

**EXPERIENCES OF PEDAGOGICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT OF
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN LABORATORY RELATED COURSES AT
WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY: A CASE OF BUTTERWORTH CAMPUS**

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Abstract

Globally, the number of students with disabilities entering higher education institutions continue to be on the rise. In South Africa, during the apartheid government, access into the education system for students with disabilities was limited. Although the South African education system after-1994 has the power and potential to improve engagement of students with disabilities in higher education institutions, challenges remain. Mostly, the greatest barriers faced by students with disabilities within higher education institutions is pedagogical and physical access in laboratory-related courses is of concern. This study is underpinned by the Social Model of disability, as postulated by Hodkinson & Devarakonda, who defined disability as an action of a dynamic interaction between humans and their surroundings. The study focused on the pedagogical experiences of students with disabilities and the extent to which they received institutional support whilst attending laboratory-related courses at the Butterworth Campus of Walter Sisulu University. The study was located within an interpretive research paradigm and employed qualitative data production methods. Purposive sampling was undertaken and ten students with disabilities, who were registered for laboratory-based courses, and four laboratory technicians, who worked in the laboratory facilities at the Butterworth Campus, were selected. Data analysis was produced from in-depth interviews. Data from audio-taped interviews were transcribed *verbatim* before analysis. The findings of the study highlights that the university needs to be more supportive and accommodative in order to provide a diverse learning environment. It is envisaged that this study will inform the future architectural design of laboratories to accommodate students with disabilities so that they too may experience positive teaching and learning on the campus.

Key words: students with disabilities, institutional support, higher education institutions, pedagogical experiences and Social Model of Disability.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation submitted for the degree Masters of Education in Higher Education: Teaching and Learning, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is my own work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

Mbalenhle Precious Dlamini



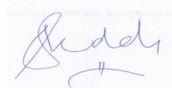
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08 July 2019

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ABBREVIATIONS

WSU	: Walter Sisulu University
HOD	: Head of Department
DU	: Disability Unit
HEIs	: Higher Education Institution
FOTIM	: Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis
NSFAS	: National Student Financial Aid Scheme
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
DoE	: Department of Education
WHO	: World Health Organisation
HEQC	: Higher Education Quality Committee
CRPD	: United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ICF	: International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
UNICEF	: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
SAHE	: South African Higher Education

LIST OF TABLES

Figure 2.2.1.....	14
Figure 2.2.2.....	15
Figure 3.3.1.....	30
Figure 3.6.1.....	32
Figure 3.6.2.....	33
Figure 3.6.3.....	34

CONTENTS PAGE

Abstract	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABBREVIATIONS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CONTENTS PAGE.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE	1
1. Background to the Study	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of Walter Sisulu University.....	4
1.3 Rationale for the study.....	5
1.3.1 Personal motivation.....	5
1.3.2 Importance of the study.....	6
1.4 Statement of the problem	7
1.5 Critical research questions	9
1.6 Research objectives	10
1.7 Focus of the study	10
1.8 Scope and limitations of the study	11
1.9 Outline of the study.....	11
1.10 Conclusion	12
CHAPTER TWO.....	13
2. Review of literature.....	13
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 The concept of disability	13
Figure 2.2.1: Conceptual models of disability source: Scott, et.al (2003, p. 33-35)	14
Figure 2.2.2: Three dimensions of the ICF.....	15
2.3 Experiences of students with different disabilities.....	16
2.3.1 International perspective	16

2.3.2 National perspective.....	18
2.3.3 The disability unit.....	19
2.4 Walter Sisulu University.....	21
2.5 Theoretical framework.....	23
2.6 Conclusion.....	26
CHAPTER THREE.....	27
3. Research Methodology.....	27
3.1 Introduction.....	27
3.2 Research paradigm.....	27
3.2.1 The interpretivist paradigm.....	28
3.3 Research design.....	29
Figure 3.3.1: Research design.....	30
3.4 Location of the study.....	30
3.5 Research methods and instruments.....	31
3.5.1 The phenomenological in-depth Interview.....	31
3.6 Population and sampling.....	32
Figure 3.6.1: Sample of laboratory technicians, WSU (Butterworth campus)	33
Figure 3.6.2: Sample of students with disabilities in WSU (Butterworth campus).....	33
Figure 3.6.3: Sample of students with disabilities at WSU (ten who participated in this study and five who did not participate).....	34
3.7 Data production process.....	36
3.8 Data analysis.....	37
3.9 Validity.....	37
3.10 Reliability.....	38
3.11 Ethical consideration.....	38
3.12 Scope and limitations of the study.....	39
3.13 Conclusion.....	40
CHAPTER FOUR.....	41
4. Data Presentation and Findings.....	41

4.1 Introduction	41
4.2 In-depth interviews.....	41
4.3 Experiences with teaching and learning needs.....	42
4.3.1 Accessing the university.....	42
4.3.2 The disability unit	46
4.3.3 Financial assistance for students with disabilities	48
4.4 Experiences of architectural structures.....	50
4.4.1 Physical access to the teaching and learning environment.....	50
4.4.2 Laboratory layout and resource constraints	51
4.5 Experiences with support structures	53
4.5.1 Staff assistance.....	53
4.5.2 The role of the tutor	54
4.6 Conclusion	55
CHAPTER FIVE	57
5. Presentation of the Findings.....	57
5.1 Introduction	57
5.2 Institutional support.....	57
5.2.1 Inclusion of students with disabilities in laboratories	57
5.2.2 Professional skills.....	59
5.2.3 Physical access to teaching and learning environment.....	60
5.2.4 Specialised assessments	61
5.3 Conclusion	62
CHAPTER SIX	63
6. Summary and Discussions	63
6.1 Introduction	63
6.2 Summary and discussions	63
6.2.1 Accessing the university.....	63
6.2.2 Disability unit	64
6.2.3 Financial assistance.....	65
6.2.4 Physical access to teaching and learning environment.....	65
6.2.5 Staff assistance.....	66

6.2.6 Role of tutor assistance.....	67
6.3 Perspective of laboratory technicians	68
6.4 Conclusion	69
CHAPTER SEVEN	70
7. Recommendations and Conclusion of the Study.....	70
7.1 Introduction.....	70
7.2 Recommendations.....	70
7.3 Conclusion of the study	72
8. References.....	73
Appendices 1.....	81
Appendices 2.....	86
Appendices 3	89
Appendices 4	92
Appendices 5	94
Appendices 6	95
Appendices 7	96
Appendices 8	99
Turnitin Originality Report	106

CHAPTER ONE

1. Background to the study

1.1 Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines disability as “any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner considered normal for a human being” (WHO, 2011, p. 3). The term ‘disability’ refers to “a person with a verifiable physical, visible/ non-visible, and psychological limitation/s which negatively restricts or affects his/her daily activities in a specific way” (WHO, 2015, p. 4). According to the Medical Model of disability as postulated by Scott, Loewen & Funckes (2003, p. 33), “disability is viewed as a deficiency, problem of the person, abnormality directly caused by disease, trauma or another health condition which therefore, requires sustained medical care to be provided in the form of individual treatment by professionals”. The Social Model of disability as postulated by Hodkinson & Devarakonda (2009, p. 24), conceive disability as an “action of a dynamic interaction between humans and their surroundings”. The Social Model is a more progressive model that considers the voice inclusion of people on their disability related experiences, removal of barriers to expand access and the activation of participation in society as a whole. This study draws on this perspective that disability is considered, as the result of a disabling environment to teaching and learning spaces in terms of participating and engaging pedagogically in daily activities in higher education.

Globally, the number of students with disabilities entering higher education institutions continue to be on the rise (Hadjidakou & Hartas, 2008). Laws and policy regulations of non-discrimination has imposed on many higher education institutions around the world that their duties are to actively promote transformation through access for students with disabilities and equality in opportunities (Hadjidakou & Hartas 2008). Developed nations such as the United States have created national policies that protect their citizens, which extend to students with disabilities. One of these laws is the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990, which is a civil rights legislation that disallows discrimination towards people with

disabilities (Fidzani & Mthombeni, 2009). The act outlines the requirements for accessible design of public places and facilities for all people, making buildings and facilities easily accessible to students with disabilities.

While, in South Africa, during the apartheid government before 1994, access into the education system for students with disabilities was limited (Crous, 2004). For those students with disabilities¹ who had access to education, “the system segregated them into ‘special schools’ and prevented them from being in contact with able-bodied students²” (Nel & Tlale, 2014, p. 23). Further, Naicker (2005) highlights that during the South African apartheid government regime, there were resource constraints in many of the special schools for black students with disabilities compared to those for white students with disabilities. In most cases, the public schools had limited resources and were under-prepared to accommodate and educate students with disabilities (Prestoungrange & Ainslie, 2000). This exclusionary schooling system in the midst of the apartheid rule thus further contributed to the under-preparedness of students with disabilities (especially black South African students) from entering the South African higher education institutions arena.

Oppression was basically focusing on certain groups which were either women or black³, or students with disabilities. Many activist organisations were formed to advocate for those people who were marginalised due to their race, gender, disability and sexual orientation. Other organisations such as Disabled People South Africa (Howell, Chalklen & Alberts, 2006) developed a movement that ensured and recommended the recognition of disabilities as also being a significant sector discriminated against, in the South African society. However, with the

¹ Students with disabilities (this is the term that will be used to describe students with disabilities)- the term refers to students with some physical or mental impairment that substantially limits any life activities.

² Able-bodied students- this is the term that will be used to describe students without disabilities.

³ Black- was the major category in South Africa where people were discriminated, based essentially on skin colour. Inferior status and poor facilities and resources were assigned to people categorised as Black in the apartheid South Africa.

institution of a democratic government in 1994, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognized all the people of the land as being equal human beings (DoE, 1997).

After 1994, with the establishment of the South African democracy, the final Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, guaranteed all South Africans rights of citizenship and equality before the law. The Education White Paper 3 of 1997 was released with the aim of, *inter alia*, to redress social injustices of the past and to provide advanced educational opportunities for an expanding range of the population irrespective of race, gender, age, class or other forms of discrimination (DoE, 1997). The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 was established to ensure that there is no segregation among the students of South Africa, and in the case of this study, discrimination of students with disabilities.

Further, the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities confirms that “all students with all types of disabilities should enjoy all human and fundamental freedom on an equal basis with others, adaptation has to be made to enable students with disabilities to exercise their rights effectively” (Schulze, 2010, p. 10). The inclusion of disability in the South African constitution basically implies that disability has been given priority in the new legislation policy documents that make up South Africa’s legal and policy framework, including the policies framing the higher education landscape.

The National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001) points out the importance of the policy implementation which includes equity and access as a way to create fair opportunities for previously disadvantaged people to higher education, in this way promoting equity in the society. In responding, all higher education institutions should have the basic infrastructure to allow access to the campus for students with disabilities and members of the community more generally” (DoE, 2001, p. 35). This points to the idea of universal access – when making campuses accessible for students with disabilities, these campuses are also made accessible to all.

South African higher education institutions responded to the new policy framework by establishing disability units within their universities to accommodate and provide for students with disabilities at tertiary level (Lourens, McKinney & Swart, 2016). Some of the services offered by the units at these institutions include provision of assistive measures for pedagogical support such as screen readers, braille systems, type- writers and extra time for assessments offered to students with disabilities. The Disability Units are also responsible for organizing structural adjustments on campuses to allow students with disabilities to attend their classes (Moabelo, 2012).

Despite all the laws that are put in place that emphasize the inclusion of students with disabilities, when it comes to implementation and recommendation on how to provide accessible and quality education for students with disabilities at the higher education institutions, priorities and enforcement are not being practiced efficiently (Crous, 2004).

A report by Census 2011 revealed that 5.3% of students with disability have managed to succeed in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in South Africa (Moabelo, 2012). However, it is minimal when compared to the actual number of students with disability in South Africa which is estimated at 2870130. Of this number only one-fifth are in higher education institutions currently (Moabelo, 2012). It may thus be deduced that students with disabilities, especially those in higher education institutions, continue to face challenges and this affects their participation, progress and success in universities (Kochung, 2011).

1.2 Background of Walter Sisulu University

Walter Sisulu University (WSU) is a comprehensive university born from a merger between Eastern Cape Technikon, Border Technikon and University of Transkei. Training is offered on four campuses- Mthata (the administrative seat), Butterworth, East London and Queenstown- with eleven delivery sites covering a radius of approximately one thousand kilometers. The university has four faculties, each of

which has several departments. The faculties are: Business, Management Science and Law, Education, Health Sciences and Science, and Engineering and Technology. A number of laboratory-based courses such as Hospitality Management, Fashion, Engineering, Medicine, Information Technology and Graphic designing are also offered by these faculties. The overall aim of the laboratory-based courses at WSU is to, “produce highly skilled graduates, who are able to lead in the innovation of new products and knowledge through practical classes conducted during the course of each programme” (WSU Prospectus, 2016: 15). A large number of students register for laboratory-based courses each year, however according to WSU National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) student records of 2016, only fifteen students with disabilities registered for such laboratory-related courses in 2016 (WSU, 2016). This study focuses on these fifteen student’s experiences of pedagogical and institutional support while being registered at WSU since 2016 to present.

1.3 Rationale for the study

1.3.1 Personal motivation

This study was triggered and motivated by the fact that I am a person with a disability, living and working in the South African higher education context. I joined the WSU in 2008 as a Laboratory Technician in the discipline of Tourism and Hospitality at the Butterworth campus. I am based primarily in the Hospitality Department. In my capacity as a laboratory technician, I conduct practical classes in the hospitality laboratory. This laboratory is designed specifically for the purpose of providing a practically-based pedagogical approach to enhance the hospitality students’ skills in cooking, baking, handling of food and beverages, to name just a few. My role as the laboratory technician includes demonstrating cooking skills, chopping, baking and demonstrating practices of safety hazards in the hospitality laboratory which is kitted out as a real kitchen. This job description also entails the lifting of heavy pots and the receiving of inventory (food items, beverages, cutlery,

crockery etc). The listed items vary in mass and size. I am also responsible for receiving and storing them.

In 2011, while working as a laboratory technician at the hospitality laboratory, I was involved in a car accident. I sustained major injuries to my left hand that has compromised the usage of this limb since then. As a result of the accident I am to this day unable to lift up objects and perform fine motor movements with my left hand. I am thus limited to the use of only one hand since the accident. Immediately after the accident when I realised that I had this disability I went into a state of severe depression. It took months for me to adjust to a new way of life and to accept the realisation that I am a person with the ability to use only one hand. Despite this challenge, I persisted on working in the laboratory. However, this situation created a lot of stress and tension between myself and my colleagues regarding my practical classes. During practical classes, I was faced with so many challenges of conducting practical classes with the use of only one hand. I had to adjust to performing my responsibilities of chopping, pushing trolleys, receiving the bulk of the inventory, demonstrating baking and cooking skills, and so on, with only the use of one hand.

It is indeed sad to note that I have received very little to no support from the institution nor from my colleagues to date. It is this personal experience of being a staff member with a disability that prompted me to undertake this research study. I was interested in understanding the experiences of students with disabilities in terms of the pedagogical and institutional support that they may or may not be receiving at the Butterworth Campus. It is envisaged that the study will impact on the pedagogical practices and institutional support mechanisms thereby addressing the needs of students with disabilities as discussed below.

