Furthermore, the complexity and interaction between the internal and external factors and processes in relation to support and barriers become evident through the data of the participants. Each participant in the research will be referred to as either an individual participant (**IP**) or a focus group participant (**FP**) throughout the text. Any quotes are written in italics to indicate that this is not my wording but the words of the participants. Their responses have been quoted verbatim.

4.2 INTERNAL SUPPORT AND BARRIER FACTORS AND PROCESSES

4.2.1 Emotional

The participants expressed their experience of positive emotions like happiness and satisfaction or negative emotions like aggression. They recognise that these emotions can contribute to the support process or detract from it, thereby becoming a support or barrier factor.

Many students with disabilities responded that overall their experience of support and services provided at Stellenbosch University was good. They recognised a mutual relationship between themselves and others and identified their own emotions as possible barriers to support. They stated that it was their responsibility to contain their emotions and to advise others on problems related to support or to raise awareness of their support needs rather than becoming rude or aggressive. One student stated it as follows:

*Ek het nog geen probleem gehad op geen manier nie; ek is baie gelukkig. Ek het nog nooit gevoel dat hier is 'n tekort nie. Ek voel as hier dalk 'n tekort is moet jy nie op jou perdjie spring nie – jy moet eerder probeer adviseer en kyk hoe jy dit kan oplos (FP-1).**

Although they reported general feelings of happiness and satisfaction with support at Stellenbosch University and experienced a sense of belonging they reported that there were incidents where they became very upset.

Ek moet sê ek raak soms baie emosioneel. Aan die begin van die jaar want ek het nie geweet wat ek gaan doen nie, waar is alles, en hoe werk alles ... Eintlik, die meeste mense is baie behulpsaam en baie vriendelik – daar is net 'n paar mense wat jy mee sukkel. Jy moenie kortaf raak met hulle nie. Ek is nie onskuldig nie (FP-5).

Furthermore a lack of support or awareness from staff or others resulted in feelings of exclusion and alienation and these situations created barriers and complicated matters further, as shown in the following quote:

Ek het uitgesluit gevoel, ek het verwerp gevoel, jy weet die irrasionele dier kom nou uit ... wat maak dit op die einde van die dag? Dit bring aggressie uit, die bring woede uit en dit raak 'n emosionele onstabiele storie (IP-3).

It seems that students with disabilities experience both positive and negative emotions. Their negative emotions are the result of uncertainty and actions of others. However, they recognise their own agency in the support process and feel that they need to raise awareness and advise others in this regard.

4.2.2 Behaviour

In this study the behaviour of the participants is regarded as a possible barrier or support factor. The aspects that emerged are their own disclosure of information, communication and participation or lack thereof.

4.2.2.1 Disclosure

The students reported that they knew it was their own responsibility to disclose their disability. *Ek dink die onus lê totaal en al by die student (IP-2).* They stated that disclosing information regarding their disability and support needs helped them to find the way forward

* The experiences of the participants were documented in Afrikaans because it is their preferred language.

and that they received information and advice on suitable support services. One student explained:

Toe ek aansoek gedoen het voor my eerste jaar, het ek 'n vorm ingevul en my gestremdheid genoem en hulle het vir my inligting gestuur. Toe het ek 'n afspraak gemaak (toe was dit nog Studentesake) met [...] sy het my vertel hoe dit werk en wie ek moes sien. In die eerste week was daar oriëntasie voor die klasse begin het, het hulle toe met ons vergader om te verduidelik hoe alles werk (IP-1).

However, once they have disclosed some students with disabilities need much more than communication alone. Information is often not enough to support them, as expressed by one participant:

Hulle het geweet want dit het op my vorm gestaan dat ek 'n gehoorverlies het, maar ek dink hulle het dit eintlik eers werklik begin besef toe ek fisies in die klas is en sê dat ek nie verstaan nie (IP-3).

Furthermore, some students experienced a lack of communication from the university as a barrier. After they had disclosed information they believed not enough was done to ensure the information was communicated to the right person. The following participant reports that simply informing students that support is available will not necessarily ensure that the students will get the support they need. The following participant suggested that individual contact sessions be arranged where support needs can be discussed:

Oor die algemeen is daar eintlik 'n baie slegte kommunikasiestelsel wat op die oomblik in plek is. Hulle moet meer met die studente met spesiale behoeftes kommunikeer. Dit is die student se eie verantwoordelikheid – as hy aansoek doen, is daar 'n afdeling wat sê: "Is jy gestremd – is jy nie gestremd nie – het jy 'n spesiale behoefte?" Dis jou eie ding om dit in te vul, maar as dit ingevul is, is daar mos 'n ding van dat jy – die persoon wat by die universiteit werk, daardie inligting moet kry en ek dink nie dis voldoende dat hulle net 'n briefie uitstuur van "Ons is hier, ons kan vir jou help." Ek dink hulle moet vir jou fisies kontak, vir jou bel en sê: "Luister kom ons maak 'n afspraak, kom kuier vir ons" (IP-1).

Although it is the students' responsibility to provide information concerning their disability to the university, they feel that the information needs to be communicated to the right people in order to make appropriate recommendations regarding their support needs.

4.2.2.2 Communication

Communication is an overarching theme in the study. The participants clearly stated that mutual communication, that is, between the university and the students with disabilities, is vital. Although student support services are provided to students with disabilities, they realise that the university is not solely responsible for their support, and that they have to take ownership and communicate their special needs to the particular person involved in the support process.

Jy moet kyk waar jy hulp nodig het en dan die betrokke persoon moet met homself gaan praat...dit help nie jy gaan die hele tyd deur Studentevoorigting om vir jou al hierdie goed te doen nie – gaan na die mense toe en verduidelik vir hulle en hulle help jou (IP-2).

Therefore, communication with regard to support means that students with disabilities need to take the first step by asking for help:

Jy moet die inisiatief neem – hulle gaan nie weet as jy nie vir hulle sê nie. Jy moet stap vir stap vir hulle gaan sê: "Dit sal vir my help as jy vir my email." Hulle kom partykeer met snaakse idees wat jou glad nie kan help nie, maar jy moet net oop wees en vir hulle sê – jy moet weet wat jy nodig gaan hê wat jou gaan help, want niemand anders gaan weet nie (FP-3).

Furthermore, the participants recognised the importance of communicating with each other and the need to improve communication between them.

Onder die studente is daar ook nie kommunikasie nie. Ons self by Dis-Maties, ons komitee sukkel om hulle bymekaar te kry, die een wil niks doen nie en nou skielik wil hulle iets doen (IP-1).

4.2.2.3 Agency and participation

The participants stated that their own attitudes and willingness to participate in social or sport events would determine whether they would become fully accepted and integrated members of the university community.

Ek dink alles begin by jou 'attitude'. Alles moet nie net na jou kom nie omdat jy gestremd is nie. Ek was in 'n gewone skool gewees en mense kon nie agterkom iets is fout nie. Ek is so gewoon om saam met ander mense goeters te doen, gestremd of nie-gestremd nie. Jy moet uitgaan en mense ontmoet en nie verwag alles moet na jou toe kom nie. Hier is soveel geleenthede om betrokke te raak op Stellenbosch (FP-4).

Although the participants felt that the university offered many opportunities to participate and socialise, they believed they themselves needed to make an effort to participate.

[E]k glo ons is almal mense, ons gaan almal mekaar aanvaar, wees net, lewe net (IP-2).

Ja, ek kan deelneem, as jy wil integreer, moet jy jouself integreer – jy gaan nie vanself deel raak nie. Jy moet betrokke raak by goed en besluit – jy moet self 'n poging aanwend (FP-2).

Other students with disabilities noticed the friendly behaviour of a particular student with a visual impairment. They noted that his keen participation and friendliness created ideal opportunities to socialise, as expressed in the following quote.

Ek het hom 'n paar keer gesien hy is so vriendelik met die ander mense en almal ken hom. Ek dink dis baie belangrik; dit help nie jy sit net daar en jy verwag mense moet na jou toe kom nie. As jou persoonlikheid van so 'n aard is en dit uitstraal, sal jy mense beïndruk en dan kan jy sosialiseer (FP-7).

4.2.3 Beliefs

In the study the participants expressed beliefs of self-advocacy, ability, stigma, disability as a learning process, their perceptions of others' beliefs and individual differences. These beliefs can also become either support or barrier factors to their development.

4.2.3.1 Self-advocacy

Throughout this research advocacy and awareness were expressed as very important themes. Students reported some lecturers were not adequately aware of support needs but would not be unsupportive. They believed that self-advocacy of needs and accommodation was necessary to raise awareness and inform the lecturer about their disability.

Hulle is glad nie bewus nie – ek stel voor dat dit die studente se eie verantwoordelikheid is om voor die klasse te begin, om na al die dosente te gaan en vir hulle in te lig dat jy in hulle klas gaan wees en wat jy nodig het vir die jaar. Maak hom bewus, dan kan hy nie na die tyd se maar jy het nie so opgetree of wat ookal nie. Ek glo almal wil help, dit is net dat hulle partykeer vergeet of nie bewus is nie. So as jy jou mond oopmaak, sal hulle help (IP-2).

Although self-advocacy is needed to understand the support needs the following participant felt that lecturers had initially been unable to provide adequate support, and provided support only after he had insisted that his needs are met.

Ek moet eers by die dosente begin en vir hulle gaan sê: "So lyk my wêreld" – sodat hulle my eers kan begryp en dan moet hulle nou hulle evaluering daarby aanpas. Wel hulle kon nie en hulle het nie. Eers later in die tweede jaar het dit gebeur toe ek baie druk begin toepas het (IP-3).

Another participant emphasised the importance of a lecturer's expressing a strong interest or willingness to help students with disabilities and to discuss their support needs and the necessary accommodations. In fact, if a student has to repeat his or her advocacy of needs over and over again, it reflects an attitude of unwillingness or lack of interest from the lecturer. The following quote clearly demonstrates the interaction of internal (the student's willingness to indicate support needs and accommodations) and external (the lecturer's level of interest in the student and provision of support) factors in relation to support and barriers.

Sommiges is goed, maar sommige stel ook nie eens belang nie – ek dink omdat ek ook [...] swot, is dit 'n baie sterk behoefte, ook van 'n dosent, om te gaan en te vra, of as ek na jou toe kom en sê: "Ek het 'n spesiale behoefte, ek kan nie goed sien nie" – dat daardie dosent kan vra: "Wat is jou spesiale behoefte?" en dat hy self 'n bietjie navorsing gaan doen of ten minste net sê: "Kom na my kantoor toe, kom ons maak 'n afspraak sodat ons kan gesels." Ek dink dit is 'n baie groot ding of ook moontlik om na die klas met jou te gesels en kommunikeer. Dit is baie belangrik – baie keer voel jy so half uitgesluit as jy elke keer moet gaan vra. Jy voel half dat die dosent nie baie geïnteresseerd in my is as ek elke keer moet gaan vra vir hulp nie (IP-1).

The participants reported that an awareness of social barriers created opportunities to advocate themselves by organising events to raise general awareness of disability. For example, they had an event called "dinner in the dark" where everyone was blindfolded while eating dinner and a speaker with a visual impairment shared his story with the audience. Events like these demonstrate the positive interaction between students with disabilities and their peers, while giving the students without disabilities a chance to experience the practical reality of living with a disability. Their peers enjoyed this experience and indicated that they would like to participate in more of these events.

4.2.3.2 Ability

The participants expressed a firm belief in their own ability and inherent potential and said that they needed others to recognise this and value and respect them as human beings.

Ek is 'n volwaardige mens – ek het net 'n gestremdheid en dit is 'n gehoorgestremdheid wat ook 'n taalgestremdheid is (IP-3).

Hulle moet meer bewus gemaak word van ander studente dat hulle beseef dat daar dalk iemand is wat nie kan sien nie of hoor, maar hulle is ook maar net mense. Ek is net soos jy – jy kan dalk nie kook nie, hierdie persoon kan nie loop nie. Hy het net 'n spesiale behoefte en ek glo dat elke mens 'n spesiale behoefte het en selfs jy wat nie geklassifiseer word as gestremd nie, het iewers 'n spesiale behoefte in die lewe. Jy kan ook nie alles perfek doen nie – ons is ook net mense (IP-1).

Some participants experienced the physical inaccessibility of some buildings on campus as a barrier and explained that when a building has no access it means that a student may be denied the opportunity to take the courses offered there even though they have the intellectual ability to do so.

Daar is geboue op kampus, die Wilcocksgebou is een, Fisika en Chemie is nog een, wat glad nie hysbakke het nie. Hoe moet mense in rolstoel inkom? Dit is nie dat hulle nie in staat is nie – almal kan Chemie swot as hulle wil, maar iemand wat in 'n rolstoel is en sy hande kan gebruik, kan net nie loop nie. Dit is nogal 'n groot probleem van die fisiese toeganklikheid (IP-1).

The participants stated that they aimed to change attitudes and raise awareness on campus through self-advocacy initiatives, for example by organising a barbeque and selling hotdogs.

... Byvoorbeeld om 'n stalletjie op die Rooiplein te maak om worsrolletjies te verkoop, ens. Ons kan dit ook doen, hoekom nie? As ons bv. 'n braai hou, 'n sosiaal vir die gestremdes is dit baie keer die vriende van die gestremdes wat gestremd se werk doen. Die persoon wat vir ons braai, is 'n swaksiende persoon – hy kan nog minder sien as wat ek kan – en hy doen dit dan. Ons is nie gebreklik nie (IP-1).

4.2.3.3 Stigma

Some participants felt that stigma does exist and that people do not really know the person and only see the disability. They reasoned that their upbringing leads to preconceptions and stigma which contribute to alienation and exclusion.

Ek dink dis maar 'n stigma. Hulle ken die persoon nie – hulle word so groot – ek dink dit kom maar van die ouerhuis dat dat voorgesê word dat dit 'n 'ander' persoon – maw los hom uit – ons wil niks met hom te doen hê nie ... dit is nou maar net daardie konnotasie aan gestremde persone – hy is dom. As jy blind is, is jy dom – as jy doof is, is jy dom, as jy in 'n rolstoel sit, is jy dom ... maar intussen kan daardie persoon dalk baie ander dinge doen. Ek dink diegene wat nie betrokke is nie, is nie bewus daarvan nie (IP-1).

The following participant expressed concern about disclosure and asking for support, given the stigma of concessions like extra writing time in tests or examinations and the wish to not be treated differently to their peers.

Die slag as ek hulp wil kry, is daar niks. Partykeer sit ek daar en wonder of hulle my kan help – ek wil nie eintlik hulp vra nie. Ek praat nie van die studente nie, ek praat van die dosente. Ek verstaan hulle wil jou help. Jy is nie klein of afhanklik nie. Hulle moet ook vertrouwe in my kry. Ek voel as mense weet jy het 'n gestremdheid dan dink hulle hoe gaan jy dit op universiteit maak en so aan (FP-5).

4.2.3.4 Learning process

Many participants expressed a strong belief that their disability is a learning process for both others and themselves. With time they learn ways of coping and how to make things easier for themselves, as shown in the following quote:

Gestremdheid is 'n leerproses, jy leer elke dag iets nuuts van jouself, elke dag hoe om goed makliker te doen en om jou tyd effektief te bestee. Ek sal seker maar eendag 'n handleiding moet skryf. Jy leer die hele tyd van jouself, hoe om goed te doen, ag klein goetjies soos bv. daardie klein rekenaartjie daar, 'n groot rekenaar pas nie in my tas nie, so ek het 'n klein rekenaartjie om dit makliker te maak vir myself (IP-2).

Some viewed the problems related to support not as shortcomings but as an essential part of the learning process and most importantly, that both parties involved will learn from each other. The participants reported the following:

Ek het al bietjie probleme gehad maar ek beskou dit nie as tekortkoming nie, ek beskou dit as ons almal leer (FP-1).

