

Researching organisational capacity for disability-inclusive curricula

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Rationale: Institutions of higher learning need to integrate disability as a social justice and diversity issue rather than merely a medical problem. As such, transformation of curricula is required rather than only focusing on admission and reasonable accommodation of disabled students and staff.

Purpose: These Vice Chancellor's Strategic Goals of UCT are identified as essential for addressing the marginalisation and inequities experienced by disabled people:

- Expanding and enhancing UCT's contribution to SA's development challenges
- Enhancing the quality and profile of UCT's graduates.

Aim of research: to determine the extent and nature of disability inclusion in teaching and research in curricula at UCT.

Methodology: A case study approach was used to elicit the experiences of disability inclusion in teaching and research across six faculties at UCT.

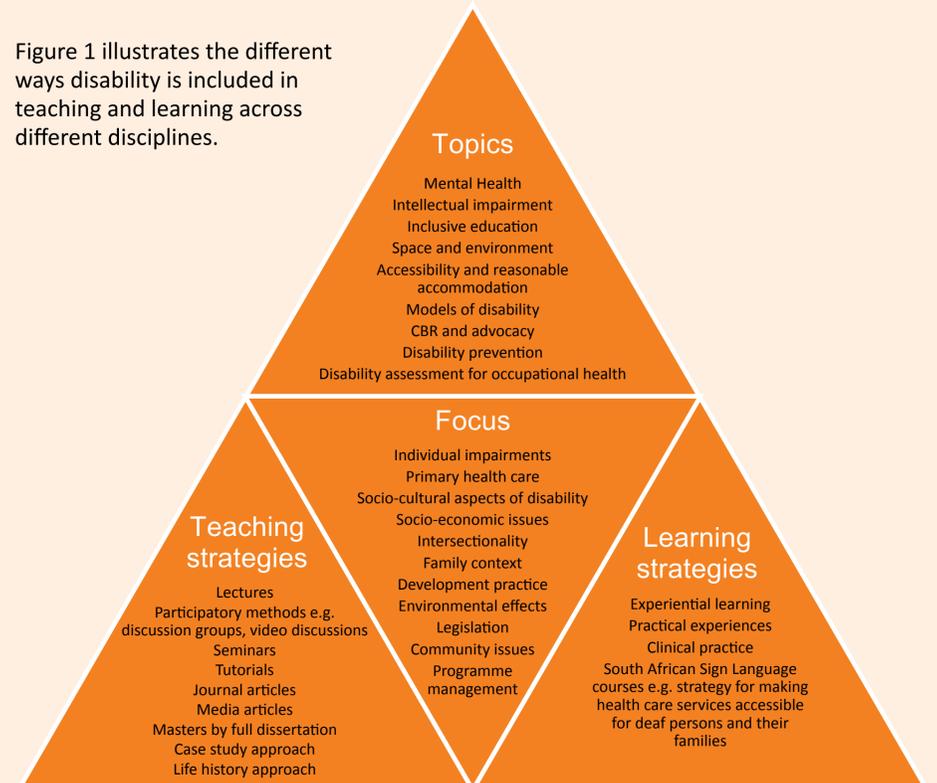
Data gathering: Desk top analysis of UCT's research reports for period 2006-2009 and faculty handbooks of 2009 and 2010. In-depth interviews of academic staff based on responses to phone and email survey.

Data analysis: Descriptive statistics was done on quantitative data and thematic analysis on qualitative data