1.3.2 Importance of the study

In 2011, an audit of WSU was conducted by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) in terms of its mandate, to determine the extent of malpractices

at the institution. The findings of the audit were documented in the HEQC Report. Among the findings it was noted that, “the university was not a welcoming place for students with disabilities” (HEQC, 2011, p.12). The report further states that university structure did not adequately accommodate students with disabilities. Therefore, this study makes a direct contribution in determining the extent to which WSU’s vision and mission (WSU prospectus, 2016:10) of “providing an educationally vibrant and enabling environment that is conducive to the advancement of quality academic, moral, cultural and technological learner-centered education for holistic intellectuals”, is achieved. In terms of the pedagogical approach and strategies adopted at WSU, curriculum designers, academic staff and laboratory technicians may consider new ways of designing, delivering and implementing curricula that respond to the diverse needs of our student body, specifically, students with disabilities. In general institutions of higher education as well as other educational facilities may benefit and design institutional policies and governance documents that may address the needs of staff and students with disabilities based on the findings of this study.

The study may also contribute to the future architecture and design of new university campus buildings that accommodate students, staff and stakeholders with disabilities.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Although the education system of South Africa in the new democracy has been geared in the direction of improving the participation of students with disabilities in higher education, barriers remain (Mutanga, 2017). One of the greatest challenges faced by students with disabilities within higher education is pedagogical and physical access to laboratories (Kochung, 2011). According to Fidzani & Mthombeni (2009) physical access to laboratories is still a challenge for students with disabilities. A study carried out by Mberengwa & Silo (2005) on the management of instruction in Family and Consumer Science laboratories revealed that the laboratories in Botswana’s junior secondary schools were generally small

and over-crowded. They raise a concern that a scenario like this poses a challenge to students with disabilities in the teaching and learning environment. As a result, students with disabilities are often discouraged from an early age from pursuing laboratory-based programs (Dilworth-Anderson, Hilliard, Williams & Palmer, 2011). Similarly, students at higher education institutions in South Africa face challenges pertaining to the lack of adequate pedagogical and infrastructural support. These challenges may be a contributing factor to the limited number of students with disabilities pursuing laboratory-based programmes in institutions of higher education (Moabelo, 2012).

Neely (2007) carried out a study in the American higher education context to investigate the physical access to science laboratories for students with disabilities, at two higher education institutions in Colorado Springs where fifteen students with disabilities were included. The findings revealed that students with disabilities had difficulties to move around tables, benches, and chairs in the laboratories. The benches and chairs were too high and had no wheelchair space. Access to some of the equipment in the laboratory was also difficult, creating safety concerns. This study also sought to understand the experiences of students with disabilities during their practical sessions in the hospitality laboratory, and the extent to which the design and space were configured to suit their pedagogical needs.

A study conducted by the Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM) (2011), across South African universities revealed that for students with disabilities, discrimination begins right from the time they start school in South Africa. The study further highlighted that historically, education was segregated among dominant mainstream system for able-bodied students and a specialized education system for students with disabilities (FOTIM, 2011). Although intervention services for students with disabilities are allocated for across the different Disability Units in South African universities, the variation is more in the number of different services provided (FOTIM, 2011). Disability Units facilitates access and ensures that students with disabilities are accommodated by the university. This involves provisional support for students

with disabilities to ensure full participation and equal opportunities within the university. Support arrangements range from students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, physical impairments, learning impairments, or psychiatric disabilities (Crous, 2004).

I have been a lecturer and laboratory technician in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality since 2008. As indicated earlier, part of my teaching responsibility is to conduct practical training classes, during which students prepare food in the hospitality laboratory. Based on my observations, it is my view that the laboratories are not easily accessible to students with disabilities. Further, the high and long work-stations, stoves, hand wash stations, inaccessible cabinets and the location of other safety equipment, pose challenges for students with disabilities during their practical work. For example, a student with disability, in a wheelchair, who is unable to walk, may not be able to work in a long work-station in the laboratory. The long work-stations do not accommodate students with disabilities on wheel chairs as they were made for able-bodied students who are able to stand and move around easily in the laboratory. Hilliard *et al.* (2011, p. 20) on creating an accessible research laboratory for students with disabilities, observed that “most laboratory spaces are often encumbered by high workbenches, inaccessible cabinets, and overcrowded fragile equipment”. This often renders the process of teaching and learning in these spaces uncomfortable.

The observations above, regarding the extent to which the teaching and learning of students with disabilities is compromised during their practical sessions in the hospitality laboratory, triggered my interest in pursuing this study. This study aims to explore the pedagogical experiences of students with disabilities and the extent of institutional support provided for them in laboratory-related courses at WSU, Butterworth Campus.

1.5 Critical research questions

1. What are the pedagogical experiences of students with disabilities whilst attending laboratory related courses at WSU, Butterworth Campus?
2. What is the current state of institutional support that is provided to students with disabilities at WSU, Butterworth laboratories?
3. Why do students with disabilities experience the pedagogical and institutional support whilst undertaking laboratory-based courses at WSU Butterworth campus in the way that they do?

1.6 Research objectives

The main research objectives of this study are:

1. To understand the pedagogical experiences of students with disabilities whilst attending laboratory related courses at WSU, Butterworth Campus.
2. To identify the current state of institutional support that is provided to students with disabilities at WSU, Butterworth Campus laboratories.
3. To understand why students with disabilities experience the pedagogical and institutional support whilst undertaking laboratory-based courses at WSU, Butterworth Campus in the way that they do.

1.7 Focus of the study

“The university is committed to the global aspiration of providing equal opportunities to all, irrespective of their disability, especially in respect of the right to admission, access to learning programmes, financial assistance, and access to physical infrastructure, accommodation, sports and recreation as well as any other facility that the University provides, in so far as resources reasonably permit” (WSU Disability Policy, 2005, p. 13). The focus of this study was thus to understand the pedagogical experiences of students with disabilities and the extent to which the Butterworth Campus provides institutional support to their pedagogical needs during their practical classes in the hospitality laboratory.

1.8 Scope and limitations of the study

The study was undertaken at the Butterworth campus only of the WSU. It was only limited to students with disabilities registered for laboratory-based courses and four laboratory technicians, to understand the state of experiences of pedagogical and institutional support provided to students with disabilities in laboratory related courses. The institution's policy documents regarding support for students with disabilities were not reviewed, therefore, the perceptions and observations of the laboratory technicians were used to determine the extent of support provided to the fifteen students with disabilities by the institution. In this way, the study is limited to only the Butterworth campus and the students who are registered for laboratory-based courses at this campus only. The extent of institutional support that is provided is limited to only the technicians' perceptions and not the policy documents of the institution.

1.9 Outline of the study

The study is presented according to the chapter outline as follows:

Chapter One introduces the topic and outlines a brief motivation and background of the study. The critical research questions and the objectives of the study are also presented in this chapter. Chapter Two presents the literature reviewed on the experiences of pedagogical and institutional support provided for students with disabilities from an international and national perspective. The theoretical framework that underpinned the study is also discussed. Chapter Three outlines the research design, research methods, sampling strategy and ethical considerations that informed the research process of this study. Chapter Four and Five presents the analysis of the data that was produced and discusses the findings that respond to the objectives of the study. Chapter Six is a summary of the findings and discussions of the study. Chapter Seven presents the conclusion of the study and draws recommendations for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide a brief motivation and background to the study. The reader was also orientated on the rationale to study the experiences of pedagogical and institutional support for students with disabilities in laboratory-related courses. The literature review and theoretical framework that underpinned the study is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of literature

2.1 Introduction

The chapter begins by first exploring the concept of disability according to the medical and social models of disability as propounded by (Scott, Loewen & Funckes, 2003). An explanation of how the social model in particular perceives the different roles played by the society in responding to disability is then presented. This chapter also explores disability in three-dimension areas drawing on literature on the experiences of students with different disabilities from an international, national and local disability unit's perspectives within the higher education context. Lastly this chapter highlights the theoretical framework that underpinned this study.

2.2 The concept of disability

World Health Organisation (WHO), defines Disability as:

*“an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. An **impairment**, is a problem in body function or structure; an **activity limitation** is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a **participation restriction** is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations”* (WHO, 2011, p. 3).

WHO (2011) affirms that disability is a contested concept, which consists of different meanings in different communities. According to WHO (2011, p.10) disability may also be used to refer to “physical or mental attributes that some institutions, particularly medicine, view as needing to be fixed (the medical model)”. In this regard, the focus shifts from the individual to the broader social, cultural, economic and political environments. Therefore, this may be referring to limitations imposed on people with disabilities by virtue of them being part of a society or context.

However, in South Africa, the Medical Model has been used to understand many aspects of child development in the context of students with disabilities in higher education institutions (Education, 2006). In order to understand the Medical Model and Social Model (Scott, Loewen & Funckes, 2003) created a table that compares the Medical Model of Disability with the Social Model of Disability (Table 2.2.1).

Figure 2.2.1: Conceptual models of disability source: Scott, et.al (2003, p. 33-35)

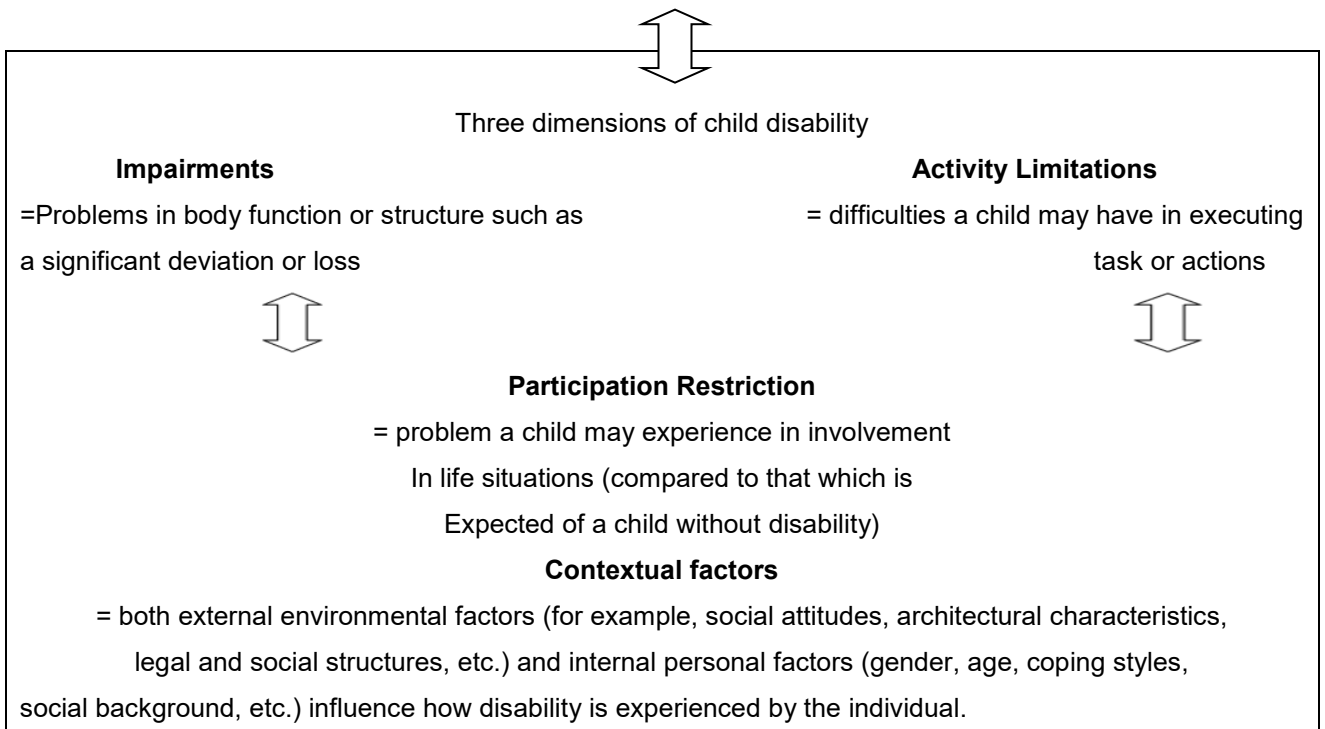
Medical Model	Social Model
Disability is a deficiency or abnormality.	Disability is a difference.
Being disabled is negative.	Being disabled, in itself, is neutral.
Disability resides in the individual.	Disability derives from the interaction between the individual and society.
The remedy for disability-related problems is cure or normalization of the individual.	The remedy for disability-related problems is a change in the interaction between the individual and society.
The agent of remedy is the professional.	The agent of remedy is the individual, an advocate, or anyone who affects the arrangements between the individual and society.

The Medical and Social models are regularly presented as being mutually exclusive. However, the World Report on Disability (2012) argues that it is not accurate to regard disability either as a solely medical issue or as a solely social issue, because students with disabilities do not only experience exclusion but as well as other related health conditions. A fair approach which acknowledges all other related disability aspects is recommended by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (WHO, 2011). The ICF regards disability as a connected component in three areas, relationship between health conditions at the individual, societal and environmental levels. In this regard, the ICF classifies disability as having three dimension factors i.e. problems in bodily function or

structure, problems related to activities and problems related to social participation (International classification of functioning, disability and health (ICF) for children and youth).

Dimension factors ensure the personal facilitation, however, to some extent the limitation or prevention is allowed (UNICEF, 2012). These factors vary from internal to external factors. Internal factors are characterised by coping style that influences the participation within the society. Whereas, external factors are related to physical infra-structure, access to information and policies (UNICEF, 2012). Although it is not a measurement tool or survey instrument, the ICF provides a standard for health and disability statistics, particularly in terms of harmonising the different approaches to estimating disability prevalence, taking into account the complex and dynamic relationship between health conditions and contextual factors (WHO, 2011).

Figure 2.2.2 below is an illustration of the three dimensions of the ICF structure on disability approach, United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2012, p. 20)



Although efforts have been made at different policy level based on the medical and welfare model of disability to one based on the social model however, this does not reflect in the attitudes and approaches of service providers and society at large (UNICEF, 2012). WHO (2011) report that many in the education sector, difficulties remain with regards to embracing the attitude and behaviour changes that are inherent in the fundamental change underlying the Education White Paper 6 on inclusive education. WHO further reports that teachers should consider the integration process from special schools to the wider school community, which does not narrow the environment of students with a disability. As a result, these students do not learn the skills necessary for mainstreaming as they are isolated from their families and communities. The following paragraph explores literature on the experiences faced by students with disabilities in the higher education context.

2.3 Experiences of students with different disabilities

2.3.1 International perspective

According to WHO (2006) report on United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), several initiatives has been put in place which includes the improvement on human rights of students with disabilities. This world report on disability provides evidence to facilitate the implementation of the CRPD which includes the promotion of social participation, accommodative physical access, equity in education and employment.

A study conducted by Madriaga's (2007) revealed that prior to 1970s, most students with disabilities were segregated from public education in the United States. This statement is similar to (Block, 1992) who highlight that before the passage of Public Law (PL) 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, states that discrimination experiences remain for students with disabilities especially in university residences or mainstream schools with no provision of physical education. However, since the mid-1970s advocacy, emphasis has been put on

policies and strategies that support the rights of people with disabilities in the United States (Madriaga, 2007).