Ek wil net sê ek stem baie saam dat dit 'n leerproses aan albei kante is. Albei partye moet werk aan mekaar (FP-5).

4.2.3.5 Perceptions of others' beliefs / noticeability of disability

Students believed that when their disability is not easily noticeable they have to advocate for basic accommodation and support.

'n Fisies gestremde persoon, jy kan sien hy het 'n probleem, die blinde persoon loop met sy stok – maar die dowe persoon – daar is nie 'n manier waarop jy kan sien dat daardie persoon doof is voordat hy nie met jou begin

praat nie ... Die feit dat ek 'n gehoorapparaat dra, maak nie dat daardie persoon my doofheid gaan besef nie (IP-3).

Furthermore, they felt that people tend to be more suspicious regarding their requests for support when their disability is not noticeable. The participants responded as follows:

As jy bv. 'n gestremdheid het, jy ry met 'n scooter en ek het 'n gidshond, sal mense makliker begryp bv. sy het 'n gidshond, sy kan nie sien nie, maar indien ek nie 'n gidshond by my het nie en net alleen stap, is dit moeilik want mense gaan dink: "Hoekom, wat is fout?" (FP-3).

... Of jy vat 'n kans (FP-6).

On the other hand, when a disability is noticeable, it is easy to stigmatise and this contributes to exclusion and alienation. A participant with a visual impairment shared her experience in the following way:

Dis soms as ek bv. met iemand saamloop wat blind is, 'n mens kry dit baie dat jy die een is wat kan sien en dan word jy gevra bv. "Hoekom doen hy dit?" of "Kan hy dit doen?" maar die hele probleem is daar dat die ... my gestremdheid self kan jy nie oplet nie – jy sien dit nie, jy dink ek is 'n normale persoon. So hulle sal my nader en sê en vra: "Wil die blinde persoon 'n koffie hê of wil hy 'n broodjie hê of kan ek help of iets?" Hulle vra hom nie self nie en ek dink dit moet uitgesluit word. Vra hom self – ek sal gewoonlik sê: "Vra hom self, hy is nie gebreklik nie" (IP-1).

4.2.3.6 Individual needs / differences

All the participants said that support and alternative arrangements are different for different people. Students with disabilities are not a homogeneous group, as shown in the following quote.

As jy nie kan sien nie, neem almal dadelik aan dat jy Braille kan lees, maar ek kan nie Braille lees nie. Dosente sal inligting bv. op so 'n manier probeer aanstuur, maar vir my werk dit nie (FP-3).

Therefore, the participants believed that the way forward is to take responsibility and make their unique needs known.

By elkeen is dit so verskillend dat elke dosent moet voor die tyd moet weet wat elkeen se spesieke behoefte is (FP-2).

... almal is verskillend en jy moet maar oopkop hou en hoor by die persoon wat hy soek. Ek glo nie dat dit die mense se verantwoordelikheid is om na jou toe te kom nie – jy moet na hulle toe gaan. Hulle is daar om te help (IP-2).

4.2.4 Physical

The participants experienced examinations as extremely tiring, stressful and physically strenuous. Therefore, they felt that their effort and time need to be acknowledged. Support, especially during examination times, is important because it relieves some of the physical strain.

My leertyd strek van die oggend (ek staan 06:00 op) tot die aande nie later as 20:00 nie – so dis 'n baie korter leertyd ook as die res en dan ook as jy drie uur skryf, neem ek 'n uur af ... En dan na die eksamentyd, dan gaan ek rus. Hoe meer ek slaap, hoe beter. So dis baie uitmergelend op ons. Ek sou sê dis ongeveer tien keer so erg op ons as op normale mense (IP-2).

Support at Stellenbosch University for example allowed a student with a visual impairment to write examinations using a computer. This reduced the physical strain on her eyes and she could cope, as shown in the following quote:

Ek het daarmee geëksperimenteer totdat ek nog uitgekom het by die feit dat die rekenaar vir my die beste is. Ek het in my eerste jaar alles geskryf om te kyk wat kan ek doen – toe kom ek agter dat baie keer is die 3-uur vraestelle – dit maak my oë lam, ek moet letterlik gaan slaap om weer te kan gereed wees (IP-1).

However, the levels of awareness, attitudes and willingness to provide support varied considerably between different departments and faculties. A participant reported that her request to be accommodated during examinations was questioned at one department but at a different department the staff were very supportive and accommodated her willingly. The following quote reflects her experience in terms of support at different departments:

'n Ander ding is ook dat ek nie drie dae agtermekaar kan eksamen skryf nie. Ek moet na elke eksamen, het ek drie dae nodig sodat my liggaam net kan herstel. My liggaam vat dit baie erg. Ek is op 'n stadium beskuldig daarvan dat ek aansit, dat ek nie my prioriteite reg het nie en dat ek te veel hooi op my vurk vat ... Aan die einde van laasjaar, was my laaste taak mikro-ekonomie en toe ek daar kom, toe was ek net heeltemal uitgebrand. Toe het ek dit later geskryf, so ek dink verskillende departemente hanteer dit ook verskillend. Ek het verskillende ervarings met verskillende departemente gehad. As ek by die eksamenlokaal aankom, dan is die rekenaar en die stoffie daar – dis anders as mense wat net vergeet van my. Dis ongelooflik (IP-2).

4.2.5 Cognitive

The participants' past experiences and memories of school, their understanding of limitations to support, their self-awareness and needs and awareness of policy contribute to support or barriers to their development.

4.2.5.1 Past experience / memories of school

The transition from school to university or from one university to another seemed to influence the students' experience of support at Stellenbosch University. A participant with a hearing impairment mentioned that at Stellenbosch University he received more writing time than he had at a previous university. However, unlike the international university that he had previously attended where students with hearing impairment write multiple-choice styled examinations only, this was not the case at Stellenbosch. This experience made it challenging for him to adapt to written examinations. The participant reported that people with hearing impairment generally experience spoken and written language as a barrier because sign language is their natural means of communication.

Toe ek by [...] was, het hulle wel vir my 20 minute ekstra tyd op elke uur gegee, m.a.w. op 'n drie-uur vraestel, vier ure gegee omdat ek so omslagtig moet skryf ... Ek het vir vyf jaar in Amerika se gestudeer – dowes skryf nie eksamen nie, daar bestaan nie so iets nie. Die verste wat hulle gaan kom om eksamens te skryf is monkey puzzle – meerkeusige vrae, want die dowes het nie die taal nie (IP-3).

Another participant reported that the previous university at which he had studied, had no formal support services available and that he had to learn to cope without any external support. He became so used to scanning his books and notes himself that he chooses not to use the scanning services provided at Humarga. Therefore, his willingness to utilise support services is influenced by his past experience. He thus chooses internal instead of external support, as reflected in the following quote:

Ek het voorgraads op [...] geswot. Daar is geen dienste nie, daar is net ekstra skryftyd. Ek kon ook vra dat my vraestelle vergroot word, maar daar is nie regtig dienste nie. So ek moes maar geleer om my eie ding te doen ... ek moes al my goed scan, terwyl hier 'n diens is waar hulle vir jou goed kan scan. Maar ek is al so gewoond daaraan om my eie goed te scan, dat dit weird sal voel om iemand anders te vra, ek doen dit self (FP-2).

Moreover, the transition from school to university is often experienced as a challenge because students need to adapt and learn new skills such as independent living skills, social

skills and communication skills. They also need support to cope in their new circumstances. The participants reported the following:

... jy moet baie skills nou self aanleer (FP-3).

Universiteit is baie lekkerder as skool. Ek sal dit nie vir skool verruil nie ... net aan die begin was dit nogal 'n aanpassing gewees. Dit kom ook saam met die feit dat ek bly in [...] ek bly ver van die huis af, dis nuut en as jy 'n probleem het kan jy nie huis toe gaan 'n gou-gou by Mamma gaan huil nie. Dit was 'n aanpassing, maar dis lekker (FP-5).

Ek is gelukkiger hier as wat ek in die Skool vir blindes was. Dis interessant want ek het gedink Stellenbosch is die plek waar ons blindes gaan sukkel om aan te pas. Ek het meer gesukkel op Worcester as wat ek hier gesukkel het (FP-1).

The participants described their experience at Stellenbosch University as very positive and pleasurable. They said that they particularly enjoyed the diversity and many opportunities offered by the university.

Ek dink 'diversity' kan dit beskryf. Daar is soveel goed om te doen en goed waar jy betrokke kan raak. Hier is duisende verskillende mense – dis nie so op skool nie. Baie keer op skool is daar mense wat nie 'n baie goeie ervaring het nie (FP-4).

4.2.5.2 Limitations of support

In many policy documents on disability the term 'reasonable accommodation' is used to note limitations of support. The participants reported that they are a heterogeneous group and expect a lecturer to "know it all" would be unreasonable.

Ek dink nie jy kan regtig al die kennis hê nie – elke persoon is anders. Ek dink die onus lê totaal en al by die student, ek dink nie dis die dosent se verantwoordelikheid nie. Studente is daar om te leer en dis jou verantwoordelikheid om na hulle toe te gaan (IP-2).

Mens sal nou nie van al die dosente verwag om die hele geskiedenis van elke gestremdheid te ken nie (FP-4).

It would also not be feasible or financially possible for the university to accommodate or meet all the demands of each student. The participants' understanding of limitations of support were described as follows:

Jy kan nie net van 'n gestremde se kant af hoor wat hy of sy nodig het nie, maar die persoon wat nie gestremd is nie moet ook kan sê bv. ons kan nie in hierdie behoefte voorsien nie (IP-1).

Ek is hierso in die [...] en in die [...] en hulle is goed ingerig. My 'scooter' is nog groot en pas nie in hysbakke nie. Dis my probleem – ek het nie geweet dat dit so sal wees nie maar dis nie 'n probleem van die universiteit nie. Ek los my 'scooter' onder – ek kan loop (FP-5).

4.2.5.3 Knowledge of self and needs

To have self-knowledge and awareness of their own needs is deemed most important for students in the support process. A defined sense of self is necessary to communicate needs, as shown in the following quote:

Ek voel die verantwoordelikheid is jou eie, net jy kan weet die universiteit kan basies alles vir jou sit maar as jy nie self weet wat jy nodig het nie, as jy nie self soontoe stap of so nie – hulle gaan dit nie vir jou op 'n skinkbord aandra nie. Net jy gaan weet wat op die ou end vir jou gaan werk (IP-2).

Moreover, Stellenbosch University created an inclusive environment with many opportunities for students to explore their interests and to develop a sense of self.

Jy het hier jou eie belangstellings en jou eie omgewing wat vir jou belangrik is. Na 'n paar jaar vind jy jouself. Vat klein aspekte soos uitgaan: As jy drama-persoon is gaan jy Bohemia toe; as jy rustig is gaan jy Rustics toe (FP-4).

The following participant felt that one cannot only rely on external support but that one also needs internal strenghts and certain personal characteristics in order to be successful.

Die persoonlike goed wat 'n student moet hê – ek sou sê baie mensekennis. Hy moet die deursettingsvermoë hê om daar te kan kom wat hy wil uitkom. Hy moet geduldig wees, jy kan nie verwag alles van vandag na môre toe moet gebeur nie. Hy moet positief wees en probeer om met mense kommunikeer en nie teruggetrokke wees nie – hy moet uitgaan in die wêreld en sê: "Ek is Piet Pompies en ek gaan dit regkry en jy is Susanna en jy gaan bereik wat Susanna wil doen." Verstaan jy? 'n Student moet vertrou in homself hê (IP-1).

Although personal characteristics, for example a positive attitude, determination and agency, were considered important by the participants, the attitude and competency of the lecturer may become a barrier to their development. The continuous interaction between the internal and the external factors and processes in support were confirmed by a participant in the following quote:

Ek is 'n persoon wat altyd positief is en wat baie deursettingsvermoë het en geduldig is, maar dit beïnvloed my tog as ek 'n dosent wat almal oor moan– en sê: "Maar hy is nie 'n goeie dosent nie." Dan kan dit nie werk nie – al is jy 'n positiewe persoon. Iewers gaan jy nie meer wil nie of kan nie en ek dink dit het ook 'n invloed op enige ander mens, nie net iemand met 'n spesiale behoefte nie (IP-1).

4.2.5.4 Awareness of policy

Although some of the participants responded that they were aware of the policy document on diversity and more specifically the section pertaining to students with special learning needs/disabilities, others were less aware of it as shown, in these quotes:

Ja ek het dit nou die dag gelees ... ek het geweet daar is een in plek maar ek moes dit nou die dag lees vir die voorsitterskap – so ek weet daarvan en is bewus wat daarin staan (IP-1).

Ek weet nie wat sê die Beleid nie. Ek dink oor die algemeen doen hulle baie moeite (FP-5).

Having knowledge of the policy would empower them to be advocates and to raise awareness of the policy to ensure that the university accommodates and support them effectively.

Ek weet van die beleid. Dit is ons beleid by Dis-Maties om die gestremdes se beleid bekend te maak. Ons kyk daarna (FP-1).

4.3 EXTERNAL SUPPORT AND BARRIER FACTORS AND PROCESSES

4.3.1 Peers

The participants recognised that peers supported them both practically and emotionally. Furthermore, the attitudes and awareness of peers contributed to their support, and the lack thereof was experienced as a barrier to their development. They experienced the diversity of the student community as very favourable and felt it created an inclusive environment where differences can be embraced.

4.3.1.1 Practical and emotional support from peers

The participants emphasised the importance of having friends whom they can trust for support.

Baie van die ondersteuning wat ek aan die begin gekry het, was van my vriendinne ... dit het baie gehelp ... as jy iemand ken, dan is dit baie makliker om te vra (FP-3).

The same participant also said a student mentor, in her first year, had been very supportive and provided assistance by showing her around campus and going with her when meeting lecturers. These first-year orientation activities were experienced as very helpful.

Generally, the participants felt that most people are willing to provide support. More specifically, older students with disabilities' knowledge about and experience of support is considered to be a valuable resource. Older students can direct other students with special needs to the Centre for Student Counselling and Development. Thus, other students with disabilities serve as valuable resources for information about available services, advocacy and support.

Daar is altyd iemand wat probeer om die lewe vir iemand met 'n spesiale behoefte maklik te maak en ek dink dis 'n ouer student se verantwoordelikheid om nuwe studente te adviseer om na bv. SSVO te gaan. Dalk weet jy self nie, maar daar is iemand wat jou sal kan help. Ek dink daar sal iemand en iets wees wat kan help (IP-1).

Social integration was noted as the most valuable university experience, as shown in the following quote:

Dit is baie belangrik om aanvaar te wees en om deel te wees van iets as wat dit belangrik is om toegang te hê tot goed. As jy nie vriende het nie – wat soek jy dan hier? Vriende maak jou universiteitslewe ... om in te skakel en deel te wees van 'n groep, dit gaan jou op die lang termyn ongelooflik baie help ... as jy 'n groep vriende rondom jou het, dan maak hulle jou lewe vir jou makliker ... ek dink vriende gee meer support as wat groot mense jou support ... ek dink jou omgewing rondom jou moet van so 'n aard wees dat jy na jou vriendin toe kan gaan en sê: "Ek het vandag 'n slegte dag gehad, my notes wil nie afrol nie" en hulle sal bv. sê: "Kom ons gaan haal vir jou notes" (IP-2).