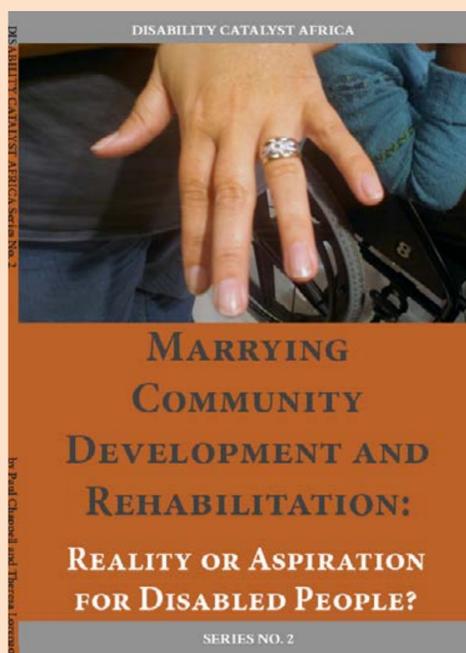
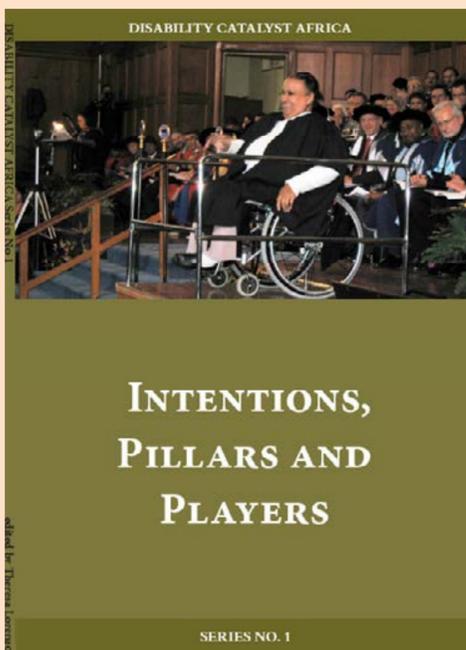
Findings

Limited research has been undertaken in the field of disability, except in the Faculty of Health Sciences where research focuses largely on impairment.

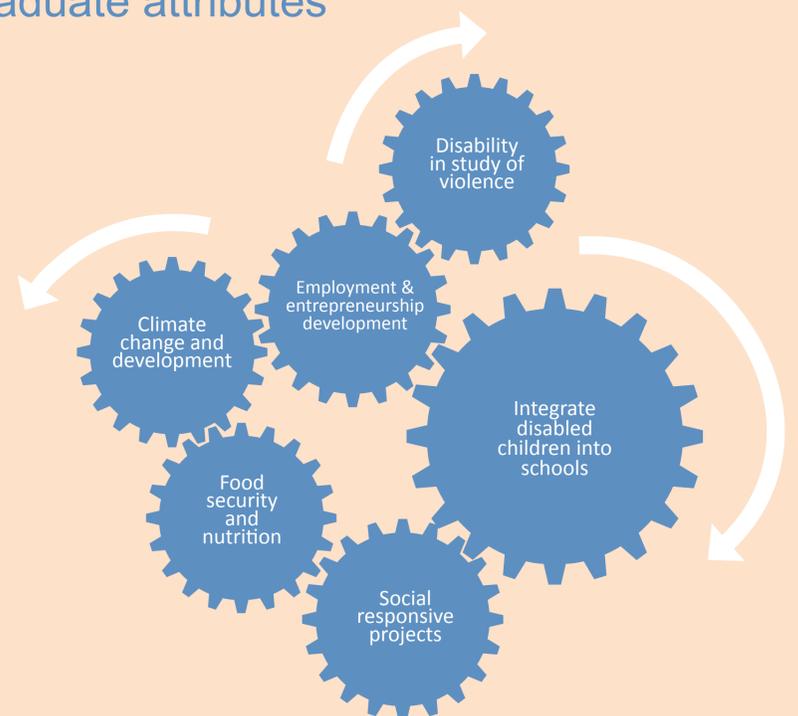
Figure 1 illustrates the different ways disability is included in teaching and learning across different disciplines.



Knowledge generation and dissemination



Relevance of disability inclusion to developmental challenges and graduate attributes



Recommendations

- Disability should be seen as an issue of social justice and diversity and not just a medical or health issue, particularly for those with intellectual and psycho-social impairment as they experience greater marginalisation and stigma
- The issues for research relating to disability in the other faculties need to be highlighted by exploring research collaborations across disciplines with research units at UCT
- Academics and researchers are encouraged to liaise with the Disability Studies Division, Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences in the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Centre for Higher Education Development for academic support, as well as the Disability Services in the Transformation Office of the Vice Chancellor's Office for support in service provision
- Consider disability inclusion for staff performance appraisal related to Rate For Job, ad hominem promotions and merit awards

Conclusion

Integrating disability in research and service learning opportunities could contribute to shifting disability from a marginal or charitable issue to one of diversity and identity politics. The challenge remains for DIRECT to explore ways in which disability is related to social justice and global citizenship.

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