It revealed that India is the third largest higher education system in the world, after China and the US (Jameel, 2011). Jameel further revealed that not much has been done in the higher education system to improve access for students with disabilities. In this regard students continue to experience challenges with the higher education system. According to Ahmad (2018) students experience many difficulties in navigating through the difficult course of the Indian educational system. Further, similar studies by Jameel (2011) entitled “Disability in the context of higher education: Issues and concerns in India”, revealed that lack of support services by the staff hinders the access of students with disabilities in India’s higher education system. A report from Indian National Sample Survey 2004, revealed that 55% of students with special needs were illiterate and only 9% had achieved higher secondary education (UNESCO, 1999). Therefore, the above statistics confirms that India's higher educational system at that time was inaccessible to 98.8% of its people with disabilities in higher education.

A survey entitled “Provision for Students with Disabilities in Higher Education” was conducted by the UNESCO for Special Needs Education and presented to the World Conference on Higher Education (UNESCO, 1999). The findings of the survey revealed that the needs of students with disabilities were not accommodated within the educational system. However, the survey revealed that this may vary between other countries. For example, developing countries, like those in sub-Saharan Africa, differed exceptionally from developed countries in Europe (UNESCO, 1999). The survey therefore, recommended the importance to improve services and accommodate educational needs of students with disabilities, especially in developing institutions where there are resource constraints. In this regard, historically disadvantaged universities should mobilise resources to improve their services to students with disabilities.

2.3.2 National perspective

Since the introduction of non-discriminatory legislation in South Africa, a multiple number of changes in the higher education sector have been identified. Crous, (2004, p. 25) points out the following changes regarding students with disabilities:

- Both Colleges and universities have created systems which enables access to qualified students with disabilities;
- Changes in faculty attitudes and practices towards students with disabilities; and
- An increase in students' self-awareness and knowledge of their own impairments.

Since the democratic era post 1994, South African institutions of higher teaching and learning have been incorporating inclusive education in their educational programmes for students with disabilities (Muthukrishna, 2000). Similarly, the higher education universities are encountering a transformation period (Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012). Furthermore, the South African National Plan for Higher Education requires higher education institutions to increase the participation of students with disabilities in higher education institutions (Department of Education, 2001).

This implies that for institutions of higher education, it is against the South African law or policy to refuse access to the educational system due to the existence of any disability, however, institutions continue intentionally or unintentionally to influence the levels and scope of participation by students with impairments, that is through courses they can or cannot participate in (Howell & Lazarus, 2003). In this regard, subjective evidence reveals that in most cases students with disabilities are influenced to choose only certain courses (Howell, 2005). This is in line with Matshedisho (2007) who highlights that students with disabilities continue being told that the institution is not well resourced to meet the needs of students with disabilities and that it would be in their best interest to seek alternative institutions. Without any option, such students are expected to take responsibility for the perceived limitations created by their impairments (Matshedisho, 2007).

In another study, Matshedisho (2007b) explores the barriers of access to higher education for students with disabilities from a human rights policy perspective. He confirms that one of the biggest challenge in addressing inequalities for students with disabilities is the transformation of formal rights on paper into real rights (Matshediso, 2007b). He says that the South African Higher Education (SAHE) system has been the engine in promoting these inequalities and social injustices. To resolve this, three points are raised: “the need to transform policies so that they address ideological impediments to what constitutes reasonable support; formal rights do not automatically make rights real to people; and the need to involve academic staff in decision making processes about support for students with disabilities” (Matshedisho, 2007b, p. 27). Matshedisho points out that South Africa seems to be moving along an opposing path of embracing disability rights and the social model of disability. He highlights that this is proven by the barriers that disability support services face and the lack of political commitment to disability issues by government and higher education. In this regard, Matshedisho suggests that there should be policies with clear guidelines and instructions that prioritise redressing social inequalities.

Cheausuwantavee & Cheausuwantavee (2012) argue that it is vital to have appropriate support systems in teaching and learning to ensure equal access for students with disabilities. However, the university should facilitate support and be willing to change the admission, teaching and learning environment, curricula, as well as physical accessibility of the institution for the benefit of students with disabilities. To address such support provisions, disability units were created at the different HEIs. The discussion below highlights the literature on disability units that have been established to date.

2.3.3 The disability unit

The so-called disability units (DU) were formulated in some Higher Education Institutions in South Africa, in order to promote access, equity and integration of students with disabilities at their institutions (Mayat & Amosun, 2011). Services

that DUs offer to students with various disabilities include, *inter alia* an “alternative test arrangement, such as extended time, taking the test and exams in a separate room, having the test read out aloud, having a scribe for the test mostly for students with visual impairment (blind and partially sighted), adaptive equipment and technology, provision of materials in alternative print (e.g. braille, large print, and tape-disk), peer tutoring and permission to tape-record lectures” (Pingry, 2007, p. 30 & Mole, 2012, p. 23).

The DU makes provision for students with disabilities the option to receive alternative format assessments (tests or assignments). Examples of alternative format testing or assignments include a scenario as a substitute to an open-ended examination question paper, or an oral presentation instead of a written examination paper. Other alternatives may include converting study material to more accessible formats, bigger size fonts and conversion of materials into Braille (Pingry, 2007). In this regard, faculty members are consulted with respect to the intent of the test formats (Mole, 2012)

Despite the success stories of DU's in higher education, there are constraints that hinder the smooth transition of this process (FOTIM, 2012). The main challenge is financial constraints to support students with disabilities in higher education in South Africa, both for the individual student and the institutions. A study by Howell (2015, p. 15) indicates the lack of sufficient disability funds and highlights that “there is no ring-fenced funding given to institutions for disability support”. Currently, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFSAS) is “the only state funding body in South Africa, and, therefore, very few students are able to access higher education and succeed in their studies” (CHE, 2005, p. 44). In this regard, the above financial constraints affect the day-to-day operation of DUs, especially for previously disadvantaged institutions (FOTIM, 2011; Howell, 2005 & Matshedisho, 2007a).

DUs are also faced with internal limitations and challenges. In some higher education institutions, DU's are not a stand-alone Unit, rather fall under different

departments within the institution (e.g. student counselling or student affairs). In this regard, DU's experience financial restrictions and services they can provide (FOTIM, 2011 & Naidoo, 2010). Some departments, may oppose the direction some DUs want to take and oversee all the activities of the unit, (Lyner-Cleophas, Swart, Chataika & Bell 2014). This may shift the focus or vision of the disability unit, for example, those DUs managed within counselling services who view disability through a pathological lens and reinforce the perspective that disability is a medical condition.

2.4 Walter Sisulu University

As I have stated earlier, WSU is a multi-campus university, consisting of four sites. At the time when this research was conducted, there was no formal disability policy at WSU that was provided to me on request, while a two-page policy document (Appendix 6) was provided by the department of quality assurance in this regard. This leads to different, inadequate and fragmented ways of responding to the needs of students with disabilities at this university.

The university does not have a disability unit office either; however, the Student Affairs office offers services to students with disabilities at WSU Butterworth campus. This department relies on student's disclosure of their conditions as there is no record-keeping in the system. This is similar to the study conducted by De Cesarei (2015), where both positive and negative responses were raised on the issues of disclosure across the continent. The study revealed that only half of the students disclosed their disabilities on application to their institutions of learning or at registration. About one-quarter disclosed during their first year and the rest could possibly have disclosed during their second and third years (De Cesarei, 2015).

While undertaking this research, informal discussions with staff at the WSU Student Affairs Department were conducted to obtain more clarity on the procedural plans for students with disabilities. This department pointed to the limitation of support available to students, due to inadequate staff members. These include difficulties in

accessing qualified staff, inadequate technology, resource constraints allocation, record-keeping issues, and university infrastructure. In addition, it was highlighted that some staff members are unaware of the services and support that are available to students with disabilities, awareness campaigns around the campus and whether there are students with disabilities in their classes and how to accommodate their learning requirements.

Another point of challenge raised during informal discussion with the Student Affairs department was the medical certificate. It was highlighted that each academic year upon registration, some students with disabilities are required to prove their disabilities by producing a doctor's certificate. Without the doctor's documentation, the disability may not be confirmed. For example, some students with disabilities who have hidden or less obvious disability, such as a hearing impairment, it may be possible for them to pass as able-bodied students. Therefore, a student may be subjected to medical tests to verify the extent of the disability.

During informal discussions with the Student Affairs office (Butterworth campus), it was indicated that the university has built a new library auditorium, entrance ramp and some of the toilets to accommodate students with disabilities within the university, however, the classroom environment and some of the buildings still pose a challenge to students with disabilities. This will be evident later in the dissertation findings chapter (Chapter 5). Altshuler & Kopels (2003) argue that even though the need to improve physical infrastructure has been on the demand, many government services are not disability friendly, and severe challenges with the built environment exist. According to the World Report on Disability (2012, p. 15) "a person's environment has a huge impact on the experience and extent of disability". Inaccessible environments create disability by creating barriers to participation and inclusion. World Report on Disability, (2012, p. 15) emphasize some examples of the possible negative impact of the environment include: "a Deaf individual without a sign language interpreter; a wheelchair user in a building without an accessible bathroom or elevator; a blind person using a computer

without screen-reading software.” Therefore, the less resourced universities are a contributing factor to this dilemma (World Report on Disability, 2012).

The department of Student Affairs at WSU assists students during the registration processes and with residence placement for accommodation. However, during accommodation allocations, all students including students with disabilities are required to acquire at least a 60% average pass rate with a bonus point as a student with disability. According to the Room Allocation Policy (2015) of WSU, students with disabilities are catered for and prioritised based on their disability condition and merit of 60% average rate (Appendix 7). The same also applies with the NSFAS office at WSU, students with disabilities apply like any other student online, then specify on the application form the condition of disability. However, students are selected according to their disability condition and should meet a 60% pass rate for any given year of study. This includes the maximum amount paid by NSFAS to students with disabilities as R33 800 per year. The total amount given to students includes the total cost for all assistive devices, upgrades, replacements and repairs that are done per annum.

From the above review of literature, it is evident that students with disabilities are still faced with numerous challenges whether it concerns the teaching and learning environment, their allocation of residences and also with regards to their financial assistance in the higher education context. Given the context and background of WSU that was described earlier, the Social Model of disability provided the lenses through which the students experiences of pedagogical and institutional support were viewed. The following paragraph elaborates on the Social Model of disability that illuminates the societal barriers that hinders students with disabilities in higher education institutions such as WSU.

2.5 Theoretical framework

This research is underpinned by the Social Model of disability and acknowledges that disability has an impact on the lives of students with disabilities (Hodkinson &

Devarakonda, 2009). The Social Model of Hodkinson & Devarakonda (2009) affirms that it is the community that disables students with disabilities. The Model also recognizes that social prejudices as well as the environments that are not easy to access, unfairness in work arrangements and segregated education as disabling societal elements. "Disability is something imposed on top of the physical impairments by the way society isolates and excludes those with disabilities from full participation in society" (Hodkinson & Devarakonda, 2009, p. 40). In 1983, Mike Oliver introduced the phrase "Social Model of disability" with reference to the ideological developments with regards to students with disabilities. His focus point was based on the individual model (where Medical was excluded) versus a Social Model, obtained from the distinction originally made between impairment and disability (Mole 2012). Furthermore, Munyi (2012, p. 42) observes that "disability is no longer seen as a static feature of an individual but rather as a dynamic and changing experience defined by the changing nature of the environment in which she engages".

This Model reveals that disability is a result of disabling infra-structure, physical, social, and societal environment (Hodkinson & Devarakonda, 2009). The suggestion of this perception is that it highlights the need for the societal environment to be more accommodative, ensuring that persons with disabilities participate equally in societies rather than accepting the impairment to cause some degree of social exclusion (United Nations, 2006).

In the Social Model, societal issues such as education, care, identity, equity, social division, communal surroundings and power (Oliver,1996) were considered important when dealing with disability issues. This pointed a shift when focusing more broadly than just the medical. The influence of society was highlighted and the way it served to marginalize students with disabilities became evident in higher education institutions. The Social Model presents a way for how society should consider its relations with students with disabilities. According to the Social Model, society needs to consider their role from various perspectives such as welfare, transportation, education, access to information and health, as ways of alternatively

integrate disability. Howell (2015) points out the importance of implementation of accommodative landscape in higher education. In her research, she points out that disability is seen as current transformation efforts and part of redressing social inequalities of the past. Therefore, the Social Model creates pathways that emphasizes the implementation of barrier-free infrastructures and collaborative environments between the work place and society where students with disabilities will be accommodated.

The Social Model recognises that disability affects every aspect of our lives. Students with disabilities have the equal right to opportunities and benefits as the same as their able-bodied siblings and friends within their respective society. This may include education, transportations and health services. In this regard, the Social Model was used as a lens to view the student's experiences of pedagogical and institutional support during their laboratory training at WSU. The Social Model served as a basis through which the extent to which the environment in the laboratories at WSU provided an equal participatory space for able-bodied students as well as students with disabilities.

However, despite the good intentions of the Model, Crow (1992) who was a pioneer in the criticism of the Social Model highlights that disabilities influence every aspect of our lives, without any pretence. However, there should be a common way to integrate them into our whole experience for our emotional and physical well-being.

From the above it can be gathered that the Medical Model does not give a broad perspective of the factors to be examined in disability to fully account for the experiences of people. Disability consists of many different and connected parts. Although the social environment is important, it is also vital to recognise the personal impact of disabilities, personal condition and the surroundings.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the literature on the concept of disability, the Social and Medical Models were also presented. Details of experiences of students with disabilities in HEIs, both internationally and nationally, were discussed. The responsibilities and support offered by DUs were also highlighted. From the literature that was reviewed and presented here, existing weaknesses and gaps in pedagogical and institutional support for students with disabilities at HEIs were illuminated. This study then makes a contribution to these conceptual and contextual gaps in the existing body of knowledge.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

The type of research problem under consideration in this study aims to understand the experiences of pedagogical access and institutional support that WSU provides to students with disabilities who are enrolled for laboratory-based programmes. This study therefore was located within an interpretive paradigm since the study consisted of participants' experiences in the higher education context. The chapter presents a description of the chosen research paradigm, followed by the research design, credibility of the study, ethical considerations, and concludes with the scope and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research paradigm

In understanding the research paradigm Creswell (2009, p. 40) defines a paradigm as "a basic set of beliefs that guide action". Mackenzie & Knipe (2006, p. 22) argue that 'paradigm' may be defined as "a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research". It is also argued that paradigm refers to a research culture with a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers have in common regarding the nature and conduct of research (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, in understanding research paradigms, I assume that it is one's perspective, beliefs or perception on how an individual views the world.

However, recently, the term paradigm, in educational research, determines a structure on how knowledge is derived and interpreted in research (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Lincoln, Lynham & Guba (2011, p. 30) explore this idea by outlining that "paradigms are shaped by epistemological (the nature of knowledge), ontological (the nature of existence) and methodological (how the inquirer should go about finding out knowledge) questions".

Key research paradigms, according to the literature are positivism, interpretivism and critical theory. However, for the purpose of this study, only the interpretivist paradigm will be presented.