4.3.1.2 Attitudes and awareness of peers

A lack of awareness and attitudinal barriers were reported as factors that caused social difficulties. The following participant reported that younger students on campus tend to be less aware of diversity, particularly of students with disabilities. This could cause an atmosphere where students with disabilities experience social alienation or rejection. The following excerpt illustrates this experience:

My vriendinne lag altyd en sê dat studente in hulle eerste jaar as jy by hulle verby loop met jou hond, dan sal hulle drie keer jou agternak. Vir die tweede en derdejaars is dit nie meer snaaks nie. As jy hier kom is dit ewe skielik baie anders vir mense as jy nie gewoon is daaraan nie. As jy blind is, is dit nog fine - ek sien nou nie as mense drie keer vir my kyk nie, maar ek weet nie hoe iemand sal voel bv. as jy in 'n rolstoel verby ry en dan gaan iemand miskien ook twee keer kyk en dan gaan daardie persoon dit sien ... Dit is net die feit dat jy in die groot wêreld is en hier is almal bymekaar – dis nie in die skool ... Vir my is die social ding baie belangrik – vir die akademie is dit vir my reg (FP-3).

Futhermore, the lack of understanding and awareness from peers as well as communication barriers can cause feelings of exclusion and social isolation, as captured by the following participant with a hearing impairment:

Ek neem bv. hierdie groep saam met wie ek hierdie [...] graad gedoen het – hulle het baie keer grappies vertel – o, hulle was 'n vriendelike opgeruimde groep gewees – ons het lekker goed gedeel, emosionele goed gedeel, lewensvaardighede gedeel. Dan lag hulle hul gate uit vir die grappie wat vertel is, dan sit ek met my somber gesig, want ek weet nie wat die grappie was nie. Weet jy wat dink hulle - dat ek kwaad is, dat ek teleurgestel is, dat ek probleme by die huis, dat ek vandag nie goed voel nie. Weet jy – ek wil net so lekker saam met hulle lag, maar ek weet nie waaroor dit gaan nie (IP-3).

In addition, one of the participants considered attitudinal barriers to be much worse than the architectural barriers and considered positive social interaction with peers free of stigma crucial to create an inclusive environment.

4.3.1.3 Diversity of student population

The university's diverse population offers more opportunities to interact with a whole range of students, including students with disabilities. The participants felt that it is necessary for the whole student community to embrace diversity and become socially integrated members of an inclusive university community, as captured in the following quotes:

Ek dink die belangrikste bewustheid is dat mense sosiaal geïntegreerd moet wees, want mense kom bv. uit 'n gewone (hoofstroom) skool, dan kom jy in 'n klas en jy is ewe skielik tussen mense met rolstoel, mense wat nie kan sien nie, en dit is moeilik. So ek voel dat mense moet – mens dink jy is anders – jy is anders maar dit is nie 'n slegte ding nie (FP-3).

Ek glo dit gaan wyer as net gestremdhede, dit gaan oor enige diversiteit ... jy is bietjie vasgevang in jou eie wêreld...dit is nodig dat iemand net van buite af in jou wêreld inkom (FP-2).

In addition, the following participant said that she now has more opportunities to choose her friends and that she can socialise and identify with other students with disabilities at university.

Ek was in 'n klein skool daar is nie genoeg mense om jou vriende te kies nie. Op universiteit, daar is so baie mense. As jy nie van een persoon hou nie dan beweeg jy maar net aan ... mense kan nog vir jou sê hulle verstaan en hulle is vriendelik, ek meen ek het vriende gehad, maar ek het niemand gehad wat regtig 'n gestremdheid gehad het nie. Hier is dit baie lekkerder al is hulle blind – ons is 'n groepie (FP-5).

4.3.2 University accommodation

The accessibility of university accommodation and positive social interaction were experienced as external support factors. On the other hand, inaccessible university accommodation and a lack of communication and accommodation of needs lead to barriers and unfavourable circumstances.

4.3.2.1 Accessibility

The participants felt that even though their disability had been disclosed, they experienced problems related to suitable placement and their specific needs were inappropriately accommodated, as captured in the following quotes:

... toe ek daar kom, toe weet hulle nie eintlik ek is gestremd nie. Ek verstaan nie, want ek het moeite gedoen om mense te laat weet – al hierdie koshuisstorte het krane daar waar ek nie kan bykom nie. Toe moes ek maar drie maande vir iemand vra as ek stort om die stort aan te sit. Dit was nie baie lekker nie. Ek kom daar aan en niemand weet nie. Ek het so half gevoel dat ek so baie moeite gedoen. Met die kamers – ek het eintlik niks nodig nie, maar toe sit hulle my op die tweede vloer. Ek kan trappe klim, maar dis ... Jy kom daar aan en die atmosfeer is klaar nie reg nie (FP-5).

Some of the participants felt that there were insufficient mechanisms in place within the institution for information to be communicated with regard to their specific accommodation needs. They reported the following:

Dis net hulle moet meer kommunikasie tussen dit doen en so ook met swot en verblyf. Hulle sê bv. vir jou jy het 'n koshuisplek, maar hulle het nooit met jou gekommunikeer oor wat jou behoeftes in die koshuis is, wat het jy nodig in die koshuis om daar te kan gaan bly. Het jy bv. 'n enkelkamer nodig omdat jy 'n rolstoel het, of jy het 'n spesiale badkamer nodig of moet jy op die grondvloer bly of op die derde vloer of waar ook al. Daardie behoeftes moet met jou

gekommunikeer word ... Dit is die tipe van kommunikasie en ek dink hulle moet meer onder die studente met spesiale behoeftes kommunikeer (IP-1).

... in Desember toe bel ek hulle oor iets anders. Toe sê hulle hulle sien ek is gestremd en ek het nou plek in die koshuis. Dit was vir my half – daar was iets fout met die Admin. Hulle het nie eers geweet van my nie. Ek was ontsteld daaroor, maar ek is nou bly ek is in die koshuis (FP-7).

Although some participants had negative experiences the following participant reported that her experience of the university accommodation was very positive.

Ek het aansoek gedoen vir 'n grondvloerkamer en 'n enkelkamer en ek het dit gekry, sonder om 'n probleem te hê. Hulle pas ook by die koshuis aan – ek weet daar is een plek waar 'n deur aangepas is waar hulle die 'spring' uitgehaal het dat die persoon die deur self kan toemaak (dat dit nie toeslaan nie) – so ek dink tog dit is goed genoeg (IP-1).

4.3.2.2 Social integration

Many participants said that the university accommodation contributed to a sense of belonging and enhanced positive social interaction with peers.

Die koshuis help baie – as ek vir iemand kan sê, daardie eerste jaar – dis oor die tradisies ens. wat help om die gevoel van 'belonging' te hê (FP-3).

Ek dink alle gestremdes moet in die koshuis wees ... Die situasie wat my gered het, is dat ek dadelik in die koshuis ingetrek is (IP-2).

Dis nie dat ek dink hy kan nie op sy eie bly nie, dis net dat jy ingetrek word in die hele gemeenskap – die sosiale aspekte is vir my beter (IP-1).

Accessible university accommodation and appropriate accommodation of needs contributed to a sense of belonging and enhanced the inclusion of students with disabilities in the university community.

4.3.3 The faculty and department: Differences in levels of awareness

The participants experienced varied levels of awareness among different departments and faculties. They reasoned that the willingness and ability of faculty and staff to accommodate them depended on their knowledge and understanding of disability support needs. They experienced positive attitudes and accommodation from lecturers in the arts and humanities faculty and reported that the lecturers in this faculty were very familiar with support needs of

students with disabilities, since they had greater exposure. This is shown in the following quotes:

Ek sou sê ek het agtergekom dit verskil tussen fakulteite en ook van departement tot departement. As jy bv. 'n vak neem by Sosiologie-departement, dan is hulle baie accommodating, want dis nie die eerste keer dat 'n persoon met 'n disability 'n vak by hulle neem nie. So hulle leer soos die tyd aangaan. Ek kan in alle eerlikheid sê dat ek nog nooit gesukkel het nie, bv. nog nooit 'n probleem gehad met 'n dosent se humeur, of so iets nie, glad nie. Soos die jare aangaan leer die dosente jou ken en dan later hoef jy nie meer na hulle toe te gaan nie – hulle stuur self die goed na jou toe. Veral by die Sielkunde-departement ook, ek dink dit is omdat dit 'n menslike veld is, ek weet nie hoe dit by ander fakulteite is nie, maar by BA-fakulteit is dit baie ondersteunend (FP-3).

A large number of students with disabilities study in the arts and humanities faculty, therefore the academic staff have much experience of providing support for such students. The academic staff approach students openly and willingly in order to determine their support needs.

On the other hand, the participants reported that other students studying at Tygerberg campus, particularly a student with a visual impairment, experienced various difficulties related to practicals, scanning of notes and books, keeping up with the work load and transcribing lectures. Fewer students with disabilities study at Tygerberg and therefore academic staff have less experience of supporting and accommodating such students.

Ons het dit baie maklik, maar ek dink bv. aan 'n persoon by Tygerberg – dit is nie vir haar maklik nie ... hulle kan nie die feit insien dat sy nie in die kar kan spring en Western Cape Rehab toe kan ry en haar prakties kan gaan doen nie ... Ek dink die work load speel ook 'n baie groot rol en raak 'n frustrasie, as jy 'n gestremdheid het moet jy klaar ekstra moeite insit soos byvoorbeeld klasse opneem en oorskryf. Op Tygerberg is daar niemand wat scanning doen nie. Haar werk moet eers hiernatoe gestuur word en dan gescan word en weer terug Tygerberg toe. Dis nogals 'n mission en vat baie tyd. Hierdie ekstra werk dra net nog by tot 'n 'massive work load' wat die mediese/arbeidsterapie studente klaar het en dit kan nogals 'n groot uitdaging wees om net by die res van die klas te bly, wat nog van goed doen? Ek dink daar het al baie meer gestremde studente op Stellenbosch kampus geswot as op Tygerberg. Dit kan nogals 'n impak he as die kampus nie daarvoor gereed is nie (FP-3).

4.3.4 Classroom

A number of classroom factors were experienced by the participants as support or barrier factors to their learning and development. These include the attitudes and awareness of lecturers, the assessment procedures and the teaching methodologies used during lectures.

4.3.4.1 Attitude / awareness of lecturers

The participants' stated that positive academic staff attitudes and awareness could contribute to their learning, or a lack thereof could become barriers to their development. The participants reported instances where lecturers lacked understanding of disability support needs. The following student with a visual impairment said he had to explain and demonstrate how a software program worked in order for the lecturer to understand his specific support needs. The participant felt that the lecturer had a lack of awareness and that communication between himself and the lecturer resolved the issue.

Ek het 'n geval gehad met 'n dosent, dit was in [...]. Die [...] departement is fanaties oor voetnote. Toe ek in my eerstejaar was, was ons tegnologie nog nie van so 'n aard sodat ek self voetnote te kon doen nie. Ek het altyd my verwysings met hakkies langs die sin gesit. Die betrokke dosent het nie verstaan hoekom ek nie kon voetnote doen nie en sy het my half gepenaliseer daarvolgens. Ek het net mooi 'n gesprek gehad, rustig, daaroor. Ek het tot vir haar gedemonstreer en gewys die program laat dit nie toe nie. Toe het ek haar geadviseer en toe is albei gelukkig. Ek het nie gesien as tekortkoming of as moedswilligheid van die dosent nie. Ek het eers gedink sy is dalk oningelig (FP-1).

Although this participant did not feel that lecturers generally had negative attitudes, he mentioned that some lecturers were more aware and showed more openness and understanding than others. He had the following to say:

Maar sekere dosente was net meer akkommoderend - het net meer begrip gehad om te probeer infokus in my wêreld (IP-3).

In addition, a participant with a hearing impairment reported that the following misunderstanding had occurred between himself and his lecturer with whom he had had an appointment.

Ek het een slag bv. 'n afspraak met 'n dosent gehad om vir my 'n stuk werk te verduidelik. Sy kantoordeur was toe. Ek het geklop en 10 minute gewag, ek het weer geklop en weer gewag, want hy het nie sy deur oopgemaak nie. Ek het uit respek gewag – ek weet mos nie of hy iemand binne het, 'n kliënt of

iemand wat miskien emosioneel was, want ek kan mos nie in 'n emosionele gesprek ingaan nie of miskien was hy op die telefoon besig. Uiteindelik toe hy by die deur uitkom om badkamer toe te gaan, 20 minute later, toe sê hy vir my: "Jy is 20 minute laat!!" – MAAR ek was nie laat nie, hy het net nie die deur oopgemaak nie. Toe sê die dosent: "Maar ek het gesê kom in." Toe sê ek: "Wel, ek is doof, ek het dit nie gehoor nie" (IP-3).

Furthermore, a lack of understanding and lack of openness of the lecturer regarding the support needs, and a lack of knowledge of the participant's specific disability was expressed as follows:

Ek gebruik 'n 'scriber' om vir my te skryf. Ek het gevind dit is soms 'n probleem – oningeligtheid, mense is bang ek 'crook' of iemand gaan my help. Ek het gevind, veral by die tale – nie by [...] nie, maar by [...] omdat ek tweedetaal doen. My dosent is nogal baie bekommerd oor spelling want sy sê vir my, ja die persoon wat vir my skryf sal reg spel. Spelling tel ook teen my. Toe het ek vir haar gesê, luister hier, jy kan vir die persoon sê dat ek moet spel. Ek het dit gedoen en ek het spelfoute gemaak. Toe kom sy agter dat dit werk, maar sy is nog steeds bietjie wankelrig. Elke keer as ek vir haar sê dat ek 'n 'scriber' gebruik sal sy vra of ek nie eerder op 'n rekenaar wil tik nie. Ek kom agter sy sukkel om te verstaan wat eintlik my probleem is. Die ding is, my hande is ook geaffekteer so ek kan nie skryf nie. Ek kan skryf en ek kan tik maar dit vat te lank. Hulle sê ook vir my, kyk, hulle het baie blinde en dowe mense gehad, en ek kom agter hier is nie baie mense wat, soos ek, CP het nie (FP-5).

Another participant said that lecturers needed to model intrinsic qualities like patience, kindness, understanding and a caring attitude when providing support to students with disabilities.

Wat is die kwaliteite wat die dosent moet hê – dis die eintlike ding. Liefdevol, geduld, begrip, meer begrip, nog begrip en ANDERS dink, nie noodwendig die standaard verlaag nie ... 'n Dosent kan dan nie meer net 'n dosent wees nie – die dosent moet daardie spesiale omgee en geduld deel van sy kursus moet maak (IP-3).

The following participant mentioned that when they experienced accommodative teaching and positive attitudes from lecturers, the difference was noticeable.

Sommige dosente, wat ek self ervaar, is baie toeganklik – jy kan regtig enige iets met hulle bespreek en vir hulle vra indien ek iets nie kan sien nie, om te help, bv. indien hulle iets op die bord skryf, lees dit net vir my wat geskryf is ... oor die algemeen het ek nie regtig 'n probleem met hulle nie, hulle is baie toeganklik (IP-1).

4.3.4.2 Assessment

Many participants said that alternative assessment was used continuously and that this supported them specifically during tests and examinations. They reported that concessions such as extra writing time were made, the question paper was enlarged or Brailled, they could use a computer or laptop, or make use of a scribe.

My fakulteit ... hulle laat my toe om op my laptop eksamen te skryf. Hulle gee vir my ekstra tyd (FP-2).

My vraestelle word vergroot, en dan kry ek 20 minute op 'n uur ekstra (FP-4).

Although these concessions provided support to students with disabilities, a participant with a visual impairment told the following humorous story:

My vraestel word met e-pos gestuur, dit word gebrailleer en gestuur na die eksamenkantoor. En dié aand toe ek my vraestel oopmaak, daar staan 200 punte op die vraestel. Ek begin skryf en niks maak sin nie. Ek dop toe. Ek bel die departement en sê dit kan nie wees nie. Hulle het later besef hulle het die verkeerde vraestel gestuur. Ek het nie eers gekwalifiseer vir 'n her nie, maar hulle het my nogtans laat skryf. Dit onthou ek. Dit was die langste wat ek aan 'n vraestel geskryf het (FP-1).

The following student with a visual impairment explained that for a module in psychology, alternative assessment was used and the lecturer provided excellent assistance in this regard.

Bv. derde jaar Sielkunde stats is baie soos Wiskunde – die proses is baie duur, so daar het die dosent die aanpassing in die vraestel gemaak. Presies dieselfde vraestel word vir my gegee, maar in plaas daarvan dat ek dit moet uitwerk op papier, sê ek vir hom wat en waar hy alles moet neerskryf en dan druk hy op sy sakrekenaar uit – so ek sal mondeling aflê, spesifiek vir daardie module – nie vir ander modules nie. Omdat daar 'n logistiese probleem is weens die feit dat ek nie 'n sakrekenaar het wat ... Ek weet presies wat ek moes doen, maar ek het sy hulp nodig om dit in sy sakrekenaar in te tik (FP-3).

In contrast, a participant with a hearing impairment felt that the lecturers did not accommodate him and he had to make certain adjustments himself. In addition he reported that he experienced language barriers.

Ek moes die aanpassings self gemaak het ... doofheid beteken taalprobleme, met ander woorde ons kan nie so 'n eksklusiewe taal praat nie ... ek moet dit

eers vertaal sodat ek dit kan verstaan en dan moet ek dit vertaal of weer terugwerk sodat die dosent dit darem so 'n bietjie leesbaar kan vind (IP-3).

Some students experienced oral examinations as particularly challenging and preferred alternative means of assessment. Finding the best assessment option depended on the specific needs of the student and this was perceived as part of the learning process. The following student with a visual impairment said she had learned that the computer works best during examinations.

Ek het ook geëksperimenteer met die transkibeerder, maar dit werk nie vir my nie, veral nie as ek bv. wiskundesomme moet doen nie, dan moet ek kan sien wat ek skryf het, hoe ek dit benader het ... iemand kan dit vir my lees, maar halfpad verdwaal ek wat vir my gelees is. Toe het ons besluit dat daar van die vakke is waarin ek mondelinge kan doen – dit sit 'n verskriklike druk op 'n mens – ek dink dit is erger as om eksamen te skryf, omdat jy dit wat jy gesê het moet onthou as jy praat – jy kan nie dieselfde oor en oor sê nie en dit gebeur by 'n mondeling- so dit het nie regtig vir my gewerk nie. Ek was meer gestres om te gaan praat as wat ek moes gaan skryf het ... Ek het my eksamens aan die einde van laasjaar op die rekenaar geskryf en dit het soos 'n bom gewerk. Ek kon teruggaan, ek het na iets gekyk, ek het my vergrootglas gehad – dit het net baie goed gewerk ... Hulle doen nogal moeite om dit te kan doen, om vir my 'n rekenaar beskikbaar te stel (IP-1).

The following participant with cerebral palsy stated that although she experienced examinations as very exhausting. She felt that writing examinations, the same as all the other students, is the only way to learn and to gain knowledge in a specific subject area. Furthermore, the suggestion of doing oral examinations was experienced as challenging and created barriers to learning.

Nee, alhoewel dit baie erg op my is, ek moet eksamen skryf. Ek swot altyd saam met almal in die huis en by eksamen handel ek net so af. Alhoewel dit uitmergelend is, maar op die ou end is dit die beste manier om die kennis in jou kop te kry. Hulle het gepraat van mondelinge, dis 'n absurde – in my tweede jaar het ek drie eksamens in een week geskryf en dit was verskriklik. Toe stel die [...] departement voor dat ek mondelings moet doen. Toe moes ek vir hulle lag – ek kon dit nie doen nie, dis onmoontlik (IP-2).

In addition, the one student reported that in sport science many assessment accommodations have been made regarding the practical component of the course. For instance, in athletics a guide was provided for a student with a visual impairment. As a substitute for gymnastics, the student was required to dance as an alternative means of assessment. Furthermore, in tennis accommodations such as an orange ball that bounced

more slowly was allowed and in badminton in stead of a shuttlecock she used sponge balls that she was able to see.

4.3.4.3 Teaching methodologies

The participants reported barriers related to their disability that impacted on their learning in lectures. Teaching methodologies used in the classroom can impact on students with disabilities' learning and some participants reported they experienced problems in the lectures. For example, a participant with visual impairment said she was unable to read the transparencies that lecturers sometimes use. On the other hand, the participants said that the use of PowerPoint worked very well and afterwards they could ask the lecturers to email a copy of the presentation, in order to print, enlarge or Braille it.

Moenie vir my 'n transparant gee nie – ek kan dit nie lees nie. Ek kan voor in die klas sit, maar die transparant wat op en af geskuif word, dit werk nie vir my nie want dis te vinnig – ek kan die nie met my oë so vinnig volg, lees en skryf nie. Dit werk glad nie. PowerPoint werk oor die algemeen baie goed, ek probeer maar skryf soos wat hulle praat, maar dan vra ek eerder dat dit vir my ge-email word, dan print ek dit eerder en vul dit verder aan. Oor die algemeen is hulle baie toeganklik. Bordskrif kan ek ook nie altyd lees nie, want die lig wat op die bord val maak dit net baie moeilik om te lees (IP-1).

The participants stated that the lecturers' willingness to provide copies of notes, by sending notes electronically or by enlarging texts were experienced as very supportive and enhanced their learning.

Bv. notas – 'n persoon moet self notas gaan afrol. Ek moes dit self in die hande gekry het en gaan afrol het. Vir my as gestremde was dit baie maklik, want ek kan nog rondbeweeg en ek vra as ek hulp nodig het. Maar bv. vir 'n gestremde wat nie so maklik kan sê dat hy/sy hulp nodig het nie, sal dit nogal waardeer word as 'n dosent dit vir die student te kan gee en te sê: "Hier is jou slides." Dit maak admin net baie makliker want admin vat vir ons lank om te doen, maar as daar 'n bietjie hulp aangebied word, dan sal dit net makliker wees (IP-2).

However, having to constantly remind lecturers to enlarge notes was experienced as a barrier by a participant with a visual impairment, as shown in the following quote:

Sommiges dink daaraan as ek vir hulle sê dat hulle moet onthou om my tekste groter te maak – dan doen hulle dit vanself. Ander kere moet ek weer honderde kere herinner – onthou maak dit groot. Maar intern doen hulle dit – sommige doen dit glad nie, maar ek kan ook nie elke keer op hulle hamer nie, dan doen ek dit maar self. Hulle stuur bv. in die geval Powerpoint dit vir my aan. Dit is baie keer die maklikste (IP-1).

Participants with hearing impairment said that they experienced difficulties in lectures particularly when lecturers did not use their microphone, moved away from the microphone when speaking or when they switched off the lights. This made it difficult for them to see the lecturer when he or she was speaking.

When lectures were tape-recorded, the large rooms and the lecturer moving away from the recorder influenced the quality of the recording and this made transcribing very difficult.

Hulle het geen doofheidbewustheid gehad nie ... die dosente het nie ter harte geneem nie dat hulle aan die ander kant van die vertrek moet staan, hulle het met hulle rug na die mikrofoon gestaan ... byvoorbeeld dit help nie die bandopnemer staan hier en die klas is 30 m lank en die dosent stap in die paadjie af en gee die lesing van daaragter uit die klas nie. Dit help dan nie ek het 'n bandopnemer of dan gaan 'n tolk weer sukkel om daardie persoon te hoor (IP-3).

Seating arrangements also impacted on the learning of students with disabilities in the class, particularly when lecturers were not using their microphones. A participant with a hearing impairment felt that it is necessary to have designated seating in large lecture rooms with many students. This will ensure that they would have the opportunity to sit in front in the classroom.

Die dosent het nie haar mikrofoon gebruik nie. Toe vra ek vir haar of sy nie die mikrofoon gebruik nie, en toe sê sy ek moet in die eerste ry sit. Meeste van my klasse is daar 300 kinders in die klas – dis regtig baie groot. Jy het 10 minute om van die een gebou na die ander te gaan so jy kan nie voor sit nie. So daar het ek net gevoel daar sal dit makliker wees. Ek weet in die [...] departement is daar twee rye voor in die klas wat spesiaal vir mense met gestremdhede ingerig is en dis regtig baie oulik. Ek sit daar en dan kan ek lekker hoor. Soos by die ander plekke is daar nie regtig nie, en as ek laat kom en agter sit kan jy nie hoor nie (FP-7).

A participant with a hearing impairment reported that he found group work sessions very challenging. He also felt excluded because he was unable to take his videocamera to class to record the session in view of confidentiality concerns of the group members.

Wanneer ons in 'n groepwerk-sessie het, bv. het ek my videokamera saamgebring, want hulle het net Engels gepraat ... niemand wou toegelaat het, bv. soos jy 'n bandopnemer gebruik om jou goed saam te vat huis toe, wou ek my videokamera saamgevat het sodat my vrou of my tolk my kan help. Die groep het NEE gesê, dis nie anoniem nie. Nou is ons kwesbaar. Toe moes ek my videokamera ook uit die groepwerk vat - wat beteken dit? Sewe mense is deel van 'n groep en ek is nie deel van die groep nie. Ek moet my materiaal en

medium en alles wegvat sodat hulle standaard geakkommodeer kan word. So ek as gehoorgestremde persoon was glad nie geakkommodeer nie (IP-3).

4.3.5 University

There are a number of external factors contributing to or detracting from the support process of students with disabilities. These include the university's support services, the physical accessibility of various buildings, social integration, the campus climate, the participation in extra-curricular activities and lastly the policy of the university.

4.3.5.1 Support services

The policy for students with disabilities at Stellenbosch University outlines ways in which students with disabilities should be accommodated according to their specific needs, as far as it is practical and affordable. The participants reported that support services at Stellenbosch University are largely provided by divisions such as Humarga, the Examinations Department, and the CSCD specifically, the Office for Students with Special Needs, Student Affairs, the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Dis-Maties. Support services include, for example, the Braille service at Humarga. The participants stated that they experienced the support services positively and that these services enhanced their development.

Ek sou sê dis akkommoderend ... want daar is strukture in plek wat hom kan help – dit hang af van die spesifieke gestremdheid wat hy het, maar ek dink tog dis baie toeganklik in enige opsig (IP-1).

Furthermore, the need to improve coordination across support services emerged. The participants stated that although support structures are in place, poor communication can slow down service delivery and create gaps between policy and practice.

Ek dink al die strukture is in plek. Ek het partykeer gevoel dit vat lank om te kommunikeer, maar dit word gedoen (FP-5).

A participant with a visual impairment expressed the importance of internal and external support and of continuous interaction. Although the university provides support services such as the Braille service, further student-lecturer interaction and communication is necessary, as shown in the following quote:

Ek is ook gedurig in kontak met my dosente; hulle sê vir my wat om te skandeer en wat om te leer, dit word geskandeer en word in Braille uitgedruk

dan leer ek van Braille af. My klas neem ek op en op 'n Saterdag transkribeer ek my klasse op rekenaar. Dan druk ek my transkripsies uit (FP-1).

All the participants spoke highly of the CSCD and the staff that are committed to serving students with special needs.

SSVO is baie effektief. Toe ek hier aangekom het was hulle altyd dadelik daar. Aan die begin van die jaar was dit vir my baie rof gewees en hulle was die mense wat my regtig gehelp het (FP-5).

In addition, the participants reported that the staff at the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) provide students with a precious link to the university's services, the faculty and lecturers. The following participants spoke of the good communication between CSCD and faculty and departments.

Ek dink SSVO kommunikeer nogal redelik met mekaar. Die mense wat by die kantoor met spesiale leerbehoefes werk – hulle is 'n klein groepie en hulle probeer maar die beste daarvan maak wat hulle kan, dit wat ek al van hulle ervaar het, is baie goed. Die een weet regtig van die ander een en jy kan na enige een van hulle toe gaan en sê: "Ek het 'n probleem, kom help my nog 'n keer" en hulle kommunikeer eintlik nogal baie met die fakulteite. Ek weet bv. hulle het met fakulteit [...] gekommunikeer, van die dosente het na my toe gekom, ek het nie eers vir hulle gesê dat ek aansoek gedoen het vir die rekenaar (IP-1).

SSVO was wonderlik, ons het daar met die mense gaan praat. Ek het ekstra skryftyd nodig en ek gebruik 'n rekenaar om my eksamen op te tik. Ek het dadelik in die derde jaar gesê dat ek party vraestelle skryf wat Wiskundige goed in het en dan ek 'n halfuur breek nodig. Hulle het my geakkommodeer dat ek dit so kan doen – hulle het dadelik ramps opgesit by die fakulteit sodat ek kon ry en ook by die koshuis. Ek het in die eetsaal geëet. Ek het een slag gereël dat hulle vir my kos bring en dit was ongelooflik. Ek dink toe ek hier aangekom het was hulle nog nie so geared soos wat hulle nou is nie. Elke mens is uniek, so jy moet maar vra. Ek self leer nog (IP-2).

The participants felt that support services should focus on each individual's needs, rather than on a formula according to the individual's disability. For this reason, individualised support services are provided by CSCD when students approach them for help. Furthermore, it seems that the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) plays an advocacy and mediation role when supporting students with disabilities as expressed in the following quote:

SSVO is daar, so as ek groot probleme het, kan ek soontoe gaan (FP-7).

Support was considered important for the success and development of students with disabilities and the participants found it comforting to know that there were support structures in place as shown in the following quote:

Ja ek dink tog so – dit maak my lewe net makliker. Hoekom moet ek in die eksamen sukkel om die klein teks te lees as ek dit groot gedruk kan kry sonder dat ek nou moet sukkel om daar te kom waar ek moet uitkom?

Vir my voel dit dat hulle sal hulle beste gee, hulle sal jou verseker help, hulle gaan jou nie wegstuur nie (IP-1).

However, a participant felt that the onus is on them to make a success of their studies even though support services provide a safety net.

Ek dink dis daar om dinge vir jou makliker te maak, maar op die ou end hang dit van jouself af of jy sukses behaal of nie. Al die goed kan daar wees en jy kan nog steeds fail. Maar dit is altyd lekker om te weet dat daar ondersteuning is (IP-2).

Another participant felt that support services are an important safety net. However, she expressed her concern that such services could become overcompensating and that some people may feel obligated to provide assistance even though it is not asked for.

Partykeer dink mense hulle moet nou regtig iets doen en dan kan hulle te veel raak. Ek dink dit moet so wees dat jy weet wie is die ondersteuning. As jy vra, kan jy hulp kry, maar daar is mense wat dink hulle moet dit doen. Mense raak oor-bekommerd. Hulle moet aanvaar jy is 'n volwasse mens en jy moet jou eie besluite neem. As jy hulp soek moet jy kom en vra – hulle moet dit nie op jou afdwing nie. Ek sê nie dit gebeur elke keer nie, maar ek het al gevoel dis te veel (FP-5).

4.3.5.2 Physical accessibility

The location of lecture rooms and the physical accessibility of various buildings on campus, for example the stairs of the library, and other buildings, were considered barriers to the development of students with disabilities. The participants reported that some classes were on the third floor of a building, making it inaccessible for some students, for example those using wheelchairs. The arts and humanity faculty has lifts but the economy and business science faculty does not, and access to FHARGA is problematic since the doors of the first floor close at half-past four in the afternoon and then students have access only by means of the stairway. The steps in front of buildings such as the library, the Neelsie and the education faculty have markings to help students with visual impairment to determine how

far the steps are apart when entering buildings. Therefore, maintenance of the markings on the steps is important to ensure physical accessibility of various buildings on campus. The participants felt that the university made efforts to accommodate their needs by upgrading buildings as new needs developed, but that they still had to ask that it be done.

Ek dink die BA fakulteit is baie toeganklik met lifts ensovoorts, maar die BComm Statistiek fakulteit is heeltemal ontoeganklik. Jy kan in die gebou inkom, maar goed soos FHARGA het laas jaar die onderste vloer half-vyf toegemaak. As dit 'n rolstoelmens was en dit maak half-vyf toe, sou dit moeilik wees. Hoe moet jy daar uitkom? Die trappe is al toegang (IP-2).