3.2.1 The Interpretivist Paradigm

This study was located within an interpretive research paradigm (Creswell, 2009). Interpretive researchers hold assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. “Individuals normally develop personalized meanings of their experiences-meanings directed toward certain objects or things” (Saldana, 2011, p. 32). According to Mackenzie & Knipe (2006), interpretivist approaches to research have the intention of understanding the world of human experience. Hence, this study sought to explore the experiences of pedagogical and institutional support for students with disability in higher education institutions. Interpretive researchers believe truth is many, reality is subjective and constructed (Creswell, 2009).

Most of the time, the interpretive researcher relies on qualitative data production methods and analysis (Creswell, 2009). Thus, the objectives of this study have been aligned to the qualitative research approach. Denzin & Ryan (2007) defines qualitative research as a situated activity that locates the observer to the world. It consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible and then transforms it. According to Saldana (2011, p. 29) “qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of empirical tools”. These tools include in-depth interviews, personal experiences, case studies, life stories, interviews, artefacts, cultural texts and productions, observational and historical experiences. The aim of this study was to contribute to our understanding of issues of pedagogical experiences and support that institutions of higher education provide for students with disabilities.

3.3 Research design

A research design is identical to a strategy considered when finding solutions to research problems (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Researchers use different specifications depending on the purpose of their studies, as well as the nature of their research questions. The design selection does not have any rules to follow, but preferably the choices and actions of the researcher to determine the strategy (Creswell, 2013). Saldana (2011) emphasizes that qualitative studies normally use several designs such as ethnography, phenomenology, case study, to mention but a few. In the present study, I drew on phenomenology as a research methodology and designed my research accordingly.

“Phenomenology is a research strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by the participants” (Creswell, 2009, p. 45). Phenomenological methods aim to discover the individual’s experience of a specified phenomenon through focusing on a concrete experiential account grounded in everyday life (Langdridge, 2007). My study attempted to explore such experiences of pedagogical and institutional support provided by WSU in laboratory-related courses. However, one of the challenges in a phenomenological approach is the difficulty of getting the participants to openly talk about their experiences. Participants need to really trust the researcher for them to be able to share their life experiences and challenges that they are facing. The trust of my participants was earned through explaining the purpose and intentions of the study. The issues of anonymity and confidentiality with regard to the data that was produced for this study was explained to the participants. I also narrated my story of the motor vehicle accident that left me with a disability. I shared my experiences of living and working as a demonstrator in the hospitality laboratory and the constant challenges that I have been experiencing. In sharing my story with the participants, I gained their trust and they were then able to share their stories with me.

Figure 3.3.1 below illustrate the cohesion when the purpose and the paradigm of the study, the methodology and the context in which the study takes place (see Figure 3.3.1).

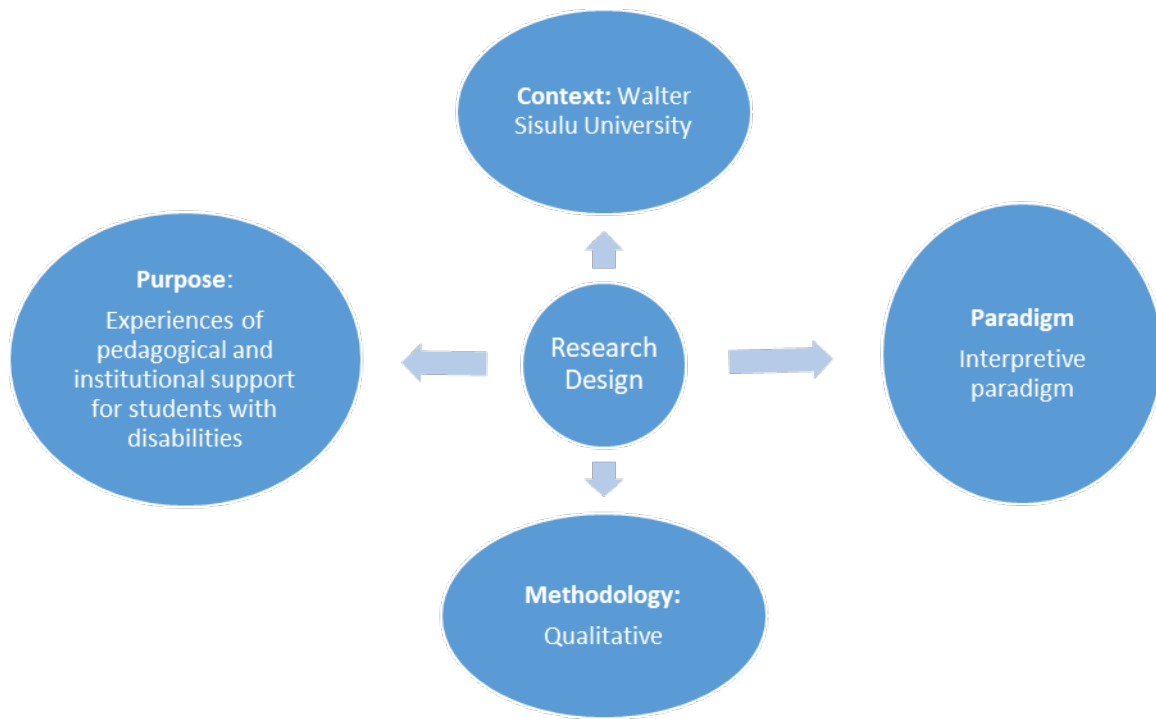


Figure 3.3.1: Research design

Adapted from Terreblanche & Durrheim (2007, p. 33)

3.4 Location of the study

As discussed in chapter one, according HEQC (2011), WSU has a student population in the region of 26 000. The university is committed to the global aspiration of providing equal opportunities to all, irrespective of their disability in respect of their right to “admission, access to learning programmes, financial assistance, and access to physical infrastructure, accommodation, sports and recreation as well as any other facilities that the university provides”. (WSU Disability Policy, 2005, p. 13). The study was conducted on one of the WSU campuses: Butterworth campus, situated on the N2, Highway, Mthatha road, Ibika

location. The Butterworth campus is “characterised by widespread poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and poor access to basic services” (HEQC, 2011, p. 4).

3.5 Research methods and instruments

3.5.1 The phenomenological in-depth Interview

For the purposes of producing data, I used in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are personal interviews, whose aim is to identify the participant’s emotions, experiences, and to discover ones’ opinion pertaining a specific research phenomenon. The main advantage of in-depth interviews is that they “involve personal and direct contact between interviewers and interviewees, as well as eliminating non-response rates, however interviewers need to have developed the necessary skills to successfully carry out an interview” (Fisher, 2006, p. 30 & Wilson, 2003, p. 33).

Kombo & Tromp (2006, p. 45) refer to interviews as “a means of gaining access to important information regarding the respondents and their experiences”. According to WSU National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) student records in 2016, there were fifteen students with disabilities registered for laboratory-related courses (WSU, 2016). This study focused on all fifteen students’ experiences of pedagogical and institutional support while being registered at WSU since 2016. For the purposes of understanding the institutional support that is provided by WSU at the Butterworth Campus laboratories, four laboratory technicians were also interviewed.

The interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants. I also took notes during the interviews which assisted in the formulation of new questions. Some probing questions were developed during the interviews to assist the participants to recall their experiences. Kothari (2004) maintains that this plan allows flow and flexibility in probing and exploring certain subjects in greater depth. In this research, the instrument validation was done by conducting

pilot testing and by seeking expert opinion from my supervisor who went through the interview questions and made recommendations for improving the clarity of the instrument. The instrument was pilot tested with two participants from the laboratory technical staff at WSU Butterworth campus prior to the actual in-depth interviews with the participants. This was only done after the ethical clearance was granted for the study.

3.6 Population and sampling

Creswell (2013) describes a population as any group of individuals who have one or more characteristics in common that are of particular interest to the researcher. In this study, the target population comprised of various students' disabilities studying for laboratory related courses as well as all four laboratory technicians in the Butterworth campus. Creswell (2013) highlights that the primary purpose of research is to discover principles that have a universal application. Therefore, in order to address this issue, purposive sampling was used. This sampling technique is common within the qualitative approach (Patton, 2002). Richie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston (2013, p. 34) states that "purposive research participants are selected on the basis of known characteristics, which might be socio-demographic or might relate to factors such as experience, behaviour and role relevant to the research topic". In this study, participants were selected on the basis of the above factors which were the experiences of pedagogical and institutional support for students with disabilities in laboratory related courses. As stated earlier, there were fifteen students with disabilities who were registered for laboratory-based courses on the Butterworth campus in 2016, however, only ten were interviewed since five students opted to withdraw from the study for personal reasons. This study focused on all those students as well as all four laboratory technicians who worked in laboratories at the Butterworth campus. Pseudonyms were allocated to each of the technicians and the student participants. Below is a table reflecting the sample population for the laboratory technicians as well as students with disabilities.

Figure 3.6.1: Sample of laboratory technicians, WSU (Butterworth campus)

Participant	Designation	Age	Gender	Department
Lez	Laboratory Technician	30	Female	Information Communication and Technology
Laz	Laboratory Technician	46	Male	Engineering
Nosi	Laboratory Technician	36	Female	Hospitality department
Nozi	Laboratory Technician	42	Male	Fashion department

Figure 3.6.2: Sample of students with disabilities in WSU (Butterworth campus)

Participant	Type of disability	Age	Gender	Degree	Level of study (year)
Sindy	Physically disabled	23	Male	Information Technology	2
Thembi	Partially sighted	23	Male	Engineering	3
Nasy	Physically disabled (wheelchair user)	21	Female	Engineering	3
Owa	Medical condition	23	Female	Engineering	3

Musa	Partially sighted	24	Female	Information Technology	2
Rose	Partially sighted	21	Female	Information Technology	2
Pinky	Partially sighted	24	Male	Fashion	2
Rich	Partially sighted	25	Male	Hospitality	3
Sabelo	Physically disabled	24	Male	Engineering	3
Sfiso	Physically disabled	23	Female	Information Technology	2
Thabo	Medical condition	24	Female	Engineering	3
Dan	Physically disabled	23	Female	Information Technology	3
Muzi	Physically disabled	21	Female	Information Technology	2
Lindy	Partially sighted	24	Male	Fashion department	2
Thato	Partially sighted	23	Male	Hospitality department	3

Figure 3.6.3: Sample of students with disabilities at WSU (ten who participated in this study and five who did not participate)

Participant	Participated	Reason
Sindy	Yes	

Thembi	Yes	
Nasy	Yes	
Owa	Yes	
Musa	Yes	
Rose	Yes	
Pinky	Yes	
Rich	Yes	
Sabelo	No	The participant had a medical related condition to attend to during the time of interviews and was unavailable.
Sfiso	No	During the time of interviews, the participant had already left the university.
Thabo	Yes	
Dan	Yes	
Muzi	No	During the time of interviews, the participant had already left the university.
Lindy	No	The participant was not feeling well and was not around the campus for the interview.
Thato	No	During the time of interviews, the participant had already left the

		university.
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3.7 Data production process

Meetings were held during February and March of 2018 with the laboratory technicians and students with disabilities, so as to gain confirmation of their participation in the research. More specifically, I wanted to explain the nature and the scope of the study. All participants were willing to participate in the research and the interviews were conducted between March and April of 2018. I collected data at times suited to the staff and students with disabilities depending on their academic work and respective study schedules. The in-depth interviews took place in one of the laboratory technician's office (computer laboratory). The reasons for choosing this space was the fact that it is on the ground floor creating easy access for students with disabilities (especially those using wheelchairs). It is much bigger and close to one of the door-ramps and it can accommodate both students with disabilities and staff members as it is not always busy. Each interview process lasted approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes. During the interviews, the campus Senior Clinic Sister was invited just in case any of the participants experienced trauma or distress and emotions while recalling their experiences. Further, one staff member from Student Affairs was present to ensure the ease of communication and translation as there were other students with disabilities who had a problem with speech. However, the campus Senior Clinic Sister and Student Affairs staff member were not physically present in the same room during the interviews, they were outside the interview room in the foyer. They were only called to be on standby for any medical and translation emergencies. The conversations ran smoothly and pleasantly without any interruptions.

3.8 Data analysis

Patton (2002, p. 35) defines “qualitative data analysis as working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and deciding what is important and is to be learned and deciding what you will tell others”.

The kind of data that was analysed in this study was produced from the in-depth interviews. Data analysis was aimed at reducing, organising and giving meaning to the data. The analysis techniques implemented were determined primarily by the research objectives and questions. In my study, I produced data through in-depth interviews by drawing on multiple viewpoints from participants. I analysed and interpreted what was seen and heard in terms of themes or patterns that would support the understanding and interpretation of that which was emerging. Data from audio taped interviews were transcribed *verbatim* before analysis.

3.9 Validity

The validity of an instrument is “the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure” (Polit & Hungler, 1998, p. 39). It’s a non-statistical method that is used in validating the content applied in research tools such as questionnaires and structured interviews. Creswell (2009) points out that qualitative validity implies that the researcher checks the accuracy of the findings by adopting certain procedures, while on the other hand qualitative reliability confirms that the researcher’s approach is consistent in the study. Validity in qualitative research refers to the appropriateness, credibility, authenticity, trustworthiness and credibility of the study (Creswell, 2009). In this study, appropriateness of language used in the interview guides was checked, after which appropriate modification of the tool was made to suit the participants. Furthermore, validity was increased by prolonged and persistent mechanical recording of data by the use of a tape recorder.

3.10 Reliability

Polit & Hungler (1998, p. 40) refer to reliability as “the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure”. Reliability ensures that errors like data collector bias is minimised through the source of measurement. According to Kerlinger (1986) the instrument used for data gathering depends on whether the instrument can measure what it is supposed to measure. Therefore, pilot testing was conducted and reliability of the instrument was determined by the results of the pilot testing where sources for response errors in the instrument were identified and corrected.

3.11 Ethical considerations

To render the study ethical, the rights to self-determination, anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent was observed. Written permission to conduct the research study was requested from University of KwaZulu-Natal and Walter Sisulu University. Verbal permission was requested from the Student Affairs Department at Walter Sisulu University (Rector’s Office). Participant’s consent was obtained before producing the data, where a meeting was requested and held through the Head of Departments for laboratory technicians. Elo & Kyngas, (2008, p. 19) define informed consent as “the prospective subject’s agreement to participate voluntarily in a study, which is reached after assimilation of essential information about the study”.

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures that would be used to produce the data, and be assured that there were no potential risks that will be encountered. Students with disabilities are considered as a vulnerable population group therefore the university was particular that the participants would not be harmed in any way during the interviews and in the subsequent dissemination of the work. Therefore, the campus Senior Clinic Sister from Butterworth campus clinic was invited for emergency purposes during the interviews.

Further, one staff member from Student Affairs department who was assisting participants academically and socially in previous years was available to ensure the ease of communication and translation during the interviews when needed.

Anonymity and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. Elo & Kyngas, (2008) define anonymity as when all the information shredded or provided cannot be traced or linked back to its originality. In this study anonymity was ensured by using pseudonyms to protect the participant's privacy. When participants are promised that the confidentiality is maintained, it means that the information they provide will not be publicly reported in a way which identifies them (Polit & Hungler 1998).

To maintain staff anonymity, comments from participants were identified by their faculty designations as needed, without reference to their specific designated area. Lastly, information about myself and my supervisor was provided to the participants for any further questions or complaints.