'n Ander saak is bv. as ek rondbeweeg op kampus, dan is dit bv. by trappe waar daar nie 'n streep op is nie – ek is baie onseker, ek weet nie waar om te trap nie, ek weet nie hoe moet ek dit hanteer nie (IP-1).

The society for students with disabilities (Dis-Maties) served as an important link between students and the university. Issues such as the inaccessibility of buildings and hostel accommodation have been raised, as reported by the following participant.

Ek weet ... mos nou van baie studente en die toeganklikheid van baie studente, wat sukkel. Ek noem nie name nie – ek weet hier by Opvoedkunde aan die agterkant by die ramp, is glad nie toeganklik vir iemand wat met een van daardie scooters ry nie. Hulle kan nie onderom kom nie – dis te nou ontwerp en gebou. In plaas van dat hulle die ramp reguit op maak, het hulle dit nou om 'n draai gemaak. Daar is geboue op kampus, die Wilcocksgebou is een, Fisika en Chemie is nog een, wat glad nie hysbakke het nie. Hoe moet mense in rolstoel inkom? (IP-1).

4.3.5.3 Climate

Generally, the participants experienced a positive and friendly campus climate at Stellenbosch University and they were able to develop a sense of belonging as captured in the following quotes:

As mens het ek hier geblom. Ek dink vyf jaar terug het ek mens geword hier. Stellenbosch gee vir jou 'n plek om te wees, wie ook al jy is en almal aanvaar jou net soos wat jy is – dis iets waaraan ek nie gewoond was nie. Dit is 'n baie ongelooflike plek (IP-2).

Ek voel ek is 'n Matie ... (FP-3).

Ek het net gevind ook in vergelyking met ander universiteite. Alles is net vriendelik –jy stap hier in en mense is vriendelik (FP-5).

However, a participant felt that the campus is divided and that the one side of the campus (Arts and Humanities) was more friendly and aware of students with disabilities than the other side of the campus (Economic and Business Science and Natural Sciences). Thus, in context this implies that certain faculties or environments are more accessible and open to students with disabilities than other environments on campus.

Iets wat baie snaaks is, is as jy aan hierdie kant van die kampus loop, ek noem dit sommer die Arts-kant van die kampus waar almal Kuns swot en almal is happy-go-lucky en jy en dan gaan jy bv. daar na die ernstige kant van die kampus toe, aan die ander kant van die Neelsie by die BComm en BSc – daar kan jy voel dat die atmosfeer baie anders is aan daardie kant as hierdie kant van die kampus. Daar voel dit baie keer dat die mense wegspring uit jou pad uit (FP-3).

4.3.5.4 Extra-curricular

The university established an Advice Forum in order to address critical issues such as support services and infrastructure with regard to students with disabilities. Participation of students with disabilities as part of Advice Forum, created opportunities for students to be active members of the university community by participating in decision-making processes regarding accessibility, university accommodation and policy development. One student commented:

Daar is 'n liggaam, die Adviesforum vir studente met gestremdhede. Hulle is verantwoordelik vir die kommunikasie met die verskillende departemente. Ons bespreek sake wat die Universiteit raak: Hoe verander jy geboue vir gestremdes ... Ons het iemand van Beplanning op die Forum wat spesifiek kyk na die toeganklikheid van geboue (FP-1).

The society for students with disabilities is known as a valuable resource for its members. Students belonging to the society expressed positive attitudes and stated that involvement in Dis-Maties enabled them to be active members of the community. They reported that various social events are organised so that awareness of disability could be promoted on campus. These events are aimed at raising awareness and facilitating interaction with peers and other members of the university community, as captured in the following quote:

Ek is op die Vereniging vir studente met gestremdhede – die Dis-Maties. So drie jaar terug het ons tot stand gekom ... Ons is juis daarop uit om die gemeenskap en ook die Maties-gemeenskap bewus te maak van gestremdhede (FP-1).

The university provides a variety of activities for students with disabilities as expressed in the following quote. This participant referred specifically to sport participation:

Daar is so baie goed om aan deel te neem in Stellenbosch (FP-4).

Ons het Vrydagaand 'n funksie gehad en daar is ook baie van Helderbergklub wat 'n gestremde Universiteitsklub is. Toe sê hulle dis die enigste Universiteit wat 'n sportklub het. So die mense doen regtig moeite (FP-4).

Another participant felt that membership of sport clubs and societies provides ideal opportunities to socialise and interact with peers as shown in this quote:

Ek speel squash en is by Dis-Maties – ek is mal oor sport so vir my is dit 'n sosiale ding (FP-3).

4.3.5.5 Policy

It was reported that levels of awareness varied between different departments and faculties. This reflects the importance of integrating supportive policies for students with disabilities across faculties and departments in the institution. The Centre for Student Counselling and Development provides an important link to the university's management structures. It also raises awareness at the higher levels and top structures of the university. However, in spite of the policies being in place, the following participant felt that not all of the relevant role players are aware of them. This might lead to inappropriate levels of support, as shown in this quote:

Ek sou sê nie almal is bewus daarvan nie – baie skeep dit ook af – ek dink indien jy nie vir hulle sê dat daar so iets is nie, dan gaan hulle dit nie weet nie en kan toepas nie, maar sodra hulle daarvan weet, is dit 'n ander saak. Dis 'n goeie ding van bewusmaking en nie net onder die studente nie, maar ook onder die dosente. En ek dink ook as die hoofstrukture nie daarvan weet nie, kan hulle dit nie afbring na die laer strukture nie (IP-1).

The following participant emphasised how important it is that everyone in the university community be incorporated and take responsibility to provide support and create a more inclusive environment.

Ek dink daar is genoeg mense om dit te doen – dis net inkorporeer almal - trek almal in – gestremd of nie gestremd ... elke struktuur en faset van die universiteit moet daarby geïnkorporeer word ... Almal moet mekaar se hande vat, jy kan nie alleen probeer staan nie. Dit help nie jy skree "Ek het hulp

nodig!” maar niemand gaan jou help as jy nie almal se hande vat en na almal luister nie (IP-1).

4.3.6 Conclusion

The data gathered from the participants was presented in two broad categories, namely **internal support and barrier factors and processes** and **external support and barrier factors and processes**. These two broad categories were further divided into different sub-categories. The four overarching themes that emerged from the data of the participants, namely **attitudes** and **awareness, communication, inclusion** and **advocacy** were outlined (see Appendix E for an overview). Throughout the presentation of the findings the complexity and continuous interaction of the internal and external factors became evident. The findings are recontextualised and therefore, interpreted in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to document students with disabilities' experiences of support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University. The categories identified in the present study, namely internal and external support and barrier factors and processes, will be discussed to show the complexity and continuous interaction of these factors. Thus, the interpretation and recontextualising of the research findings will be discussed. Thereafter, I will suggest recommendations and explain the strengths and limitations of the study. Finally, I will address future research possibilities.

5.2 INTERPRETATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

In previous research by Fuller et al. (2004), Shevlin et al. (2004) and Dowrick et al. (2005) it was found that students with disabilities experience various barriers in tertiary education. In order to accommodate students with disabilities the institution needs to address these barriers and provide support for these students (ODP, 1997; DoE, 1997; DoE, 2001b; DoE, 1998; DoE, 2001a) Furthermore, it is important to view the different components (internal and external factors) of an environment as pointed out by Belch (2000), in order to examine the campus climate and the impact on human development. Therefore the two influential theoretical perspectives, the eco-systemic perspective (including Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological human development model, 1979, cited in Swart & Pettipher, 2005) and the constructivist perspective, provide an understanding of the importance of social context and illustrate the strong influence that social context has on development (Donald et al., 2002). Furthermore, these two perspectives, more specifically the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979, cited in Swart & Pettipher, 2005), highlight the complexity of the interaction and interdependence of systems that impact on individuals in terms of their learning and development (Swart & Pettipher, 2005). The ongoing interaction of the individual in an environment and the different components of an environment will most definitely contribute to or detract from the development process of an individual. According to Marks (1999) cited in Naidoo (2006) it is necessary to realise the complexity of the relationship between the environment, the body and the psyche. Thus, it is crucial to understand that barriers to

learning and development are not only situated in individuals, specifically students with disabilities, but involve the interaction between systems and the continuum of internal and external factors (see Fig. 4.1).

5.2.1 Internal support and barrier factors and processes

In this study the data elicited from the participants revealed that there are various internal support and barrier factors that impact on the development of students with disabilities, as shown in Figure 4.1. In a report by Nelson et al. (1993) six psychological belief factors or internal factors were identified as important factors that contributed to their success in education and support. These belief factors include discipline and effort, acceptance of disability, personal ambition, self-confidence, prior knowledge and experience and ability.

5.2.1.1 Emotional

Although the psychological belief factors are largely personal, they may still be influenced by the campus climate (Nelson et al., 1993). Revealing that the participants' emotions and other internal factors were influenced by the campus climate supports this notion. On the one hand a sense of belonging and happiness contributes to their learning and development, and on the other, negative feelings and reactions cause barriers to support. Clearly, the external factors such as a lack of awareness from staff and peers influence their experience of support and contribute to feelings of frustration and aggression. Marks (1999, cited in Naidoo, 2006) states that a full picture of disability must take into account how impairment and disability are emotionally experienced. Furthermore, students with disabilities can experience responses to exclusion, marginalisation or rejection, including resistance, anger, despair and compliance.

5.2.1.2 Behaviour

The students identified their own behaviour, specifically their own communication, disclosure and participation in the university community as important support or barrier factors. Adreon and Durocher (2007) noted that students might experience communication difficulties for reasons such as impaired speech, or difficulty in interpreting language or understanding of humour. Similarly, in this study a student with a hearing impairment mentioned that he experienced difficulty in understanding the jokes the group members made in the classroom. He thought that others might misinterpret this as a sign of indifference or anger. Thus, students with disabilities' communication difficulties can cause socialisation barriers, as reported in Adreon and Durocher (2007). Furthermore, students with disabilities considered

communication with peers and lecturers to be necessary. In this way they could ask for help and indicate the accommodations that would be needed in order to get support.

Williams and Palmer (2004, cited in Adreon & Durocher, 2007) state that an often overlooked fact is that in most university settings, students with disabilities are responsible for disclosure and advocating for themselves. The participants in this study stated that although it is their responsibility to disclose information, the university needs to improve communication procedures so that information can be communicated more effectively across the institution. Hence, the information regarding their disability and support needs is crucial in order for them to receive support from both academic and administrative staff. Students' reluctance to disclose their disability is considered a barrier to their development. However, disclosure does not necessarily ensure that students with disabilities will get the support that they need. Lightfoot and Gibson (2005) caution us to the fact that when accommodation is based solely on a student's disclosure of a disability some students might not get support. Furthermore, disclosure should not be for faculty members to focus on the person's disability instead of on his or her ability (Lightfoot & Gibson, 2005). In addition, students need to participate in various university clubs and societies such as the society for students with disabilities, or the Advice Forum, which provide opportunities to advocate and raise awareness in the university community. Dis-Maties needs to communicate effectively with its members and maintain a strong link between the university and the community.

5.2.1.3 Beliefs

In accordance with what is stated in the literature, belief factors such as ability, stigma and self-advocacy were considered important support or barrier factors by the participants. The participants' firm belief in their own ability and inherent potential will most definitely contribute to their success and development. Therefore, recognition of their potential and ability is an internal support. They need others to respect them as human beings. In contrast, concern about disclosure, given the stigma of concessions such as extra writing time and the wish to not be treated differently from peers, was expressed as a barrier factor. In prior research by Fuller et al. (2004), Shevlin et al. (2004) and Dowrick et al. (2005) many participants stated that they felt stigmatised because of the misconception that disability equals inability.

Another interesting support factor of students with disabilities in the present study was their belief that understanding and accommodating disability is a learning process for themselves and others. As a result of this belief, the participants saw problems and difficulties related to support and accommodation not as shortcomings, but as part of the learning process.

Furthermore, the perceptions of others' beliefs, specifically how easy noticeable their disability is, influenced their own beliefs of support and accommodation. Fuller et al. (2004) and Adreon and Durocher (2007) found that many faculty members were unaware of the support needs and rights of students with disabilities, especially those with invisible disabilities. In this study it was found that the participants believed that when a disability is invisible people tend to question requests for support and accommodations given to students with disabilities. On the other hand it was found that when a disability is visible it is easy to stigmatise.

Another finding in accordance with the QAA (1999) states that students with disabilities are not a homogeneous group and their support needs may differ considerably from student to student. For this reason students with disabilities believe that communication of their unique needs is necessary, in order to raise awareness and to get support.

5.2.1.4 Physical

Shevlin et al. (2004) assert that students with physical and sensory disabilities encounter many practical difficulties and that their ability to study may be undermined. Similarly, reports from participants indicated that their physical wellness was influenced by stressful examination periods and the willingness of faculty to accommodate and support them during these difficult times. Both in participants' response and in the literature, attitudes and awareness of the institution and lecturers emerged as key barrier factors that hamper students with disabilities in achieving their ambitions and performing to their best capacity (Fuller et al., 2004; Shevlin et al., 2004; Dowrick et al., 2005).

A further finding was that students with disabilities' cognitive processes – for example their past experiences, their understanding of limitations to support, self-knowledge and needs and their awareness of policies – influenced their experience of support or barriers at Stellenbosch University. According to Adreon and Durocher (2007), students often experience adjustment and transition issues in tertiary education.

5.2.1.5 Cognitive

Transition from school to university or from one university to another poses certain challenges for students with special needs. For example, a student with a hearing impairment experienced difficulty in adjusting to written styled examinations at Stellenbosch University after he studied abroad where he wrote multiple-choice styled examinations only. A certain student with a visual impairment, who had previously studied at a different university, had had no access to formal support services at the previous university.

Therefore, he learned to cope without support services and now chooses to do all the scanning of books and notes on his own. Moreover, students need to adapt and learn new skills when entering tertiary education. Adreon and Durocher (2007) state that students need to learn independent living skills, social skills and communication skills. Students are expected to initiate contact with the university's Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) to disclose their disability and must approach academic staff to indicate their support needs. In addition, Hong, Ivy, Gonzalez and Ehrensberger (2007) emphasise the importance of the development of self-advocacy (how to communicate needs), self-regulation (how to evaluate own performance), internal locus of control (what it means to have a sense of control) and self-knowledge so that students with disabilities can become self-empowered and take responsibility for their own learning. Hong et al. (2007) state that there is a lack of collaboration at tertiary level between faculty and an institution's office of student services when it comes to providing services to help prepare students with disabilities for challenges they may encounter and to help them to develop the components of self-empowerment as mentioned before. Although these students experienced certain challenges when they entered tertiary education, they particularly enjoyed the diversity and many opportunities provided by Stellenbosch University.

It seems that students realised the limitations of support. They regarded the fact that they are a heterogeneous group as the reason why it would be unreasonable to expect lecturers to know it all. In addition they realised it would not be feasible or financially possible for the university to meet all their demands.

The students considered Stellenbosch University an inclusive environment where they can explore their interests and continue to develop a sense of self. They reasoned that a defined sense of self is necessary to communicate their needs and to indicate their required accommodations to lecturers and other relevant role players. Hong et al. (2007) confirm the importance of self-knowledge and state that students with disabilities need to be aware of their own strengths, interests, and limitations. Many personal characteristics that contribute to support were identified by the participants, for example a positive attitude, agency, determination and friendliness. However, even though these students are determined to succeed academically, external factors such as the lecturers' attitude and lack of competency can create barriers.

Finally, students with disabilities' awareness of policy regarding students with special needs seemed to differ. Some students were fully aware of the contents of the policy and indicated that they had read the policy carefully, while others knew of it but had not read it yet. Knowledge of the contents of the policy empowers students to advocate for themselves. A

society like Dis-Maties is an important advocacy agent and ongoing awareness-raising campaigns will ensure that the whole university community will become involved.

5.2.2 External support and barrier factors and processes

In the study the data elicited from the participants revealed that there are various external support and barrier factors that impact on the development of students with disabilities, as previously shown in Figure 4.1. In Bronfenbrenner's model external factors can be located in the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. In a report by Nelson, et al. (1993), four sociological or external factors were identified as important factors that contributed to their success in education and support: family support, interaction with others, and interaction with faculty and university support services. A number of researchers, including Fuller et al. (2004), Shevlin et al. (2004), Dowrick et al. (2005), Nelson et al. (1993), and Adreon and Durocher (2007), found that students with disabilities in higher education face various barriers in their educational environment. Many higher education institutions, both abroad and in South Africa, including Stellenbosch University, adopted the social model perspective to support and accommodate students with disabilities. This involves that an institution recognises, understands and addresses disability as a human rights and development issue, where the key principles such as non-discrimination and equity are appropriately applied to the experiences of students with disabilities (CHE, 2005). Furthermore, policy emphasised that higher education institutions should put mechanisms in place to address barriers to learning and provide support for the diverse student population (DoE, 1997a; DoE, 1998; DoE, 2001a; DoE, 2001b). In this study the participants emphasised the role of peers, university accommodation, faculty and departments, the classroom and the university as external support and barrier factors and processes to their development.

5.2.2.1 Peers

The participants regarded the practical and emotional support from peers to be very supportive. This confirms the findings of Belch (2000). This author states that the human aggregate components of an environment influence an individual's experiences. Therefore, the behaviour of peers will influence students with disabilities' experience of safety and inclusion. The participants' accounts stressed the importance of having friends whom they can trust for support. Older students' knowledge, guidance and experience of support are considered to be valuable resources for information about available services, advocacy and support. Furthermore, student mentors were identified as being very supportive, especially when showing students with disabilities around campus or going with them to meet lecturers.

In accordance with this view, Adreon and Durocher (2007) state that it is helpful for some students to establish a liaison, contact person or mentor to go to when confused or stressed about academic or social demands. Dowrick et al. (2005) claim that peers offer crucial support and guidance to students with disabilities. Throughout prior research the attitudes and awareness of peers were considered an external support or barrier factor (Fuller et al., 2004; Shevlin et al., 2004; Dowrick et al., 2005; Nelson et al., 1993). When the attitudes or behaviours of the majority of students are negative towards students with disabilities, those interactions have the ability to be harmful to the development and academic success of students with disabilities.

Similarly, in this study a lack of awareness and understanding of disability and negative attitudes towards students with disabilities permeate their social lives and create barriers. This can result in an atmosphere where they experience social alienation or rejection. In contrast, a support factor was that Stellenbosch University's diverse student population offered an inclusive environment that enabled participation and socialisation opportunities. This reflects a campus climate where diversity is embraced and where everyone can become a member of the university community. Mandew (2003) highlights the benefits students reap both educationally and in terms of democracy from a diverse campus climate. Strange and Banning (2000, cited in Belch, 2000) posited an equivalent hierarchy of environmental conditions to Maslow's model for human development (1968, cited in Belch, 2000). According to this model as presented in Figure 2.1, the third level of an inclusive environment ensures full membership of the participants. In this study the participants reported that they did indeed experience membership and felt as if they were true Maties.

5.2.2.2 University accommodation

University accommodation was experienced as an additional support or barrier factor that can either enhance or detract from an inclusive environment. Adreon and Durocher (2007) reported that independent living skills might be problematic for students with special needs. According to some participants the inaccessibility and inappropriate placement of university accommodation were considered barriers to their development. This was not the case for all students, as some of them had very positive experiences that contributed to a sense of belonging and enhanced positive social interaction with peers. Importantly, communication between students with disabilities and the administration of the university needs to be improved. Therefore, once disability is disclosed the institution needs to support and accommodate the specific housing needs of a student with disabilities.

5.2.2.3 Faculty and department: Difference in levels of awareness

Another factor that was considered important in creating an inclusive environment was the levels of awareness of faculties and departments. Shevlin et al. (2004) confirm the above finding. It seems that the varied levels of awareness between different departments and faculties reflect limited implementation of supportive policy throughout the university. Furthermore, it implies limited support and accommodation for students with disabilities in some faculties and departments. Although the institutional policy may explicitly support the social model of disability, this can be contradicted through the everyday experiences of students. Thus policy does not necessarily always lead to proper practice.

Barriers like the physical accessibility of faculties and departments and attitudes and awareness of staff will determine whether full participation and equal opportunities are possible. An explanation for the varied levels of awareness was that staff members in the arts and social science faculty were very familiar with support needs and accommodations required due to greater exposure and course enrolments by student with disabilities. On the other hand, in the economics and business science faculty, certain departments, such as the statistics department, were seen to be less familiar with disability and student support needs. As mentioned earlier, understanding and accommodating disability is a learning process and each day is a step closer towards learning how to create an inclusive environment for all students, more specifically for students with disabilities.

5.2.2.4 Classroom

A number of classroom support or barrier factors were elicited from the participants' data. As reported in prior research by Fuller et al. (2004), students with disabilities experience difficulties related to assessment, curriculum delivery, the provision of user-friendly handouts, negative attitudes as well as a lack of awareness of lecturers. In this regard, Hong et al. (2007) state that a 'barrier-free' environment creates access and participation, particularly in the classroom. For example, lecturers need to take into account external environmental conditions such as well-circulated ventilation for students with asthma, extra space in the classroom to manoeuvre wheelchairs, the desk size and level, the seat itself and ease of writing on the desk, especially when students use a laptop to make notes. In research studies by Tinklin and Hall (1999) and Holloway (2001) cited in Shevlin et al. (2004), Dowrick et al. (2005) and Nelson et al. (1993) it is reported that staff attitudes range from supportive to unhelpful. Generally the participants in this study did not feel that lecturers and staff had negative attitudes and were unsupportive. However, it seems that some lecturers were more aware, understanding and accommodating than others. Positive

attitudes from lecturers and accommodative teaching were experienced as very supportive and the difference was noticeable to the participants. The participants in this study suggested that lecturers needed to model intrinsic qualities like patience, kindness and a caring attitude. Belch (2000) confirms that when working with students with disabilities values of human dignity and equality need to be reflected.

Barriers in relation to forms of assessment were reported. Although alternative assessment was used to provide support, students found oral examinations to be particularly challenging. Fuller et al. (2004) found that 30 per cent of the participants considered examinations to be a barrier and 12 per cent mentioned that oral presentations are challenging. The participants in this research study reported that finding the best form of assessment was a matter of experimenting and that it formed part of the learning process for both faculty and student.

In certain courses many assessment accommodations have been made, regarding the practical component of the course, particularly in sport science where, for example, as a substitute for gymnastics, a student with a visual impairment was required to dance. In accordance with Shevlin et al. (2004), participants responded that course content that includes diversity of humanity – specifically disability – leads to the promotion of an inclusive mindset among staff and peers.

Barriers related to students' disability and that impacted on their learning in lectures were reported. For example, the use of transparencies caused problems for students with visual impairment. This finding confirms Fuller et al.'s study (2004) where it was found that 44 per cent of the participants experienced barriers related to their disability in lectures. In this study, students with hearing impairment experienced difficulties when lecturers did not use a microphone, turned away from the audience or switched off the lights. This made it difficult to understand the lectures, because they could not lip-read. Other problems included that tape-recordings of some lectures are of poor quality, and that they cannot record the lecture if the lecturer moves away from the recorder, particularly in large lecture rooms. When teaching methodologies reflect flexibility in providing for a variety of learning styles by incorporating different teaching methods and multi-media, many students will benefit, and not just students with disabilities. Multi-media such as power point presentations were considered very effective teaching aids and the lecturers' willingness to email presentations provided tremendous support. Moreover, the lecturer's willingness to provide notes or to enlarge texts was experienced as very supportive. Shevlin et al. (2004) report that when students struggle to get lecture notes it is experienced as a barrier to their learning. Furthermore, participants considered seating arrangements important and the need for designated seating in large lecture rooms arose.

5.2.2.5 The university

Throughout literature the university's support services were another factor cited as crucial to the success of student with disabilities (Fuller et al., 2004; Shevlin et al., 2004; Dowrick et al., 2005; Nelson et al., 1993). The organisation of support may differ from university to university and some may even follow similar trends. However, a flexible organisation design will ensure that individual differences and needs are accommodated and support is provided (Belch, 2000). At Stellenbosch University the CSCD, specifically the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities), and other support divisions such as the Braille service at Humarga, the Examinations Department, Dis-Maties, Student Affairs and the Centre for Teaching and Learning, were considered important support structures. These support services were experienced positively and enhanced the students' learning and development. The need to improve coordination and communication across support services emerged. This confirms what is stated in Dowrick et al. (2005). Belch (2000) cautions us to the fact that institutions create highly specialised structures (such as special offices or centres) that could lead to compartmentalisation and fragmentation. Furthermore, everyone should accept responsibility to accommodate and support students with special needs, not just those people appointed in a specialised disability support office. Mandew (2003), Belch (2000) and the CHE (2005) stress that the whole campus is responsible for fostering a diverse campus climate and addressing the students' diverse needs. It should not be the task of student support services alone, although the crucial role that they play is recognised. Staff of the disability support Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) seem to play an advocacy and mediation role which is in accordance with the findings of the CHE (2005). All the participants spoke highly of the CSCD and the commitment of staff. They seem to provide students with a valuable link to the university's services and facilitate communication between faculty and students with special needs. In agreement with Dowrick et al. (2005), participants stated that support services need to focus on each student's individual needs rather than on the student's disability categories. There are diverse needs even within the same so-called 'category of disability'.

It became clear some of the support services and alternative arrangements at Stellenbosch University are similar to trends followed by local and international universities in accommodating and supporting students with visual, hearing and physical impairments. Adreon and Durocher (2007) state that some students with disabilities need specific academic support services and accommodations. It is most important to realise that the population of students with disabilities has diverse support needs. Therefore, the university needs to respond to the diverse needs of the population of students with disabilities and provide a spectrum of accommodations and support services.

The support and alternative arrangements presented in this study include the scanning and enlarging or Braille of notes and textbooks, and using information technology, for example special software programs like Jaws. Concessions include allowing lectures to be tape-recorded, emailing of notes and PowerPoint presentations after lectures, designated seating in classrooms and extra writing time for tests and examinations. Alternative arrangements are made during tests and examinations. For example, the examination department provides support by Braille or enlarging the examination paper. In addition, students report using a computer, writing an assignment, doing oral examination presentations or making use of a scribe as alternative assessment forms. For many of the participants it was comforting to know that there are support services and that these services provide a safety net when they face academic or other challenges related to university life.

Numerous researchers found that the physical accessibility of institutions constituted a major barrier to participation at universities (Fuller et al., 2004; Dowrick et al., 2005; and Tinklin & Hall, 1999; Holloway, 2001; Borland & James, 1999 cited Shevlin et al., 2004). According to Belch (2000) the physical components of an environment are relevant to the safety and belonging of students (Figure 2.1) and they send powerful non-verbal messages regarding the campus climate. Furthermore, the manner in which a university responds to accessibility issues can communicate a message of tolerance rather than embracing differences and diversity. At Stellenbosch University the inaccessibility of various buildings was reported. For example the Wilcocks building and the chemistry and physics buildings have no lifts. The arts and social sciences faculty was considered the most physically accessible. The location of lecture rooms is often problematic, for instance when they are on the second or third floor of a building. Furthermore, Fharga, on the first floor in the statistics department, closes after half past five and then the students have limited access and have to make use of the stairway, which makes it inaccessible for students with disabilities.

Students with visual impairments indicated that the steps in front of buildings, as in the case of the library, the Neelsie and specifically the education faculty, need stripe markings in order to distinguish how far they are apart. Moreover, in some buildings, specifically those of the education faculty, the design of the ramp is problematic since it is very narrow and has a turning, which makes it impossible for some students with scooters to use it. However, students report that various amendments to buildings and university accommodation have been made when students requested it. Generally, the participants said that Stellenbosch University was accessible but noted that this was not the case for the Tygerberg campus.

The overall campus climate of a university is considered central to the academic success and personal happiness of student with disabilities. An inhospitable campus climate can

result from negative behaviour of peers, a lack of awareness and understanding from lecturers, or a lack of accommodation and support. Generally, the participants experienced a positive and friendly campus environment and developed a sense of belonging. However, there were times where they had to advocate for accommodations and support. In addition, one participant considered the one side of the campus (the arts and social sciences) more friendly and aware than the other side (economic and business sciences). A positive campus climate will encompass a diverse student population where differences are embraced and participation is encouraged.

In Belch (2000) the second level of the hierarchy, as presented in Figure 2.1, proposes that involvement engages participation in roles and responsibilities in order for individual growth and development. Therefore, an institution needs to offer students a variety of opportunities to participate in societies, clubs and to take leadership and decision-making roles. At Stellenbosch University an Advice Forum has been established. Participation of students with disabilities in the Forum creates opportunities for students to become active members and experience community in the university environment. The society for students with disabilities (Dis-Maties) is known as a valuable resource for its members. Students belonging to the society reflect positive attitudes and experience involvement as active members of the campus community. The society serves as a crucial link between students and the university and relevant issues such as the accessibility of buildings, student support and awareness drives as well as university accommodation, are discussed. They organise various social events to raise awareness in the university community. One such an event was called Dinner in the Dark and this event specifically aimed to raise awareness regarding students with visual impairment.

The participants experienced the variety of activities the university offered positively. For example Helderberg sport club, a sport club for student with disabilities, was said to be the only university sport club in the country. It seems membership of these clubs and societies provides ideal socialisation opportunities. It definitely contributes to a positive campus climate.

Another factor that will contribute to an inclusive environment is policy frameworks. Many universities, both local and international, shared the sentiment that a policy within an institution is a mechanism to ensure provision of support to students with disabilities. However, prior research has indicated gaps between policy and practice (Fuller et al., 2004; Shevlin et al., 2004; Dowrick et al., 2005). Although the participants at Stellenbosch University knew about the policy for students with special needs, they did not think that lecturers, peers and other faculty staff were fully aware of it. They stated that levels of

awareness varied between different departments and faculties. In some departments and faculties it was easier to get the support and accommodations needed than in other departments. In this regard Shevlin et al. (2004) suggest that varied levels of awareness in an institution reflect a lack of integrating support for students with disabilities across the institution and can result in inappropriate levels of support. In the case of Stellenbosch University the CSCD provides an important link to the university's management structures and plays a crucial role in policy development regarding support of students with disabilities. The participants see the CSCD as an active agent of advocacy for students – more specifically, students with special needs.

The concept of reasonable accommodation is cited throughout policy frameworks both locally and internationally. The CHE (2005) states that reasonableness is influenced not only by cost implications but also by the perceptions and attitudes of what is needed in order to ensure academic success and throughput rate for students with disabilities. These attitudes and perceptions will impact on the level of provision and support an institution is willing to offer. Therefore it is crucial that an institution reflects attitudes of embracing differences rather than merely tolerating students with disabilities.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In terms of the role of the society for students with disabilities and the forum it provides it is recommended that it maintains a strong relationship with the administration of Stellenbosch University. As the principal forum whereby students with disabilities can discuss and address their needs on campus, it is important that this society is able to communicate their ideas to the administrators in charge of policy and all the relevant role players. Student with disabilities need to communicate their needs, especially those regarding the physical accessibility of the campus.

It is also recommended that diversity awareness, specifically disability awareness, should be included in first-year orientation activities and workshops. More campus-wide events should be designed to raise this awareness further and to create a more inclusive environment.