3.12 Scope and limitations of the study

The study was carried out at WSU, Butterworth campus. It was only limited to students with disabilities registered for laboratory-based courses and four laboratory technicians, in order to understand the experiences of pedagogical and institutional support provided to students with disabilities. The institution's policy documents regarding support for students with disabilities were not reviewed. Therefore, the perceptions and observations of the laboratory technicians were used to determine the extent of support provided by the institution. Only ten students with disabilities were interviewed for the purpose of this study. Three of the selected participants had already left the university and two of the students were reported to be not feeling well and were not around the campus during the interviews. The study is therefore limited to the students from Butterworth campus and the views of the laboratory technicians who work there.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research paradigm, research design and research methodology that underpinned the study. A description of the sampling techniques, participants of the study and data production strategy was also presented. All ethical considerations were explained and the credibility and limitations of the study was outlined. The next chapter focuses on the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data presentation and findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings of the data that was produced through in-depth interviews with the ten participants who were students with disabilities at the university. All ten of the participants were registered for laboratory-based programmes and attended the Butterworth campus. As mentioned earlier, the objectives of the study were:

1. To understand the pedagogical experiences of students with disabilities whilst attending laboratory-related courses at WSU, Butterworth campus;
2. To identify the current state of institutional support that is provided to students with disabilities at WSU, Butterworth campus laboratories; and
3. To understand why students with disabilities experience pedagogical and institutional support whilst undertaking laboratory-based courses at WSU Butterworth campus in the way that they do.

This chapter deals with the first objective and presents the data from the qualitative in-depth interviews with the participants. The themes that emerged through the data analysis processes were informed by the theoretical framework that underpinned the study. The Social Model of disability provided the lens through which the participants' pedagogical experiences whilst attending the laboratory sessions were analysed.

4.2 In-depth interviews

The findings from the interviews provide a holistic understanding of pedagogical experiences of students with disabilities whilst attending laboratory-related courses at WSU Butterworth campus. The findings are presented according to the themes

that emerged from the data analysis based on the Social Model which sought to understand the social attitude, architectural characteristics and social structures within the laboratories at the Butterworth campus.

Themes were determined and categorised into a pattern of responses. The following findings were from the interviews with ten students with disabilities.

4.3 Experiences with teaching and learning needs

4.3.1 Accessing the university

During the interviews, participants were asked to describe their experiences of access to the university. Participants indicated challenges especially during the application process to the university. The participants indicated that there was a lack of awareness of the programmes and qualifications that were on offer at the universities. This was a problem with most rural schools for able-bodied students being marginalised and even worse for special schools that were pushed even further into the periphery and left in the dark when it came to communication from the surrounding universities.

Participants were of the view that the university was supposed to send representatives to their school with the aim of showcasing or sharing the information on all the courses that are offered by the university. They believed that this would have made their lives or career choices easier if they knew which courses to apply for and what facilities the universities had to support their needs as students with disabilities. The following statement by Thabo indicates the frustration that the participants experienced with the lack of information from the universities:

***Thabo** “Our high schools are situated in a rural part of town, with limited resources like internet and transportation to visit nearby universities. The only hope is a word of mouth from the people who visits our school*

more often. This normally enlighten us of what is happening around the world. Therefore, we believe that it is university's responsibility to circulate and share information with high schools, especially on the courses that are offered by the university. This would mean that one knows exactly which course is suitable or to choose from."

Another participant Rose added by saying:

Rose *"I once read about the career expo in a newspaper somewhere. This was an event hosted by one university who invited high schools to that event. Students were transported by the university from their schools to attend this event where the university showcased their courses and orientated all students around the campus. All I am saying is that maybe if we had or can have something like that in future".*

Thembi expressed her desire for information on university courses as follows:

Thembi suggested that *"Even if they can distribute pamphlets in high schools regarding courses offered by the university, because during my first-year application, I had a very bad experience. I was accompanied by my sister who assisted me throughout the application process. It is not like I was looking for a special attention or something, but considering the fact that I was the first-time applicant, I had no idea of the courses that were offered by the university."*

The above statements concur with Madriaga (2007, p. 35) who highlight that "such a lack of information about support services to students with disabilities in high level education has been a constant theme in many studies in developing countries". Even though there are different kinds of information sharing, for example social media, television, newspapers, however, the above responses from participants indicated that a gap still exists in terms of communication between universities and high schools, especially rural schools and schools for

students with disabilities. Students with disabilities continue to face challenges in accessing information about courses offered in higher education institutions. They are also not well briefed regarding registration processes at the university. The sub-theme below reflects this inadequate level of understanding such processes.

Participants also highlighted that they received no assistance during the registration process. Although the security guards were visible in the great hall to assist students in general there were no specific personnel that was allocated to students with disabilities. Participants expressed their frustration and disappointment that nobody was in the registration hall to receive them and to assist them to complete the registration forms. Despite their disabilities, they had to endure standing in long queues as is indicated by the participants below.

Pinky affirmed the above statement by saying,

***Pinky** “I thought that after struggling so hard with application, the registration process would be a walk in the park. Little did I know that it was actually worse than application process. It took me actually five days to finally register and do student card. I had to queue for everything, for example, filling of the registration form, residence allocation and student card. Some students were waking up as early as 1:am to stand on the que until 8:am when the great hall would be open. But even so, it would take them another few days to finish registration processes.”*

Owa expressed his disappointment with the lack of assistance during registration as follows:

***Owa** “It was really hard standing on the que considering my condition, however I waited with hope of being a university student at the end of the whole registration process experience. I think there should be a*

separate office where students with disability will use for registration and any other related information.”

Another participant with a physical disability made the following suggestion:

Dan *“Maybe we should be allocated on of our own (student with disability) on the registration team, who will deal with only us or have a separate registration from others, to prevent long queues”.*

The above statements clearly indicated the frustration and disappointment of participants when accessing the university, where there was a lack of assistance and consideration for their needs as students with physical and other disabilities. This goes against the White paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013) that clearly states that accommodative arrangements should be made by higher education institutions by removing challenges that hinder student’s development and promote a culture of diverse environment to all students. The paper states that the “government remains committed to improving access and success for ‘non-traditional students’ (disabled, black and female students)” (DHET, 2013, p. 20).

This statement concurs with Mole (2012, p. 20) who indicates that “Social Model of service provision would determine ways to make all aspects of university life accessible to all students from the onset”. Therefore, in order for HEIs to embrace this model, access to higher education should be made more accessible in order to support and encourage students of all diversity to apply and register for programmes across all HEIs. Despite all these efforts, students with disabilities continue to feel unwelcomed and not catered for at universities. However, some HEIs have created specific units that attend to the needs of students with disabilities as is discussed below.

4.3.2 The disability unit

On completion of the application and registration process, students with disabilities enter the university with some hope of finding relevant offices that provide social and academic support throughout their academic journey. This includes offices like the disability unit and Student Affairs departments who are responsible for student services. According to FOTIM, (2012, p. 13) “for many students with disabilities, the disability service unit or disability support service is the first point of contact”. Such units or offices ensures and facilitates the access and participation of students with disabilities in the university.

During the interviews, participants were asked about their experiences of using such a disability unit within WSU. According to the participants, they were not aware of a designated disability unit as such on the Butterworth campus. However, they did mention that the Student Affairs department played some role in assisting students with disabilities. Some participants confirmed that they do receive assistance with campus residence accommodation (inside and outside the Butterworth campus) and transportation from outside campus residences to the campus. The personnel who work in the Student Affairs department provide them with such services. All participants attested to that but highlighted that the academic support that they receive throughout the year is not sufficient, this includes finding bursaries, making arrangements when going to class (especially for those using wheel chairs) and tutor allocation. The following participants described their experiences as follows:

Thembi: *“No we do not have a disability unit as such within Butterworth campus, but, the Student Affairs provides assistance in terms of residence accommodation within and outside the campus after the registration process. However, I feel that this is not enough. During the course of the year, there are a lot of issues or challenges which includes, allocation of tutor assistance, extra time allocation during classes, finding*

bursaries, making arrangement to go to class (especially for those using wheel chairs). This is where I think the office should assist most. However, there is no assistance provided.”

Participants appreciated the support offered by the Student Affairs department, however they highlighted that the office is always busy and full of able-bodied students who also require assistance. The participants were of the view that having a dedicated disability unit that will attend to their specific needs would somehow protect them, provide privacy and create a feeling of belonging for them. Below are some of the participants' views in this regard:

Rich *“We really appreciate the support and assistance that we receive from Student Affairs department. However, in some cases you go to their offices for more than three times without getting any assistance, because their offices are always busy and full of students who needs assistance. So, having a disability unit who only focus on us will really help”.*

Rose added by saying *“Sometimes it is very difficult to discuss your private matters in their offices and in front of other students as I feel that there is not enough privacy. I think we need to have a disability unit separately”.*

The above statements from the participants highlighted the importance of having a dedicated disability unit within the campus. This statement concurs with FOTIM (2012) who highlights that most universities rely on the disability support services office on their campuses for information regarding all general disability information on students. This disability support service office serves as a crucial point of contact for university staff and students with disabilities. Therefore, a professional relationship between the support service office, departments and students with disabilities is essential. Private matters such as issues of finance may then be deliberated on in a confidential manner as is discussed below.

4.3.3 Financial assistance for students with disabilities

According to FOTIM (2012) most students come to university with the hope of being awarded bursaries or loans to further their studies. This implies that in order to continue with their studies, one must apply for a bursary or National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to pay for university fees. NSFAS guidelines with regards to students with disabilities are positions and geared towards the payment of assistive devices, tuition, books, accommodation, wheel chairs, laptops, and food costs. However, they do not fund human support (scribes, sign-language interpreters and note takers etc.) (FOTIM, 2012). This limits some students who have related disabilities that require such services.

During the interviews, participants attested that they do receive funding from NSFAS within the Butterworth campus. However, a lot of challenges were raised by the participants. Some of the funding frustrations that they shared included the late approval of funds, that had a ripple effect on the late arrival of assistive devices that were required to support their teaching and learning in the programmes that they were registered for. Participants highlighted that they normally apply for NSFAS at the beginning of the year, together with registration. In this way they hoped that the funding would be approved early in the year and they would then receive the monthly allowance for food, books, tuition and assistive devices. However, the participants indicated that their funds were only approved during the second or third term. Some of their frustrations of having to attend class on an empty stomach and without books or assistive devices are expressed below:

Nasy *“Yes we do receive financial assistance from the NSFAS office each year, which covers mostly food, books, accommodation, and assistive devices. However, the problem is that we do apply for the bursary as early as the beginning of the year, but the process is too slow and we only receive the approval towards the end of the year”.*

Thembi attested to the above statement by saying: *“The late approval of bursary allocation really puts a strain on our teaching and learning. For example, there are students who are using assistive devices like braille when attending classes. Without the approval and recipient of this device, this means that a student has to attend classes without assistive device. This may hinder the success of student during teaching and learning”*.

Another major challenge that was highlighted by the participants during the interviews was the once-off fee that is payable for devices like wheel chairs, walking aids and other assistive devices that are required to support the teaching and learning of students with disabilities for the full duration of the programmes that they are registered for. The participants described their experiences with the hiring of these devices (they were only allowed to claim once in three years for each device) as follows:

Owa *“This is a devastating experience to us who are permanently using wheel chairs. The university only allows a once off payment which is payable for the device that you are using for the period of a degree duration. My only concern is that, we use gravel road outside the residence accommodation, and this may affect or brake the wheel chairs tires. Then I cannot be able to claim for another wheel chair. I think the bursary allocation should be increased for the assistive devices. Maybe we should have a separate bursary for the assistive devices”*.

The above statement indicated that there is a shortage in bursary allocation for assistive devices. The need to increase the bursary funding was also recommended. This statement concurs with FOTIM (2011) in their project report on the disability in higher education that revealed that NSFAS is not adequate since students with disabilities have extra needs than the normal allowance given to able-bodied students. These statements are strengthened by the Social Model theory (Hodkinson & Devarakonda, 2009) which contends

that it is the society that disables persons with disabilities. Proper arrangements should be made for students with disabilities so that they can enjoy same benefits as their able-bodied peers.

4.4 Experiences of architectural structures

4.4.1 Physical access to the teaching and learning environment

Physical access to the teaching and learning environment has been listed among other barriers to higher education opportunities for students with disabilities. These architectural structures include entrances to the buildings, toilets, lifts, lecture venues and laboratory entrances. During the interviews with participants, it was highlighted that some buildings where they attend theory classes do have ramps for wheelchair access, however, the buildings where the laboratories are located do not have ramps. Another concern for the participants was the poor working mechanism of the lifts in the buildings. They expressed frustration at the frequent malfunctioning of the lifts especially during times when they had lectures or practical's scheduled. Many participants also felt that the number of toilets that were designed for students with disabilities was inadequate. They claimed that some buildings did not have specially designed toilets and the toilets had to be shared between buildings. The participants' concerns regarding the architectural design of the buildings were as follows:

Rich *"... the entrance ramp to my building was built just few year ago that assist students with disabilities when entering the building. However, other buildings do not have ramps. When I am attending my practical lessons in the laboratory I have to go to another building upstairs where there are no ramps. This creates a problem as I cannot walk properly on the stairs and I need an assistant to hold me as I walk up".*

Other participants complained about the malfunctioning lifts and the inadequate toilets that pose health risks:

Musa “...in my department, there is a lift that was built few years ago to help or assist students if they are attending classes on the second floor. However, the lift is always not working. So this puts a challenge when one has to go to other classes upstairs”.

Dan added by saying “Our toilets in my building were not built to accommodate students with disabilities as the entrance door is small and are placed on the second floor. Therefore, we go to another building block to share toilets. However, we worry about the issues of health safety as there are a lot students sharing those toilets”.

The above statements highlighted the need for more access especially to the building entrances. The participants indicated that physical access to the buildings play a negative role in their pedagogical experiences although the Social Model suggests that “Everyday things should not be a barrier or even a special accommodation for students with disabilities” (Munyi, 2012, p. 20). It is clear from the participants that their pedagogical experiences were compromised by the inadequate architectural design of the buildings where the lecture venues and laboratories were located. The issue of inadequate toilets and malfunctioning lifts further compromised their pedagogical experiences. Participants highlighted that access to university buildings have a negative impact on their experiences as students with disabilities on the Butterworth campus.

4.4.2 Laboratory layout and resource constraints

The laboratory is where students are given a chance to practise what was taught in the theory class. Students work separately in their own working stations. Therefore, most laboratories which are designed for practical-oriented programmes consist of big machines, tables, stoves, computers etc. During the

interview participants described their challenges of navigating inside the laboratories on the Butterworth campus. They indicated that the high, long laboratory tables were difficult to work on and the electricity sockets were positioned too high up on the walls which made them difficult to reach. As a result, during the practical sessions, the participants had to rely on their classmates to assist them. The following participants described their struggles:

Owa confirmed that *“...Our laboratory has long high tables and chairs which are difficult to reach. When I am working in the laboratory, I do not use my working station but I use a shorter desk which is much better. I have complained about this several times, but the lecturer told me that it is a management issue and it will be forwarded to the management.”*

Participants also highlighted the issue of overcrowded laboratories. They mentioned that they had to share equipment or computers in the laboratory due to the large numbers of students. As a result, one stove and machine was shared by five students. This is evidenced by the following statements:

Musa: *“Our laboratory has twenty working stations, this simply means that it is allowed to carry twenty students per practical class. However, in my class we are fifty. Therefore, we divide and share the twenty working stations. This leads to overcrowding around the station and we end up not performing the practical.”*

Challenges of resource constraints where there is no suitable computer that can accommodate students who are partially sighted were also added. Temby confirms her experience as follows:

Thembi confirmed that *“...I have a problem with my eyes. I cannot see small font sizes in the computer. However, my computer laboratory does not have suitable computer for my condition that I can use. Therefore, I*

am not using the university computer lab because I cannot see properly in those computers.”