Furthermore, it will benefit all students to learn about the necessity and availability of support structures and accommodations for students with disabilities. Faculty mentoring and peer support can potentially increase the success of tertiary education for students with disabilities. New lecturers may benefit from training courses at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, such as PREDAC. It is recommended that a module on support and accommodations for students with disabilities should be included in the compulsory course

for new lecturers. This could enhance awareness, openness and sensitivity to all students' individual needs. The Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) should maintain a mediating role between students and lecturers and provide advice to lecturers on how to address the diverse support needs of students with disabilities. This in turn will contribute to the building of a trusting relationship between students with disabilities and academic staff, where everyone can learn in the process. The Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) can also help students with disabilities to develop vital skills such as self-advocacy, self-regulation, locus of control and self-awareness that will enhance their prospect of success. The following are practical training suggestions to educate faculty, staff and students.

In *Improving Campus Climate for Students with Disabilities Through the Use of Online Training*, Junco and Salter (2004) discuss the use of online programs to change the attitudes of faculty and staff towards students with disabilities. This program entails the completion of an online survey measuring their attitudes and the participation in an online training program that was designed to increase knowledge about working with students with disabilities through the presentation of laws and legislation that impact on education and students with disabilities. Videos of students with disabilities describing their educational experiences were also shown. This program, which proved to be effective in altering attitudes and behaviour, offers universities a cost effective training program. Since the program is online, staff and faculty would be able to access it at times most convenient for them.

Simulations could be used to raise awareness among staff, students and faculty. Behler (1993) discusses conducting disability simulations and some of the issues that can arise with this practice. In these simulations everyone is given the opportunity to experience some of the issues with which students with disabilities are faced and to discuss their experiences.

The Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) could also establish an online interactive portal for its registered students in order to improve communication between the students and the university. The portal could be used for the distribution of information that may be of interest to students and lecturers. Furthermore, registered students could also send messages, providing or seeking information from others.

Finally, it can be recommended that the university should ensure that support services stay up to date and are effective in handling the support requirements of all the students with disabilities. Furthermore, support services and concessions such as extra writing time have proven to enhance throughput rate and success for students with special learning needs.

5.4 STRENGTHS

The strengths of this qualitative research study are the following:

- Different data collection methods were used in this study to capture the experiences of a group of students with disabilities at Stellenbosch University. These different methods (individual and focus group interviews) were used at different times and provided for a more deepened and complex reflection of participants' experiences.
- Through the representation of different categories of disabilities, convergent and divergent perspectives of the participants were revealed and data richness was obtained.
- This research study has a rich and descriptive qualitative database that leaves a clearly defined trace of data collection and data analysis.
- During the research process consultation with an independent researcher regarding own perceptions, insights and data analysis increased the validity of the study.

5.5 LIMITATIONS

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) reminded me that all research projects have limitations and as a novice researcher, I had to learn many new things during the process of investigation. In this study I relied on the students' willingness and therefore, students' availability and time constraints influenced their participation. Fifteen students with disabilities were identified, but only ten students were able to participate in the individual and focus group interviews. The findings of this study cannot be generalised. However, qualitative research implies an in-depth description of the meaning that people construct from their experiences. The aim was not to generalise the findings in a probabilistic sense. I therefore explained the context, design and decisions so that readers could make a decision about transferability to their context. Due to the limited scope of this study I only focused on the individuals with disabilities. Ideally, all the systems can contribute to a richer, deeper understanding of the issue under investigation. This therefore opens up new opportunities for future researchers.

5.6 FUTURE RESEARCH

The aim of this study was specifically to address the experiences of students with disabilities regarding support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University. Future research possibilities could include conducting a systemic evaluation at Stellenbosch

University, thereby increasing the sample size of students with disabilities to be more representative of the larger student population and including, for example, staff, peers and other relevant role players. The findings from the present study can be used to develop a structured questionnaire and conduct a survey in order to report statistical data. Thereafter, focus group discussions could be conducted to hear the voices of the participants and to obtain data richness. Other designs and hybrids of designs and methodology could also add different perspectives, including narrative research, discourse analysis and critical research.

5.7 CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have presented the findings from one of the first studies that have been undertaken of the experiences that students with disabilities have in higher education at Stellenbosch University. The present study provides an understanding of their experiences in relation to support and barrier factors and processes at Stellenbosch University. In this study I have shown that there is a vital need to continue to seek out, listen to and act upon the voices of students with disabilities in our attempts to make higher education more inclusive.

In conclusion, the following key issues for supporting students with disabilities are proposed: The importance of variety and flexibility in all aspects relating to learning needs to be recognised. Since students with disabilities are a heterogeneous group with unique support needs, individualised support is more effective. Good communication between the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities), the administration, the faculty and peers is needed to facilitate collaboration between the role players. Positive attitudes and awareness of disability contribute to support and appropriate accommodation of students with disabilities. Advocacy is another important issue relevant to students with disabilities. The CSCD exercises an essential advocacy role. It involves both formal and informal activities such as raising awareness among important role players such as academic staff and institutional planners. Students with disabilities also need to participate in a formal capacity in key decision-making forums such as the Advice Forum at Stellenbosch University. In addition, self-advocacy and disclosure of needs is required from students in order to receive support. Disclosure is therefore, necessary to comply with admission requirements outlined in various policy frameworks, more specifically the policy for students with special learning needs at Stellenbosch University. However, a lack of awareness and advocacy, negative attitudes, poor communication and exclusion could lead to failure to accommodate and support students with disabilities even though the university undertakes to act according to principles such as equity of access and participation and non-discrimination, as outlined in the policy.

It is necessary to continue educating peers, staff and faculty regarding appropriate support and accommodation so that Stellenbosch University can attain its goals of diversity and inclusion. Although student support services play a crucial role, it is everyone's responsibility in an institution such as Stellenbosch University to create an inclusive environment where diversity can be embraced and students with disabilities can experience full membership. Finally, the need for ongoing efforts to promote unity and collaboration at Stellenbosch University is reflected in the following quote:

Ek dink daar is genoeg mense om dit te doen– dis net inkorporeer almal – trek almal in – gestremd of nie gestremd ... elke struktuur en faset van die universiteit moet daarby geïnkorporeer word ... Almal moet mekaar se hande vat; jy kan nie alleen probeer staan nie (IP-1).

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APPENDIX A

Overview of the kinds of technical and learning services offered to students with disabilities across the responding institutions. (CHE, 2005:27).

Type of service	Details of specific services offered or activities undertaken
Provision of learning materials in alternative formats	<p>Learning materials used by students are converted through facilities on the campus or through the use of external services into formats other than the printed materials normally used in classrooms.</p> <p>Alternative formats offered include Brailled material, audio- cassette tapes, printed material in larger fonts, video footage, and various electronic formats that can be assessed through existing ICT (information communication technology) facilities on campus.</p> <p>Learning materials include outlines, lecture notes, study guides, course readers and various forms of library material that students may require for assignment purposes.</p>
Alternative or supported assessment measures	<p>Assessment materials such as examinations papers and assignment outlines are converted into alternative formats listed above.</p> <p>Administration (organisation and invigilation) of alternative venues for tests and examinations</p> <p>Administration (organisation and invigilation) of additional time allocation for tests and examinations</p> <p>Evaluation, advice, negotiation and follow-up regarding alternative assessment methods where necessary, such as oral examinations</p> <p>Designated personnel such as scribes or additional invigilators to help students in examinations.</p>
Personal assistance	<p>Various mentoring programs (orientation and ongoing support)</p> <p>Note taker/scribes/amanuensis and other providers of personal assistance in the classroom situation (assistance with laboratory work, and for examination purposes)</p> <p>Additional tutoring where required in subjects and general academic skills such as study methods, essay writing etc.</p> <p>Advice forums and various counselling and support services</p> <p>Information material (e.g. information booklets about available services) and appropriate signage on campus.</p>
Information communications technology	<p>Adaptive ICT facilities (Hardware and Software) to enable students to access information (e.g. Internet access, Braille conversion and printing), communicate electronically (e.g. email and information sharing via campus network) and undertake assessment tasks (e.g. essay preparation)</p> <p>Computer literacy training</p> <p>Adaptive ICT facilities on campus and in residences</p>
Sign language provision	<p>Sign language interpreters from classroom situation and during examinations where necessary</p> <p>Training of staff in South African Sign Language (SASL) to help students where necessary</p>
Other	<p>Extended curriculum options</p> <p>Advice and negotiations with students and academic staff on adaptations to structure of academic programme where necessary</p> <p>Assistance with obtaining bursaries</p> <p>Assisting students with arrangement of residential accommodation</p> <p>Support in sports activities</p> <p>Skills for independent living, e.g. mobility training and orientation resource centre</p>

APPENDIX B

OVERVIEW OF THE BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

Physical	Attitudinal and awareness	Curricular/barriers to learning	Information and outreach	Educational supports
Accessible buildings	Levels of awareness varies between faculties	Assistive provision late or inappropriate	Recruitment of prospective students	Importance of student disability services
Library	Lack of institutional support and awareness	Inadequate availability of technology	Access to information on Support services	Individualized support services
Transport issues	Peer suspicion to disabilities 'claims' and support provision	Course content	Access to information on accommodations	Gap between policy and practice
Accommodation on and off-campus	Knowledge and understanding	Curriculum development	Network of support services and coordination	Coordination of support services
Accessible toilet provision	Stigma of accommodations and disclosure	IT the nature and equipment location	Enrolment of students with disabilities	Assistive technology Testing
Lack of lifts/heavy doors	Medical model/social model	Barriers in assessment of Coursework Examination Oral presentation	Partnership between school's disability service and administration	Counselling
Parking	Faculty ignorance unaware of the needs and rights of students	Variety of learning styles	Admission and DSS offices recruitment materials	Provision and facilitation of accommodations
Automatic doors	Peer socialisation	Accommodating policy in syllabus/statement		
Learning centres	Staff attitudes	Lecture notes		
Construction on campus		Flexible means of evaluation		
		Multi-modal instruction method and accessibility of course material		
		Welcoming classroom and field environment		

APPENDIX C

Stellenbosch University

POLICY REGARDING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS/DISABILITIES*

*“... in the South African context a social model perspective involves recognizing, understanding and addressing disability as a human rights and development issue, where the key principles such as the non-discrimination and equity entrenched in our Constitution are appropriately applied to the experiences of disabled people in this country” (Council on Higher Education, p. 3).***

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* The terms *special learning needs/disabilities* in this document are used alternately.

** CHE. 2005. South African higher education responses to students with disabilities. Equity of access and opportunity? *Higher Education Monitor*, 3.

1. Background and the current state of affairs

In 1994 Stellenbosch University appointed an *ad hoc* committee to investigate the accommodation of persons with disabilities on campus (Rossouw, 2005). This process, up to the establishing of the Advice Forum for Students with Disabilities in 1997, is explained in full by Rossouw (2005).

As of 1 January 2006, the services for students with special learning needs/disabilities has resided under the Centre for Student Counselling and Development.

The official policy regarding students with special learning needs/disabilities (SU, 1997) currently directs the advisory role of the Advice Forum and basic service delivery to such students. This policy is available electronically at the website of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development, www.sun.ac.za/counselling.as well as http://admin.sun.ac.za/Admin/Student_affairs/gestremdes.html.

The definition of disability, in terms of the above-mentioned policy, was based on the obsolete medical model of diagnostic entities. (See Brand (2005) for an explanation of the different approaches to defining the concept 'disability'.)

The two problems that have created a void in service delivery to students with special learning needs/disabilities are the decentralised nature of service delivery and the fact that the theoretical basis for this service delivery is not based on current information or approaches to the topic.

2. Legislation and the National Plan for Higher Education

Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution (1996), the Charter for Human Rights,¹ guarantees the fundamental rights of all South African citizens. The Charter includes an equity clause, as well as the right to freedom from discrimination, based on a number of social criteria, including discrimination based on disability. The Charter for Human Rights explicitly states that an individual may neither directly nor indirectly be discriminated against on grounds of a disability.

The legislation on higher education (1997)² requires that more effective measures be put in place in order better to provide for the needs of students with disabilities/special learning needs by means of the adaptation of core elements, such as the curricula and teaching, of the current system in order to accommodate a broader range of students. The legislation on higher education (1997)³ is also based on values that promote tolerance and an appreciation of diversity.

The National Plan for Higher Education⁴ of 2001 also clearly states that higher education establishments should better provide for the needs of students who experience barriers to learning, specifically those that are intrinsic to disability. These establishments have to indicate which steps and strategies, within what timeframe, are in place in their respective institutional planning for the accommodation of such students. Higher education establishments are also expected to ensure, as far as is possible, that students with physical disabilities can easily access physical facilities.

3. The position of Stellenbosch University

Stellenbosch University's Vision 2012 describes a culture on campus that welcomes diverse people and ideas. Students with special learning needs/disabilities enrich any environment with their unique knowledge, skills and characteristics, adding value to such an environment. The principle value of fairness/equity, as set out in the Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond (SU, 2000), means that the University is committed to welcoming a student body that is more representative of South African society as a whole. This implies that more disabled prospective students should be encouraged to study at tertiary level. The principle of tolerance in the Vision can be understood as a willingness to accommodate, as far as is possible, disabled students' diverse (and often complex) academic needs. Vision 2012, as well as the above-mentioned Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond (SU, 2000), which both spell out that attention will continue to be given to the issue of accessibility, is used as the basis for the policy concerning students with disabilities.

In line with its commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities for all, the University protects, within reason, the rights of individuals with special learning needs/disabilities, as well as their right to participate in activities related to higher education. In addition, the University wishes to foster a positive and non-prejudicial attitude amongst staff and students toward persons with disabilities, and will, as far as is financially viable, provide for the needs of such.

In terms of such a policy, the University wishes to provide a service to a large spectrum of the South African society, within the framework of its goals and with due consideration of the viability of providing such a service on all the different levels, by:

- 3.1 accepting students with special learning needs/disabilities, who meet the necessary academic requirements, into the student community as fully integrated members;
- 3.2 providing for the needs of such students where necessary, where doing so is practically viable and without impinging on the rights of other students;
- 3.3 maintaining a central office and employing specific persons to coordinate and promote academic accessibility and support for students with special learning needs/disabilities.

4. Definition

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'disability' is used to refer to a person with a verifiable physical, non-visible, and/or psychological limitation/s which negatively affects his/her daily activities in a specific way.

The implementation of this definition is based on the social model of disability, in which the focus is placed on the environment as a potentially limiting factor in terms of participating and engaging in activities, rather than on the diagnostic manifestation of the disability itself.

5. The rights of students with special learning needs/disabilities

This policy aims to provide specially adapted facilities for the needs of students with special learning needs/disabilities, within limits of reason, and taking financial restraints into consideration, by:

- 5.1 facilitating academic support, accessibility to modules and programmes and appropriate academic adjustments;
- 5.2 anticipating changes in the accommodation and other needs of the students with disabilities;
- 5.3 ensuring that all confidential information concerning the disability/ies is only disclosed with the written consent of the student involved;
- 5.4 promoting communication between staff members and students with special learning needs/disabilities, such as by providing academic and other information in an appropriate format.

6. Admission and registration

Admission to the University will not be refused on grounds of the prospective student having a disability, as long as the applicant meets the set academic requirements (which might exclude persons with specific types of disabilities):

- 6.1 It is the applicant's responsibility to provide information concerning his/her disability to the University.
- 6.2 The Division for Student Records will submit any such information to the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities), which will identify the applicant's unique learning needs and the implications thereof for his/her successful incorporation into the student body by means of the administration of a questionnaire that the applicant will be required to complete.
- 6.3 On admission, the eligibility of the student for the course of his/her choice will be jointly considered by the Registrar's Division, the relevant department, other professionals, and the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) (in consultation with the applicant), who will make appropriate recommendations regarding the student's admission to the specific programme. If necessary, depending on the motivation concerned, certain measures may be taken to improve the student's access to teaching. Other adjustments (such as the use of special equipment by the student and/or lecturer) may also be made, providing that such adjustments do not undermine the integrity of the graduate programme or set unrealistic expectations of the lecturers concerned. The student will be expected to provide a list of modules being undertaken by him/her, as well as his/her contact details, to all the lecturers concerned, as well as to the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities).

7. Accommodation

The existing accommodation/admission requirements, as they relate to placement in university housing, are also relevant to students with disabilities, keeping in mind that applications for admission to university housing receive individual attention.

- 7.1 Special concessions will be made in the consideration of disabled students for university housing, as far as is practically and financially viable. Should a student be dependent on the services of an assistant, the accommodation of such a student together with the assistant will be considered, as long as the housing units developed especially for this purpose are not already occupied.
- 7.2 Should a student with a special learning need/disability be accepted into residence or university housing, the housing already specially equipped to deal with such needs will enjoy preference. The Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) may be asked to provide guidance to the management of the residence/house concerned in respect of the student.

8. Physical facilities

The University aims, as far as is possible and financially viable, to improve accessibility to specific buildings and facilities for students with special learning needs/disabilities.

- 8.1 In cases where problems with access to particular buildings are identified, either for a current or prospective student, the University will attempt to rectify the problem as soon as possible. Such rectification may include the cost estimates involved or the consideration of other options (such as moving lectures to a more accessible lecture hall). Academic and housing needs will enjoy preference in this respect.
- 8.2 Accessibility to students with disabilities will be taken into account as the chief priority in the planning of new buildings and facilities (for teaching, research, accommodation, sport, recreation, etc.).
- 8.3 A representative of the Advice Forum for Students with Disabilities and/or the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) will serve on the building project teams involved, in order to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are taken into account.

9. Support services

In cooperation with the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs/Disabilities attention will be given to the specific needs of persons with disabilities, while taking the practical and financial viability of supplying suitable support services into account.

The following environments and divisions are involved in the support of these students:

- 9.1 The Division for Academic Support, and specifically the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (service of the CSCD), coordinates all such activities.

- 9.2 The Centre for Student Counselling and Development facilitates, amongst other services for students, personal therapy and development opportunities, the extended time allowed for sitting examinations and tests and the career development of such students.
- 9.3 HUMARGA provides a variety of software packages, Braille facilities and other specialised tools.
- 9.4 The Department of Sport Science/Bureau for Sport provides for participation of such students in sport, wherever possible.
- 9.5 Academic support programmes are supported by the Centre for Teaching and Learning, in cooperation with the respective faculties.
- 9.6 The student committee, Dis-Maties, is responsible for awareness drives, student support and the promotion of an inclusive institutional climate.
- 9.7 Student Affairs coordinates the functioning of the committee (Dis-Maties), as well as the general integration and housing arrangements of such students.

10. University societies and clubs

A student will not be refused membership to a University society or club due to a disability, though his/her membership will be considered in terms of practical considerations and viability.

11. Grievance procedure

In the case of academic grievances, the set academic grievance procedure has to be followed via the Academic Affairs Council and the Dean's Office concerned. Such a procedure would only be followed if personal discussions between the student and the lecturer and/or departmental head concerned did not solve the problem.

Academic grievances involve:

- the content and/or presentation of modules/graduate programmes;
- the learning environment and/or supply of supportive aids; and
- the evaluation of the graduate programme.

Administrative grievances are grievances concerning registration, subject choice and study fees, and should be discussed with the administrative official involved, the faculty secretary, or, if necessary, the Registrar.

If the problem cannot be solved within the immediate environment, a written complaint should be filed at the Division for Academic Support, specifically the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities). If a solution is still not found, the Director of the

CSCD will follow the official grievance procedure, in cooperation with the Academic Affairs Council of the SRC. Such a case can also be reported to the ombudsman, as a last resort.

All other complaints (such as those of a physical and/or practical nature) can be reported at the relevant divisions - Protective Services, Student Affairs and the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities), amongst others.

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Amended on 13 February 2007

Co-workers on the compilation of this policy: HL Botha (Academic Support); HJ Brand (CSCD); CD Cilliers (CSCD); H Keyser (previously Student Affairs), and CC Rossouw (Department of Sport Science).

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¹ *South African Constitution, Law No. 108 of 1996. Chapter 2.*

² *The Law on Higher Education: Notice 1196 of 1997. S1.18 and S1.27.2.*

³ *The Law on Higher Education: Law No. 101 of 1997.*

⁴ *National Plan for Higher Education, 2001.*

⁵ *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, 2001.*

Additional resources

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APPENDIX D

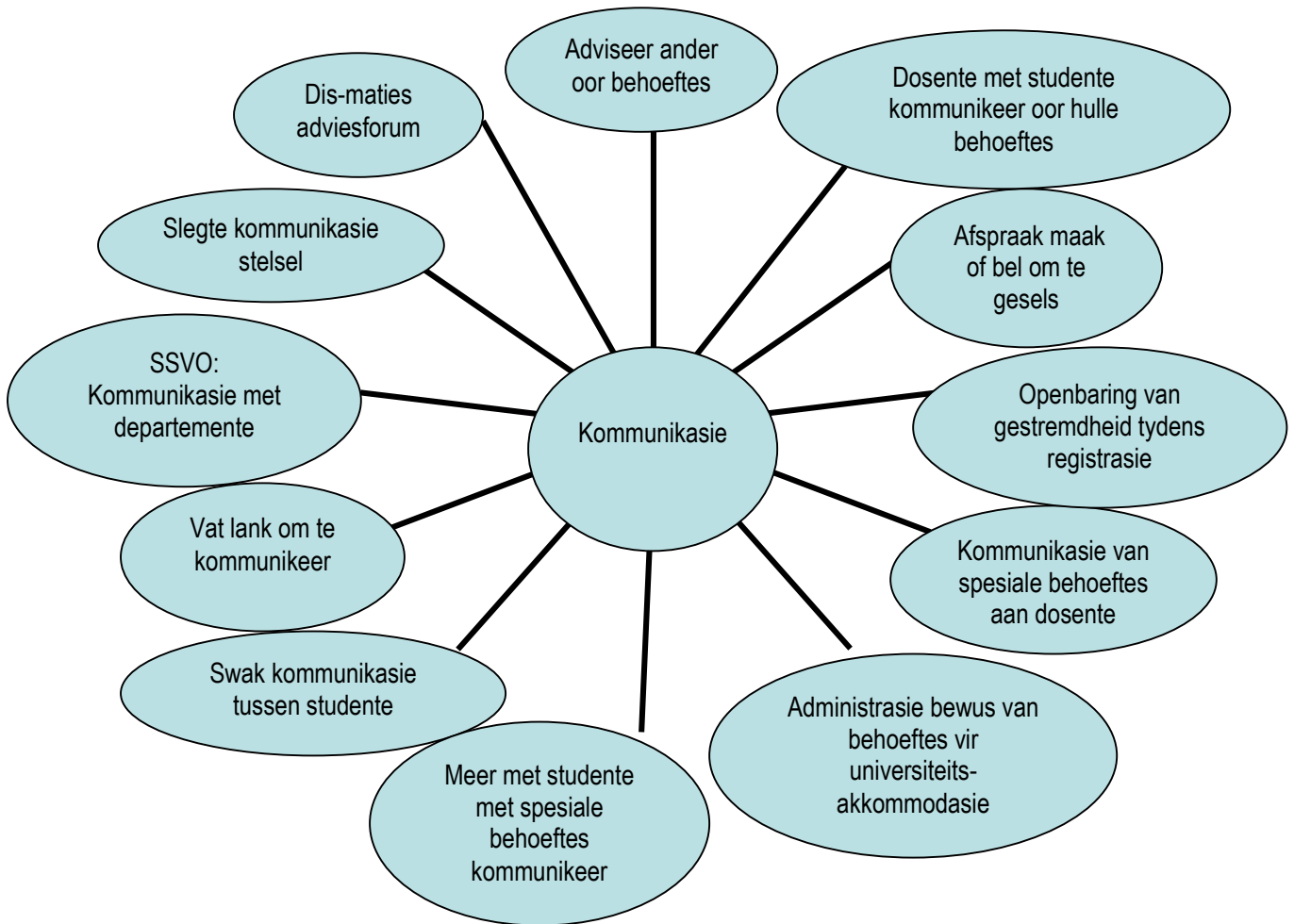
INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Teaching and learning in the classroom
Assessment/faculty/staff/peers/ barriers to learning
2. Campus climate
Accessibility/awareness/attitudes/societies/hostel accommodation/ barriers
3. Support services offered
Type of services/where/how/procedures/stakeholders involved/support needs of students with disability.
4. Policy framework
Awareness/implementation by faculty and departments
5. Collaboration/communication/coordination within the institution

APPENDIX E

OPEN-CODING FROM TRANSCRIPTS

1. Jy moet eerder probeer adviseer en kyk hoe jy dit kan oplos **(FP-1)**.
2. Adviesforum verantwoordelik vir die kommunikasie met die verskillende departemente **(FP-1)**.
3. Vat lank om te kommunikeer, maar dit word gedoen **(FP-5)**.
4. Toe het ek niks gehoor nie en aanvaar ek het nie plek gekry het nie. Toe, soos in Desember, toe bel ek hulle oor iets anders. Toe sê hulle, hulle sien ek is gestremd en ek het nou plek in die koshuis. Dit was vir my half – daar was iets fout met die Admin. Hulle het nie eers geweet van my nie **(FP-7)**.
5. Baie slegte kommunikasiestelsel meer met die studente met spesiale behoeftes kommunikeer **(IP-1)**.
6. Onder die studente is daar ook nie kommunikasie nie. Ons self by Dis-Maties, ons komitee sukkel om hulle bymekaar te kry **(IP-1)**.
7. Student van die begin af die dosent kan sien en sê dat jy hierdie spesiale behoefte het, kom ons werk saam dat ons dit kan oorkom **(IP-1)**.
8. Ek meen dit is die student se eie verantwoordelikheid – as hy aansoek doen, is daar 'n afdeling wat sê: “Is jy gestremd – is jy nie gestremd nie – het jy 'n spesiale behoefte?” Dis jou eie ding om dit in te vul, maar as dit ingevul is, is daar mos 'n ding van dat jy – die persoon wat by die universiteit werk, daardie inligting moet kry en ek dink nie dis voldoende dat hulle net 'n briefie uitstuur van “ons is hier, ons kan vir jou help”. Ek dink hulle moet vir jou fisies kontak, vir jou bel en sê: “Luister kom ons maak 'n afspraak, kom kuier vir ons” **(IP-1)**.
9. Die Sielkundedepartement het spesiaal met my kom praat en vir my gevra en so. Niemand anders het vir my kom vra nie **(FP-7)**.
10. Ook van 'n dosent, om te gaan en te vra, of as ek na jou toe kom en sê: “Ek het 'n spesiale behoefte, ek kan nie goed sien nie,” - dat daardie dosent kan vra: “Wat is jou spesiale behoefte?” en dat hy self 'n bietjie navorsing gaan doen of ten minste net sê “Kom na my kantoor toe, kom ons maak 'n afspraak sodat ons kan gesels.” Ek dink dit is 'n baie groot ding of ook moontlik om na die klas met jou te gesels en te kommunikeer **(IP-1)**.

AXIAL- CODING:

CATEGORIES AND THEMES ACROSS CATEGORIES

Categories/themes across categories	Attitudes and Awareness	Communication	Inclusion+ social integration	Advocacy
<u>Internal support and barriers</u>				
Emotional	Lack of awareness results in feelings of alienation	Mutual communication	Experience a sense of belonging Lack of support and accommodation results in feelings of exclusion	Raise awareness and advocacy of needs rather than becoming emotional
Behavioral	Own attitudes	Own disclosure of disability Ask for help	Own participation in sports and other activities Socialisation	Participation and agency on the Advice Forum and Dis-Maties
Beliefs	Stigma Perceptions of others' beliefs Belief in own ability	Communication of individual needs and differences when asking for support	Inclusion is a learning process Values of respect for all people	Self-advocacy of support needs
Physical	Attitudes and awareness of students with disabilities effort and time	Communication of support needs and accommodation	Alternative assessment and accommodation in examinations	Advocacy of support needs
Cognitive	Awareness of self (Self-knowledge)	Communication of past memories or experiences Transition from school to university	Understanding of Policy on inclusion and limitations of support	Advocacy

<u>External support and barriers</u>				
Peers	Attitudes and awareness of peers	Asking for help	Social integration Practical and emotional support of peers Diversity of the student population	Awareness raising activities such as dinner in the dark
University accommodation	Awareness of students' support needs	Communication between students and university	Accessibility and accommodation of special housing needs Policies on inclusion	Advocacy of support needs
Faculty and Department	Differences in levels of awareness	Communication with students regarding needs and accommodations	Difference in levels of inclusion on different campus for example Tygerberg campus	Self-advocacy
Classroom	Attitude and awareness of lecturers	Communication between students and lecturers	Alternative assessment Adaptations regarding teaching methodologies	Self-advocacy
University	Campus climate	Communication of support needs Mutual relationship	Support services and accommodations Physical accessibility of buildings and the campus Extra-curricular activities to create opportunities for equal participation	Self-advocacy Advice Forum Dis-Maties

APPENDIX F

26 Februarie 2007

Geagte Student

TOESTEMMINGSBRIEF VIR NAVORSING

Hiermee word u uitgenooi om deel te neem aan 'n navorsingsprojek van Elsabé Greyling onder die leiding van Prof. E. Swart. Hierdie studie word onderneem ter gedeeltelike vervulling van die vereistes vir die graad Magister in Opvoedkundige Sielkunde (M Ed Psig) aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch. U is as moontlike deelnemer aan die studie gekies aangesien genoemde studie fokus op studente met gestremdhede se ervaring van alternatiewe reëlings en ondersteuning by hierdie universiteit. Die studie poog om vas te stel wat studente met gestremdhede se ervaring is ten opsigte van ondersteuning, asook hoe die kampusklimaat ervaar word deur studente met gestremdhede. Sodoende kan 'n bydrae gelewer word tot die toekomstige verbetering van ondersteuningsdienste en akademiese sukses vir studente met gestremdhede.

Indien u inwillig om aan die studie deel te neem, sal ek graag 'n informele onderhoud van ongeveer een uur met u wil voer waartydens u my kan vertel van u ervaring as 'n student met 'n gestremtheid aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch. Die tye vir hierdie onderhoude sal in samewerking met u gereël word om die minste ongerief te veroorsaak. Enige inligting wat deur middel van die navorsing verkry word sal anoniem bly. Anonimiteit sal onder andere verseker word deur die gebruik van skuilname vir u as deelnemer.

Die gesprekke sal op band opgeneem word, maar laasgenoemde sal ook vertroulik hanteer word. U kan self besluit of u aan die studie wil deelneem of nie. Indien u inwillig om aan die studie deel te neem, kan u enige tyd onttrek sonder nadelige gevolge vir u of die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

Indien daar enige verdere vrae of onsekerhede sou bestaan, skakel asb.:

- Elsabe Greyling 082-261-4602 elsabeg@sun.ac.za
- Prof. E. Swart 021 808 2306

Baie dankie by voorbaat vir u bereidwilligheid en samewerking.

26 Februarie 2007

Geagte Student**TOESTEMMINGSBRIEF VIR NAVORSING**

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Indien u inwillig om aan die studie deel te neem, sal u deel wees van 'n informele fokusgroeponderhoud van ongeveer een uur, wat ek sal fasiliteer, waartydens u my kan vertel van u ervaring as 'n student met 'n gestremtheid aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch. Die fokusgroeponderhoud sal gevoer word met groepe van ongeveer ses studente met gestremdhede. Die tye vir hierdie onderhoude sal in samewerking met u gereël word om die minste ongerief te veroorsaak. Enige inligting wat deur middel van die navorsing verkry word sal anoniem bly. Anonimiteit sal onder andere verseker word deur die gebruik van skuilname vir u as deelnemer.

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