The above statements from the participants clearly shows that the laboratories still pose a challenge to students with disabilities when working through their class activities. However, the Social Model highlights that buildings should be designed in a way that is accommodative of people with different abilities (Oliver,1998). According to Mole’s literature (2012) reasonable accommodation includes accessibility to the teaching and learning environments such as laboratories, library and lecture halls for students with disabilities.

4.5 Experiences with support structures

4.5.1 Staff assistance

Many changes in higher education to improve access for students with disabilities have been put in place. Such changes include inclusion of students with disabilities in teaching and learning environment, transportation and accommodative living spaces. According to Mutanga & Walker (2017) this allows students to adjust more easily with lecturers.

During the interviews, participants were asked about their experiences with the staff at the Butterworth campus. Participants mentioned that the university staff were very supportive and willing to assist them at all times especially during class activities and laboratory practical sessions. Their lecturers usually allowed them extra time to finish such activities and were patient towards them. Some participants however mentioned that a few members of staff appeared to be scared and treated them differently. The participants felt that the staff believed that students with disabilities are fragile and should be treated with caution. Participants highlighted that this situation made them feel uncomfortable. The following participants expressed such sentiments:

Sindy *“...During my practical class activities, I am always the last one to finish. Therefore, I am always allocated an extra time to finish my class activities. Well, maybe it is because of my condition and my lecturer knows that I am very slow. However, she becomes sceptical and panic when I am close to the machines. I believe that she thinks maybe I will hurt myself.”*

Another participant shared his feelings regarding the staff as follows:

Rich continued... *“Yes some courses are a bit complicated when you are a student with disability, especially the practical classes. However, I believe that given a chance I would perform as much as expected like my other peers. It is not that we want to prove a point, but we just want to be given a chance and be assisted in achieving that. We do not want people feeling pity for us, but we want them to believe in us.”*

From the above sentiments, it is clear that students continue to experience attitudinal behaviour from certain members of staff. Mayat & Amosun (2011) revealed that in South Africa, students with disabilities continue to experience exclusion in certain academic courses such as Engineering and Natural Sciences. According to Matshediso (2010), literature reveals that some students believe that lack of lecturer’s awareness of students with disabilities has a negative impact on their adjustment to higher education. In this regard, the issue of tutoring assistance came into question.

4.5.2 The role of the tutor

The emphasis of tutoring assistance at WSU is an individual peer to peer support scheme for personal and academic development. It is a Centre for Learning and Teaching initiative that aims at encouraging students registered for the same course. Students are shortlisted and selected as tutors to assist other students with academic development. When the participants were asked about the role of

tutoring assistants, they highlighted that they have never been given a tutor to assist them with their work. The following participants described the experiences:

Sindy attested to the above statement *“Tutors assist everyone equally, with no special attention given to us as students with disabilities.”*

Rose added by saying *“I am not sure if I do understand the word tutor, but I believe that in our situation we should be allocated tutors who should assist us with our academic activities. I believe that this would make our academic activities much easier, especially during practical classes. Despite this, I have never been allocated any tutor. Here at WSU, we do not have tutors to assist us with our work. Even though we heard that NSFAS can pay for personal assistant for student with disability, but here it is not like that.”*

In the case of one participant, he stated that he was called upon to serve as a tutor:

Thabo highlighted that *“I was never allocated a tutor on my studies but I was a tutor myself. I really enjoyed the opportunity that was given to me and gained a lot of experience”*.

The above statements from participants attested that they have never been allocated any tutor to assist them with their academic work. However, some of participants have participated as tutors for other students. This statement concurs with Hadjikakou, Polycarpoy & Hadjilia (2010) regarding the experiences of students with disability in higher education in Cypriot who found out that in most of the institutions, there was no special tutoring available for students with disabilities.

4.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide an understanding of pedagogical experiences of students with disabilities whilst attending laboratory related courses at WSU Butterworth campus. Each theme was presented with a brief analysis.

Data presented in this chapter confirms that students continue to face pedagogical challenges within the institution. In the following chapter, I present and discuss data obtained from the laboratory technicians.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Presentation of the findings

5.1 Introduction

As discussed in chapter four, data presented was obtained through qualitative methods of data production. In this chapter, I present the data that was produced through in-depth interviews with four laboratory technicians based in Butterworth campus. The findings were analysed and presented according to the themes that emerged from the data based on the Social Model which sought to understand the social attitude, architectural characteristics and social structures within society. The themes were determined and categorised into a pattern of responses emerging consistently and more often to highlight a common issue. The following discussion represents the interviews with four laboratory technicians.

5.2 Institutional support

5.2.1 Inclusion of students with disabilities in laboratories

From so many angles, inclusive education has been emphasised in higher education institutions. Universities are expected to include students with disabilities in their classes in order to redress the inequities of the past. Therefore, lecturers are expected to promote diversity in teaching and learning in their respective working environments. During the interviews conducted with the participants (laboratory technicians) on their personal opinions with having interacted with students with disabilities in their laboratories, different views emerged. Mixed attitudes about having students with disabilities in their classes were found. Their responses were influenced by their experiences in their classes and some felt that it was not a big issue to have students with disabilities in their laboratories. They promoted the view of inclusive education and felt that maybe there is still more to be done at WSU and the Butterworth campus in this regard. However, some participants highlighted that somehow,

they feel as if the work load is too much for students. Participants also highlighted the issue of overcrowded laboratories.

They highlighted this issue as putting a strain on their work as they have overloaded classes, large classes and limited resources which actually raises a concern of safety in the laboratory.

Nosi and Nozi shared the same sentiments:

Nosi *“The inclusion of students with disabilities in the higher education system has been put into light for quite some time. In my class, I do have one student with disability. I do not have a problem with her. I always avail myself for any extra assistance that may be needed. However, I am concerned that maybe the work load is too much for her, hence this course requires a lot of practical work in order to acquire all credits and pass the diploma.”*

Nozi concurred with the above statement, *“In my department, I am the only laboratory technician who is supposed to help between 40 up to 60 students during practical classes. With this in mind, the laboratory cannot cater for such group. Therefore, students are grouped and share equipment amongst themselves. However, this normally raises issues of safety in the laboratory as they deal with dangerous equipment’s”.*

Although some laboratory technicians are sympathetic towards students with disabilities, however sometimes they feel overloaded and overwhelmed. They end up failing to balance personal and professional emotions. DHET (2013) highlights that more integrated strategies to inclusive education and different methodologies in post-secondary school are essential. Therefore, greater responsibility should be on educating staff to address issues of disability at all levels. With regard to professional emotions raised on the above statement, the issue of professional skills was also raised.

5.2.2 Professional skills

During the interview with participants, lack of professional training in dealing with diverse students, and particularly in dealing with students with disabilities were highlighted. This contributes to a number of challenges which includes their reaction and behaviour in the teaching and learning environment:

Lez and Laz confirmed to the above statement by saying:

Lez *“The issue is that as laboratory technicians, I was not trained to deal with students with disability matters e.g. having a partially sighted student or a student without hands in class can be very traumatising, while at the same time you have big classes and you are rushing to meet department deadlines.”*

Laz added by saying... *“As the first point of contact with students in classes, you want to be confident and feel in-charge. This can only happen if you know that you are well capacitated within your territory. I believe that a professional training towards inclusive education is a necessary tool. This is to prepare and ensure that the staff is ready to face challenges in the respective classes”.*

From the above statements, it is evident that awareness campaigns that promote diverse environments within institutions should be conducted regularly with staff members. According to Sefotho (2015, p. 14) “lecturers are the first point of contact with students during practical classes”. They orientate, ensure safety standards and conduct practical classes in the laboratory. Therefore, one has to be well equipped in order to conduct and maintain high academic standards.

5.2.3 Physical access to the teaching and learning environment

During the interviews with participants so many concerns were revealed with regards to the university's physical access to the teaching and learning environment. Participants pointed out that there are changes that have been put into place in the university like the new entrance ramps, however the inside layout of the laboratories has not been the matter of urgency. Participants pointed out that this has a negative effect on the teaching and learning of students.

This statement was confirmed by **Nozi** by saying,

Nosi *“Most of the buildings within the university do have ramps that were built recently at the main entrance of each building for people using wheelchairs. However, I feel that the inside setting of laboratories has not been considered in term of accommodating all kinds of students with disabilities. For example, computer laboratory is supposed to have braille to accommodate student with disability. Same applies to other laboratories like, food laboratory, engineering which should have accommodative short chairs and tables for students that are using wheel chairs etc.”*

Laz also added by saying,

Laz *“Due to the nature/ setting of my laboratory, it is very difficult for a student in a wheelchair to move around, because it is full of machines with no space to move around. I normally ask them to sit in front so that they can be able to see everything that will be demonstrated in class.”*

From the above statements, it is revealed that accessibility to the teaching and learning environment is a huge problem at WSU Butterworth campus. The tables, chairs and stoves are not conducive to wheelchair users. Greyling (2008) points out that adjustments to teaching and learning environment is

essential to ensure the safety of students. Therefore, more emphasis needs to be put on the inside layout of the laboratories.

5.2.4 Specialised assessments

The participants were asked to share the assessment methods with regards to students with disabilities. They had different views, possibly due to different students that they have in their classes. For example, some students need font adjustments, some were provided with personal assistants from previous schools and some are from rural areas where English is used as their second language. Therefore, they need time to adjust to the new and changing environment.

The following participants shared their views by saying:

Nozi *“I am not sure if there is a policy that talks to assessments in terms of students with disabilities. Therefore, I treat them the same otherwise if indicated by my head of department when there is anyone who needs a special attention. However, I try to give them extra hours during class work”.*

Laz: *“I do not think there are any formal rules when it comes to assessment method. I treat them the same, especially during practical class when one has to observe. It is not about who finished first, but the knowledge acquired during class activities”.*

Nosi continued by stating:

Nosi *“I think there should be a visible policy on teaching and learning for students with disabilities that will clearly state what is expected of laboratory technician during practical classes. Yes, changes can be*

made in the laboratories but if it not stated clearly how to teach students with disabilities, then it is going to be a problem.”

The above statements mentioned that participants used neutral methods to assess all students as they were not aware of any special teaching and learning or assessment policies to guide their practices.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the findings from the four laboratory technicians who worked in laboratories in different departments. From the data analysis, themes emerged based on the common responses. The following chapter will present the summary and discussions of this study.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Summary and discussions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter was designed to summarise and discuss the findings of this study. For the purpose of this study, this chapter is divided into two sections. The first section summarises and discusses the pedagogical experiences of students with disabilities. The second section explores the institutional support provided to students with disabilities in laboratory-related course. In this way all the research objectives are discussed.

6.2 Summary and discussions

6.2.1 Accessing the university

With regards to application and registration into the university, participants expressed many challenges faced during this period. The study revealed numerous barriers which hinder the application and registration process of students with disabilities. Amongst these challenges, a gap of information sharing and lack of communication between the university and special high schools on career guidance was highlighted. In this regard, the information sharing process which enables students with disabilities to know more about the courses offered by the university or that they intend to enrol for, does not reach their previous high schools. This puts them in a disadvantaged situation and makes them feel unwelcomed, isolated and not catered for when applying to the university. The above statements concur with Ahmad (2016) who points out a lack of communication, career guidance and information regarding access to higher education institutions courses for students with disabilities and proper arrangements should be made in order to assist and improve the learning process.

The study also revealed a lack of personal assistance during registration. Participants expressed their disappointment and frustration where they felt that they were not supported by the university. The study revealed that the long queues

and registration process that takes them almost a week to complete puts a strain on their health issues. Much support and assistance is needed during registration, especial personal assistance through ought the registration. This statement is in line with Greyling (2008) who highlights faculty support, peer to peer support and university support is an important factor that contributes to student's access and success.

Therefore, there is a need to conduct career guidance in high schools to make students aware of all the courses offered by the university, as well as a provision of a relevant office to deal with students with disabilities. The findings of this study reinforce the Social Model which underpins this study. In the Social Model, societal issues such as education, access to information, equity, identity and power became important considerations when thinking about disability. The university should ensure that career guidance is conducted in special schools, in order to share information and prepare students with disabilities for higher education institutions.

6.2.2 Disability unit

The findings of this study reported that the university does not have a disability unit (DU) office, however, Student Affairs office assists students with disabilities with their special needs during the course of the year. However, the findings revealed that the assistance offered by the Student Affairs office is not sufficient enough as participants continue to experience challenges throughout the year, especially with regards to their health-related issues, tutor/ personal assistance and finding relevant bursaries. Nonetheless, the findings of this study stressed the importance of DUs around the university with clear stipulated guidelines of support services for students with disabilities. This statement is alluded to by researchers Crous (2005); CHE (2005) & Greyling (2008) who revealed that in many instances, DUs continue to play an important role in terms of academic and personal support for students with disabilities in HEIs.

However, FOTIM (2012) expressed that the DUs are experiencing various challenges such as resource constraints that limit the nature of services offered. FOTIM further revealed that available evidence suggest that this may be due to the fact that institutions vary in structures as well as services offered by the Unit. Therefore, DUs are subjected to belong to different departments within HEIs, where support to students with disabilities tend to operate separately from or have limited collaboration with broader teaching and learning support initiatives at the institutions.

6.2.3 Financial assistance

The findings of this study revealed that the bursary allocation is not sufficient enough to cater for all the needs of students with disabilities. These findings are similar to the project reported by FOTIM (2011) who revealed that NSFAS is not adequate since it does not cover all the assistive devices required by students with disabilities.

The study further revealed that in most cases, students with disabilities struggle almost half of the year waiting for the bursary approval for the assistive devices, therefore the teaching and learning process is hampered. The findings revealed and expressed the importance of early arrival of assistive devices as a means to improve teaching and learning. The findings are further in line with NSFAS Notebook (2017). The Notebook expressed the main purpose of special provisions of assistive devices which is to enhance and improve teaching and learning environment that is conducive to the educational development of student with disabilities in HEIs. With such encouraging initiatives in higher education, students are enabled and empowered to further their education.

6.2.4 Physical access to the teaching and learning environment

Findings of this study revealed that limited physical access to the teaching and learning environment plays a negative role in the experiences of students with

disabilities in laboratory-related courses. The findings of the study revealed that entrances were not built to accommodate students with disabilities in mind therefore, entrance doors and inside layout settings, still pose a challenge to students with disabilities. This study is similar to Hadjikakou & Hartas (2008) who revealed that physical access to teaching and learning environments pose a challenge to students with disabilities. This affected the experiences of students with disabilities in Cypriot higher education.

The findings also revealed that the university has built new buildings like the library and auditorium with access provision for people with disabilities. However, despite this development, the findings reported that the new buildings are still problematic because even though there is a lift installed to assist students with disabilities, most of the time it is not working. Similarly, the Social Model highlights that the environment should be more welcoming and accommodative to ensure equal participation for both students with disability and able-bodied students within the society.

6.2.5 Staff assistance

The findings of this study reveal different views on staff assistance for students with disabilities. The findings revealed that staff are normally scared to make close contact with students with disabilities and are concerned that students with disabilities might hurt themselves during practical classes. Some staff members do assist students, however, with a cautious mind. These findings are in line with the study done by Ndeya-Ndereya's (2015) on the role of lecturers in the learning needs of students with disabilities at a South African university.

The results revealed that some lecturers are reluctant and distance themselves from participating in any activities involving students with disabilities. In this regard, lecturers prefer to send students to DUs for any academic related issues. A diverse teaching and learning environment at this university remains

unchanged. The author argues that even though the policies are in place, personal responsibility is also essential to promote inclusive education in HEIs.

The above studies clearly share a common view of how lecturers from different institutions view and experience disability. This also points to an absence or lack of institutional disability policy and practices within higher education institutions. It is clear that support for students with disabilities is dependent on the DUs and willingness of individual lecturers. Clear policies and strategies should be emphasized in order to improve teaching and learning of students with disabilities.

6.2.6 Role of tutor assistance

The findings of this study revealed that students are not allocated tutors during class or practical sessions. Only university tutors that assist all first-year levels available within the university. This is in line with a study conducted by Hadjikakou, Polycarpoy & Hadjilia (2010) on the experiences of students with disabilities in higher education in Cypriot, whereby, most of the institutions did not have any tutors available to assist students with disabilities. Students were offered the same tutoring as their able-bodied students.

As far as extra time is concern, this study revealed that there is no consistency. The study revealed that some of the lecturers do give extra time to students, however, some do not, especially during the examination period. The study revealed that during examination period, the university assigns new invigilators whom are not familiar with the concept of extra time, so they do not allow extra time hence they are also not instructed by the examination officer to do as such. However, this is in-contrast with Greyling (2008) who highlighted that students with disabilities get tired quickly, lose concentration and some do panic. Therefore, in this instance students might need to be calmed down and given extra time to finish. The above statements share the same sentiments which highlights the need to assist students with disabilities during tests, examinations and also in their

respective teaching and learning environments. Below is the perspective from laboratory technicians.

6.3 Perspective of laboratory technicians

The findings of the study highlighted the personal experiences of laboratory technicians in an inclusive teaching and learning environment. The findings revealed that participants are aware and exposed to inclusive education in their personal capacity although they did not deny that the policies and guidelines do exist. However, they revealed that nothing much is said or done with regards to disability policies and regulations. It is in their own personal capacity that they create a barrier-free environment for students with disabilities. They were also aware of the need for creating an inclusive atmosphere for all students. However, they face challenges in their corners to promote and create barrier-free environments for students with disabilities. The findings indicated that the inclusive policy only exists by name, however things are still being done in the traditional way where there is no professional training or workshop that was conducted to assist participants in dealing with students with disabilities.

The findings of this study revealed that there is a need to conduct workshops for staff members in order to promote a conducive teaching and learning environment. This is alluded to in the previous study by (Matshedisho,2010) who highlights that the teaching staff are also victims of a system that fails to equip them to deal with diversity challenges including students with disabilities in higher education. More intervention and strategies needs to be put in place. These includes disability awareness, regular workshops or training on inclusive education.

The findings of the study revealed that not all laboratories were suitable to meet the needs of students with disability. Specifically, the laboratories that contained the long tables and chairs and overcrowded working stations create a negative environment for students with disabilities. Even though the findings of this study

indicated that some laboratory technicians do assist students, however, the overcrowded environment still poses a challenge.

The findings revealed that there were some changes in place, for example, newly built auditorium, entrance ramps and library, however it was also highlighted that the lifts to the library upstairs are always not working. With regard to the auditorium, students with disabilities are always at the back of the class as the inner settings are not conducive to move around. The findings of this study concurred with Mberengwa & Silo (2005) who revealed that Food Consumer Science laboratory in Botswana junior secondary school was not an accommodative environment suitable for students with disabilities.

In one instance, the laboratory technician gave an example where the learners were not allowed to enrol for a certain laboratory-related course due to inaccessible equipment and facilities. In this instance, this affects the student's choice of course and career limitations.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter summarised the findings of this study by highlighting the experiences of pedagogical and institutional support for students with disabilities in laboratory-related courses. This was achieved by examining data from the interviews of students and staff involved in the network of teaching and learning system. The following chapter highlights conceptualisations of what can be considered to make WSU a fully disability inclusive campus, in line with its mission of inclusion.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. Recommendations and conclusion of the study

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the recommendations and conclusions of the study. I drew on pertinent themes from the data that was presented in chapter four and chapter five for both students with disabilities and laboratory technicians. Then I make recommendations for future research, then conclude.

7.2 Recommendations

The focus of this study was to understand the pedagogical and institutional experiences of students with disabilities in laboratory-related courses. Therefore, the recommendations are based on the findings from students with disabilities and laboratory technicians. However, it would be beneficial to have a study that focuses on all staff members in different faculties which will explore the experiences of inclusive education as invaluable insights can emerge to guide future training. I believe that this area of study requires more attention.

Below I present all the future recommendations for the study:

- **Admission office-** it was recommended that the admission office should update staff members on any admission of students with disability. This will assist staff members to make necessary or proper arrangements such as class allocation on the ground floor to prevent students needing to go up the stairs (for students in wheelchairs) etc.
- **Personal assistant or office during registration process-** it was highlighted that during registration many students with disabilities struggle with long queues and many forms to be filled. As a result, some normally bring personal assistants from their homes. Therefore, in this study it is recommended that students with disabilities should have specified people or

the registration office administrators designated to assist with the registration process;

- **Financial assistance-** Even though students with disabilities do receive NSFAS for their financial assistance in higher education, however, it was highlighted that the bursary is not sufficient. Hence the bursary does not cover other assistive devices required throughout the academic year. It is recommended that financial assistance should be increased in order to meet all the financial challenges faced by students with disabilities throughout the year;
- **Disability unit-** It emerged from the findings that the university does not have a Disability Unit, however the Student Affairs department assists students with disabilities throughout the year. It was also highlighted that the DU serves as the first point of contact for students with disabilities in higher education institutions. Therefore, it is recommended that the university should have a Disability Unit where students with disabilities can discuss and address their educational issues;
- **Laboratory setting-** It was highlighted from the study that the laboratory layout is not conducive for students with disabilities. Therefore, it is recommended that suitable chairs and tables that allow students with disabilities to move with ease inside the laboratory are required in order to improve the teaching and learning environment;
- **Staff training-** all staff members should be trained on inclusive education so as to enhance the teaching and learning of students with disabilities in higher education institutions;
- **Physical access into the teaching and learning environment-** It was highlighted that ramps should be built and lifts installed, however, the lifts are always not working to support students to access the buildings. It is recommended that all laboratories should be easy to access, especially the entrances. These recommendations are in line with the Social Model

(Oliver, 1998), which specifies that a building should be designed in a way that it is accommodative of people with different abilities;

7.3 Conclusion of the study

After the institution of the democratic government of 1994, the South African Constitution, recognized all the people of the land as being equal human beings (DoE, 1997). However, the findings of this study revealed that there is still more to be done in order to have a fully diverse university, in terms of inclusion of students with disabilities.

The aim of this study was to understand the experiences of pedagogical and institutional support for students with disabilities in laboratory-related courses. The study followed a qualitative approach and used in-depth interviews to produce data. The findings of the study revealed that students' experiences were mainly affected by difficulties in accessing the university, physical infra-structure, laboratory layout, available provisions during registration process, positive responses, financial assistance offices, and the level of awareness among the members of the academic and non-academic staff (e.g., cleaners, administrative officers, accommodation officers) on inclusive education.

The issue of accessible environment was of great concern to students with disabilities. This study recommends that accessible teaching and learning environments should be provided, as well as the establishment of a dedicated disability unit where students with disabilities can discuss and address their academic and personal needs. Other recommendations include disability awareness across the university for staff and able-bodied students.

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Appendices 1

16 October 2017

Dear Participant, (students with disabilities)

Consent to participate in research

My name is Mbalenhle Precious Dlamini, student number (215081627). I am a Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College. The title of my research is: **Exploring experiences of pedagogical and institutional support provided for students living with disabilities in laboratory related courses at Walter Sisulu University: a case study of Butterworth campus.** The aim of the study is to contribute to our understanding of issues of pedagogical access and support that institutions of higher education provide for students living with disabilities. Furthermore, the study will assist in determining the extent to which WSU's vision and mission (WSU prospectus, 2005) of "providing an educationally vibrant and enabling environment that is conducive to the advancement of quality academic, moral, cultural and technological learner-centred education for holistic intellectuals is achieved". I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about 30-40 minutes.
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be

held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.

- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: Centre for Learning and Teaching Development, Walter Sisulu University, Butterworth Campus, Eastern Cape. Email: mbalenhle100@gmail.com;

Cell: 0829705835/ 0735950599.

My supervisor is Dr Saras. Reddy who is located at the School of Education, Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Contact details: email reddys15@ukzn.ac.za. Phone number: 031 260 2415.

The Research Office Administrator is Ms Phumelele Ximba at UKZN Research Office, XIMBAP@ukzn.ac.za, telephone number is 031 2603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I..... *(full names of participant)*
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the
research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so
desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

Appendices 2

16 October 2017

Dear Participant, (laboratory technician)

Consent to participate in research

My name is Mbalenhle Precious Dlamini, student number (215081627). I am a Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College. The title of my research is: **Exploring experiences of pedagogical and institutional support provided for students living with disabilities in laboratory related courses at Walter Sisulu University: a case study of Butterworth campus.** The aim of the study is to contribute to our understanding of issues of pedagogical access and support that institutions of higher education provide for students living with disabilities. Furthermore, the study will assist in determining the extent to which WSU's vision and mission (WSU prospectus, 2005) of "providing an educationally vibrant and enabling environment that is conducive to the advancement of quality academic, moral, cultural and technological learner-centered education for holistic intellectuals is achieved". I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about 30-40 minutes.
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a

period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.

- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: Centre for Learning and Teaching Development, Walter Sisulu University, Butterworth Campus, Eastern Cape. Email: mbalenhle100@gmail.com;

Cell: 0829705835/ 0735950599.

My supervisor is Dr Saras. Reddy who is located at the School of Education, Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Contact details: email [reddys15@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:red dys15@ukzn.ac.za). Phone number: 031 260 2415.

The Research Office Administrator is Ms Phumelele Ximba at UKZN Research Office, XIMBAP@ukzn.ac.za, telephone number is 031 2603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I..... *(full names of participant)*
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the
research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so
desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

Appendices 3

Interview schedule for students with disabilities at WSU-Butterworth campus.

Guidelines:

Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will not be revealed to anybody. The purpose of this study is to ***explore the experiences of pedagogical and institutional support provided for students living with disability in laboratory related courses at WSU-Butterworth campus.*** Your role in this research process is to assist me to understand your pedagogical experiences as well as the institutional support that is provided to you when you undertake laboratory related courses at the Butterworth campus.

Thank you very much for taking your time to attend the interview

- Please feel free to respond as in much detail as you wish during this interview.
- Your responses during this interview will be treated with utmost confidentiality and shall not be revealed to anybody.
- Please you are asked to cooperate and ask/inquire from the researcher about any issue(s) which may not be clear....

WELCOME!!

1. What are your experiences with regards to accessing the university? (application process)
2. What kind of support do you need during registration?
3. Does the institution have a Disability Unit?
4. If yes, describe support services provided by Disability Unit?
5. What support services do you think the institution should offer?
6. What support is offered to students with disabilities to assist them in their academic performance?
7. What kinds of learning resources do you need for your study?

8. Briefly describe the kind of support that you need your course to offer?
9. Briefly describe the physical access to teaching and learning laboratory?
10. Kindly describe the laboratory settings of your course?
11. Are there any barriers that you are experiencing which hinder your access to the laboratory?
12. Any suggestion/solutions to the above challenge?
13. Please share with me your challenges regarding laboratory activities/ practical sessions during your class?
14. Do students with disabilities have a personal assistant during practical classes?
15. Are students with disability given extra time to finish their practical session during practical classes in the laboratory?
16. What are the teaching methods used in your practical class? (Probe lab technician preparedness, teaching methods that suit their needs, class involvement e.g. practical activities and laboratory work, realistic expectation of reading work, access to handouts etc.)
17. Explain how useful are these methods to enhance your effective participation in learning activities? (Probe about class attendance, completion rates etc.)
18. What challenges do you face with regard to your participation in practical activities?
19. What is the assessment method used in your practical class?
20. What challenges do you face when these methods are used with regard to your practical performance? In your view how can some of these challenges be overcome?
21. Describe your experiences with laboratory technician staff during practical classes?

22. Does your institution offer career/ counselling services for students with disabilities?

23. If yes, how do these offers help to ease your life around the campus?

24. Are there any recommendations/ suggestions regarding institutional support given to students with disability at WSU-Butterworth campus?

Thank you for time and cooperation

Appendices 4

Interview schedule for laboratory technicians at WSU- Butterworth campus.

Guidelines:

Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will not be revealed to anybody. The purpose of this study is to ***explore the experiences of pedagogical and institutional support provided for students living with disabilities in laboratory related courses at WSU-Butterworth campus.*** Your role in the research process is to **assist me to understand the institutional support that is provided for students with disabilities when undertaking laboratory based courses.**

Kindly note:

- You are assured that in this study all responses are good and valuable....
- Please ask/inquire from the researcher about any issue(s) which may not be clear...
- Please respond to the questions based on your experiences of working with students with disabilities in the laboratories that you work in.

WELCOME

1. Are there any students with disabilities registered for courses in your laboratory?

1.1 If yes, how many?

2. Do you have access to Student Disability Services at WSU- Butterworth campus? If yes, what has been your experience with working with them to assist students with disabilities?

3. Was there any professional training provided to you as a laboratory technician by the institution to conduct classes for students with disabilities?

4. Can you describe some of your experiences with students with disabilities in your class/ laboratory?

5. Can you describe the current state of physical access to laboratories at WSU-Butterworth campus?

6. In your view how easily do students with disabilities access the laboratory teaching and learning environment? (In terms of the physical environment settings in the laboratory etc.)

7. Describe the nature of the work that is required of the student to undertake at the laboratory? In your view how do you assist the students with disabilities to perform the work that is required?
8. Do students with disabilities have personal assistants during practical class in laboratory?
9. If not, why?
10. What are your views about the assessment methods used in the laboratory? Describe your role during the assessments. What assistance do you provide students with disabilities with if any?
11. What are the common challenges of students with disabilities in the laboratory that are brought under your attention? In your view how can they be solved?
12. What are your feelings as a laboratory technician towards inclusion of students with disabilities in laboratories? (Probe about laboratory technicians' attitude and how it may affect learners' participation in class activities, class attendance etc.)
13. In your view, what kinds of institutional support is currently being provided for students with disabilities in laboratory related courses?
14. In your opinion, what are the recommendations to promote/ improve effective learning environment at the laboratories for students with disabilities at Walter Sisulu University?

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Appendices 5



RECTOR: BUTTERWORTH CAMPUS

Private Bag X3182, Butterworth, 4960
Tel: +27 (0)47 401 6205; Cell: +27 (0)72 214 2465
Fax: 047 401 6040; e-mail: vsb.mtsetwa@wsu.ac.za

08 September 2017

Ms M Dlamini
House No 6424 Ext 24
Butterworth
4960

Dear Ms Dlamini

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT BUTTERWORTH CAMPUS :
STUDENT NO: 215 081 627**

This serves to confirm that you have been granted permission to conduct research at Butterworth Campus.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'VSB Mtsetwa', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Prof VSB Mtsetwa
Campus Rector: Butterworth

Walter Sisulu University

Appendices 6



23 February 2018

Ms Mbatenhle P Dlamini Z15081627
School of Education
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Dlamini

Protocol reference number: HSS/2147/017M

Project title: Experiences of pedagogical and Institutional support of students with disabilities In laboratory related courses at Walter Sisulu University : a case of Butterworth Campus.

Full Approval – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

In response to your application received 3 November 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr Saraswathi Reddy
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo and Ms Philisothe Ncayiyana

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X5-001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 250 3587/8250/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 250 4609 Email: s.mhaga@ukzn.ac.za / snw@ukzn.ac.za / mshirazi@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Formal Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendices 7



TITLE: DISABILITY POLICY			
POLICY NUMBER:	SA10	APPROVED BY:	Interim Council
DATE:		MINUTE:	
EFFECTIVE DATE:	8 July 2005	NO. OF PAGES:	Three (3)
REFER QUESTIONS TO: Director Student Affairs			

1. PREAMBLE

In its mission to provide optimal career oriented learning opportunities and to promote solution-centered research, there are imperatives that the Walter Sisulu University (WSU) is taking cognisance of. One of them is that people with disabilities (PWD) have the same right to reach their academic and occupational potential as those who are able-bodied. The WSU is committed to providing for the educational needs, as well as promoting equal opportunities for all PWD.

The WSU is guided by, and seeks to promote the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and other legislation which protect PWD from unfair discrimination and the violation of their rights to equal opportunity, dignity, privacy and confidentiality.

Section 9(4) of the Bill of Rights states that no person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms subsection 3. Subsection 3 lists those grounds as "race, gender, sex disability and birth."

Section 37(3) of The Higher Education Act of 1997 states that a higher education institution's admission policy must provide for redress of past inequalities and may not unfairly discriminate in any way.

Section 5 of the Employment Equity Act legislates that employers should "take steps to promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice." Section 6 of the Act further states that "No person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee... on one or more grounds including race, gender, sex disability and birth."

The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act declares discrimination to be unfair unless it can be proven that it is reasonable and justifiable. In terms of this Act, educational institutions have an obligation to provide access and facilities to PWD.

This institution commits itself to fostering and encouraging, amongst its staff and students, positive and unprejudiced attitudes towards people with disabilities and shall make provision, in so far as resources reasonably permit, for any service needed by and for people with disabilities.

2. DEFINITIONS

In its recognition of PWD, WSU applies the following definitions of disability as used in South African and international legislation:

The Employment Equity Act of 1998, according to which PWD fall in the category of designated people against whom no form of discrimination may be tolerated, defines people with disabilities as "people who have long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment which substantially limits their prospects of entry into, or advancement in, employment.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), these are persons who are restricted, or lack the ability to execute activities within the range considered normal for a human being. Handicap refers to a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from a temporary or permanent impairment or a disability that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normally possible for that individual.

(These definitions have bearing on persons with restricted sight, hearing, speech, physical, mental, chronic and learning abilities)

Based on the above, the term "People with Disabilities" (PWD) has bearing on persons with restricted sight, hearing, speech, physical, mental, chronic and learning abilities amongst others.

3. PRINCIPLES

WSU is committed to the following principles:

- Provision of equal opportunity for optimal c
- Career oriented learning for all its students
- Dignity and respect for the rights of individuals
- Co-operative links with other educational institutions in the Eastern Cape and with the community service providers in the interest of making available highly specialised services to disabled students.

4. THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The WSU recognises the imperative to comply with the need to provide a quality learning and working environment for all its students and staff by designing or redesigning all relevant aspects of its physical environment in so far as resources reasonably permit.

These include:

4.1 Access to buildings

This will be achieved by modifying, or installing specialised equipment in buildings, to allow pwd's access to relevant sections of buildings for academic, residential, administrative and recreational purposes.

4.2 Access to academic programmes

This entails the provision of relevant and affordable specialized equipment in classrooms, theatres, offices, residential halls and sport and recreational venues where necessary in order to meet the special requirements of disabled students.

4.3 Adequate signage

Signage will assist pwd's by indicating direction of shortest and easiest routes to entrances, elevators, ramps, toilets and emergency exits.

5. MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities have equal rights in respect of the right to admission, access to learning programmes, financial assistance, access to physical infrastructure, accommodation, sport and recreation as well as any other facility that the University provides, in so far resources reasonably permit.

5.1 Admissions

The WSU admits students with disabilities on the basis of the same criteria as other students, excluding cases where a person due to his/her disability does not comply with the inherent requirements of the learning programme. These criteria pertain to academic capability and suitability of programmes, courses/diplomas/degrees. Decisions in terms of suitability to the programmes will be made in consultation with all relevant student support services.

However, the support that the University can give to students will be limited to affordability of the required support. It becomes imperative that students with disabilities inform the appropriate University officials as early as practically possible. The University provides for such disclosure of disabilities in the application and admission procedure.

5.2 Financial Aid

Students with disabilities qualify for financial assistance in accordance with the same criteria applicable to all students.

5.3 Teaching, assessment and evaluation

Learning programmes, including provision for programmes and procedures for promotion will be designed giving due consideration to the disability of the students concerned.

Staff development programmes of the WSU which promote awareness of diverse, and sometimes specialised needs of students, may call for adjustments to teaching and learning approaches and methodologies.

5.4 Sport and recreation

The WSU will provide assistance and support services to students with disabilities on the principle of equal opportunity and dignity to all its students.

It is possible, however, that (for sport and recreation) the institution may not, on its own, be able to provide all the required programmes and services. The appropriate departments and staff will interact with other institutions within the region, as well as the greater community, in order to assist our students to link up with people with similar disabilities, and to make highly specialised and expensive services available.

5.5 Transport facilities

In addition to a network of paths for motorised wheelchairs and related facilities, the WSU will, wherever possible, assist students with disabilities with specialised transport requirements e.g. a shuttle service from residence to campus where appropriate.

6. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR STAFF WITH DISABILITIES

6.1 Appointment

A decision to appoint a staff member will be based on the inherent requirements of the position and the ability of the candidate to fulfil those requirements. Disability per se will not be justifiable grounds for non-appointment. If appropriate the candidate may be required to furnish a medical report certifying that he/she is able to perform the work required.

6.2 Service conditions

In all cases staff with disabilities will be subject to the same conditions of employment, disciplinary codes and contractual obligations as other employees on the understanding that special arrangements regarding the physical work environment may be considered.

Disability will not be a criterion for refusing to promote, train and/or develop a staff member unless a refusal to promote such staff member can be justified in terms of the inherent requirements of the position.

The policies and procedures applicable to all staff members in respect of retrenchment, ill health, etc apply to all staff with disabilities and therefore the employer may not discriminate unfairly against disabled staff.

(As contained in the document entitled staff policies and procedures of the (WSU)

6.3 Reporting: Employment equity

To comply with the Employment Equity Act 1998, records of staff members with disabilities will be kept by the Department of Human Resources. These records will be regarded as confidential and will be used for no other purpose than reporting to the Department of Labour and as required in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS AND REGISTRATION OF COMPLAINTS


- (a) In the case of students with disabilities, all complaints and needs must be directed to the Dean of Students in writing.
- (b) In the case of staff with disabilities, all complaints and needs must be directed to the Director Human Resources in writing.

Appendices 8

Policy Library ID
SA: 01



Policy on Room Allocations to students

Sponsor division	Student Development and Support Services
Responsible Department	Residences Unit
Related WSU policies	
Policy name	Policy Name
Policy on Student Pregnancy	
Recruitment and Retention Strategy for WSU	
Change History	
Approval authority	Council
Approval Date	28 Aug 2015
Latest revision date	28 Aug 2015
Effective date	1 September 2015
 ----- Chairperson of Council	

WSU: Policy on Room Allocations

TITLE	ROOM ALLOCATION POLICY		
POLICY NO:	SA: 01	APPROVED BY	COUNCIL
DATE:	28 Aug 2015	MINUTE	28 Aug 2015
EFFECTIVE DATE:	1 Sept 2015	NUMBER OF PAGES	08
CUSTODIAN OF THIS POLICY:	Executive Director: Student Development and Support Services		
REFER QUESTIONS TO:	Executive Director: Student Development and Support Services		

Key Policy Elements

1. Title

The Title of this Policy shall be: WSU Room Allocations for Students

2. Preamble

WSU is experiencing a huge demand for on-campus accommodation when our residences can only accommodate 3439 at the Mthatha campus; 898 at the Ibika campus and 245 at the Buffalo City campus. The current bed capacity is to cater for about 24 000 students who are registered. This creates a huge competition among students for accommodation that is grossly inadequate.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that Residences do support the Academic enterprise by ensuring that we create an environment conducive to learning while providing accommodation for students who contribute to the improvement of the institutional throughput rates.

The Policy also seeks to clarify the criteria for admission into WSU Residences.

4. Scope

The Policy is applicable to WSU students seeking admission into WSU residences, Residences Officers, Financial Aid Offices, and the general university community.

5. Definitions of Key Words or Concepts

Application Form:	An application form meant specifically for those who seek accommodation in WSU residences. It is different from the University's general application form.
Clearance Form:	It is a document that is handed to students seeking accommodation by the Finance Division allowing the bearer access to accommodation if/when such is available.
Average percentage:	A percentage constituted by adding up all subjects/ modules written in an exam divided by the number of such subjects/ modules.
Pre-allocation:	Provisional allocation of a student to a room until such student is registered.
Proof of registration:	A document that indicates that a student is registered.
SDSS :	Student Development and Support Services

6. Policy Content and Guiding Principles

6.1 Residence Allocation Process

- i. All students (new and returning) who need accommodation have to fill in Residences Application Forms before they can be considered.
- ii. Residences at WSU shall be allocated on the basis of Academic Performance. There shall be an exception to students registered for MbChB final years, BCurr Final years and SAICA students residing at the NMD Residences due to the Academic Requirements agreed to by WSU with their Accrediting Professional Bodies.
- iii. International students are to be provided with accommodation in line with the MOA's entered into by the University with those countries through the SADEC Protocol. Such students are to meet the minimum academic performance criteria as stated below.
- iv. Special arrangements will be done for Older students (28 years and above) to cater for Inter-generational gaps. Such students will be given single rooms depending on availability
- v. Disabled students will be catered for and prioritized based on their disability.

- vi. Rooms are divided according to the Size of Faculties within each campus to determine Faculty/ Programme Quotas that are to be allocated to students registered in those faculties/ Programmes of study. There shall be a quota for Postgraduate students as well.
- vii. Pre-allocation is done by Residences Officers after examinations have been published and the Lists are posted in Notice Boards prior to registration to enable students to know if they are allocated accommodation in that given year. Students are ranked according to their scores and priority is given to the high achievers. Students are given 48 hours within which to claim their rooms according to their registration days, they do so by producing proof of registration.
- viii. Academic performance for admission into residences is as follows:
New Students:
 - Students must have achieved entrance requirements for their chosen field of study. Such students shall be ranked according to points obtained in their National Senior Certificate and allocated rooms
 - Preference will be given to students who reside in places that are far from the University by at least 50km
 - International students are admitted automatically into residences. These may be on or off campus (Private Accommodation)

Returning Students

- Students must obtain an average of 70% for all modules/courses registered for, to qualify for a single room and 60- 69% for a double room and 50- 59% for a triple room. In the event where such percentages do not fill our residences students will be considered according to the highest percentages obtained as an average until all rooms are taken up. However, students who are repeating any year level of study will not be allocated rooms.
- It must be noted that due to the shortage of single rooms, priority will be given to senior students. Other year levels who qualify for single rooms will be considered if and when single rooms are available.
- Preference will be given to students who reside in places that are far from the University by at least 50km

- ix. Students are only allowed to stay in the residences for the duration of their programme of study.
- x. Students who only register for 2 modules or less will not be considered
- xi. Students are to vacate their rooms at the end of each semester. Students will be given 48 hours after their last exam paper within which to vacate the rooms
- xii. Students must return keys to the Residence Officers when they vacate the rooms at the end of each semester.
- xiii. Students who transgress Residence Rules and Regulations will not be considered for room allocation the following year

7. Statutory structure to approve, adjust and review the policy

The first structure responsible for the approval of this policy is the Institutional Management Committee. Once approved it goes to the Student Services Council. Once approved the Policy will be forwarded to the Institutional Forum for recommendation to Council.

The review process of the Policy will start with the SDSS and follow the same route for approval, recommendations and approval

8. Administration of Policy

The policy should be administered by Residence Officers responsible for room allocations at WSU. They are the primary personnel to implement the Policy. SDSS Directors in various campuses should monitor the implementation of the policy. The Internal Audit Office should oversee the process of implementation.

Matters of concern about the policy or the implementation thereof should be submitted to the SDSS Directors.

9. Custodianship of Policy

The Policy is a SDSS Residences Unit Policy led by the Executive Director SDSS. Residence Officers and the Director SDSS Residences are the primary custodians of the Policy.

10. Effective Date of Policy

The Policy shall be effective upon approval by Council.

11. Procedure

1. Residence Allocation Process

- i. Issuing of application forms for returning students is on 01 Oct and 01 June for new students
- ii. Filling in and submission of application forms by students (deadline is Nov 30 for returning students and open to those admitted for new students)
- iii. Capturing of applications on the ITS
- iv. Division of rooms according to faculty quotas
- v. Source results from the Exams Section
- vi. Pre-allocate continuing students according to academic performance. Students are ranked according to their scores and priority is given to the high achievers. Students must obtain an average of 70% for all modules/courses registered for to qualify for a single room and 60- 69% for a double room and 50- 59% for a triple room.
- vii. Students are given 48 hours within which to claim their rooms according to their registration days
- viii. Students will be given a Residences Brochure that outlines Residences Rules and Regulations that they have to sign prior to them receiving keys, and an inventory of what they will find in the room

12. References

The following documents were used to develop the policy:

- The WSU general prospectus

- The SDSS Handbook for students
- The Residences Brochure

Appendices 9

Turnitin Originality Report

- Processed on: 30-Jan-2019 11:28 PM CAT
- ID: 1070737608
- Word Count: 23691
- Submitted: 1

Masters Class 2018 By Mbalenhle Precious Dlamini

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[http://www.nyda.gov.za/knowledge-management/Knowledge%20Briefs/The%20Marginalisation%20of%20Young%20People%20with%20Disabilities%20at%20Higher%20Education%20Institutions%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.nyda.gov.za/knowledge-management/Knowledge%20Briefs/The%20Marginalisation%20of%20Young%20People%20with%20Disabilities%20at%20Higher%20Education%20Institutions%20(2).pdf)

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< 1% match (Internet from 08-Feb-2013)
http://che.ac.za/auditing/instaudited/reports/WSU_Exec_Summary_Oct2011.pdf
< 1% match (Internet from 18-May-2018)
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1034912X.2010.524445>
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