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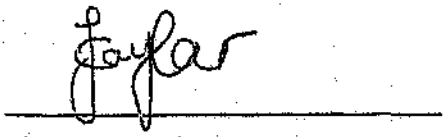
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THE INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

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Supervisor	Leah Gilbert
Date	December 1997

Declaration

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University, nor has it been prepared under the aegis or with the assistance of any body or organisation or person outside of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.



Claire Janet Taylor

8 December 1997

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List of Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
BA	Bachelor of Arts
B Comm	Bachelor of Commerce
CASE	Community Agency for Social Enquiry
DART	Disability Action Research Team
DEAFSA	Deaf Federation of South Africa
DSM	Disabled Students Movement
DPI	Disabled People International
DPSA	Disabled People of South Africa
DSP	Disabled Students Programme
ICIDH	International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps
IL	Independent Living
LRA	Labour Relations Act
NCSNET	National Commission for Special Needs in Education and Training
NCESS	National Committee for Education Support Services
NEAP	National Environment Access Programme
PADI	People for Awareness on Disability Issues
TUG	Transport Users Group
UN	United Nations
UNISA	University of South Africa
WHO	World Health Organisation
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Introduction

Disability can happen to anybody at any time. Yet it is something that many people choose not to think about. This has contributed significantly to the marginalisation of the disabled. However, their lack of organisation and mobilisation also explains their isolation. Thus, disability is a dialogue involving the disabled within a social context. Such an interactive view of disability forms the foundation of this project as it explores the experience of disability at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits). As such, it identifies barriers that limit disabled students, as well the ways in which they promote or inhibit their integration. By seeing disabled students as the experts of this project, it is operating within a reformed independent living (IL) paradigm. This is a synthesis of three sociological traditions, essentialism, structuralism and peculiarism, and sees disablement as the consequence of both environmental barriers, and individual choice, should the disabled elect exclusion as opposed to promoting their rights.

Aims of Research

The first aim is to explore the experience of disability at Wits by drawing on an interactive view of disability. Such an examination includes disabled students' perceptions of their current integration within its physical, social and academic environments, as well as their efforts to become more included. This is influenced by a modified IL paradigm, which not only locates barriers within the physical, social and academic environments of Wits, but also identifies disabled students as autonomous agents who can impact on their participation. While it acknowledges that the context can inhibit the disabled, for example through a lack of facilities and technology, it concedes that disabled people may also be accountable for their marginalisation as a consequence of inadequate organisation and mobilisation.

Secondly, as part of the needs analysis component of this project, disabled students' perceptions of the ideal situation will be examined. Again an interactive model is drawn upon to explore the tension between what is needed to make the physical, social and academic environments of Wits more integrative, and who should assume

responsibility for implementing these changes. As disabled students are seen as the experts, perceptions of their role in changing the environment will be focused on.

Rationale for Research

There are a number of motivations for undertaking this project. First, is that little research has been done in this area. As such, the findings will fill an important gap in the literature, with reference to both the interactive experience of disability at Wits, as well as in identifying the needs of disabled students. By embracing an adapted IL paradigm, this project also conforms to contemporary trends which empower disabled people, seeing them as the specialists.

Secondly, this project is not merely research for its own sake, but may impact on a current policy process. For example, a submission based on focus group discussions has already been made to the National Commission for Special Needs in Education and Training/ National Committee for Education Support Services (NCSNET/NCESS), and copies of this project will be submitted to the vice-chancellor of Wits, the Ministers of Education and Labour, and various organisations for disabled people. A research organisation contracted by the Department of Health to undertake a national prevalence study of disability and needs assessment (Community Agency for Social Enquiry) (CASE), has also shown interest in obtaining a copy of this project to be included in its research. Disabled students who contributed have also shown an interest in using this project to promote their rights. Thus, this research has a 'practical' component in that the findings could be used to develop policies and projects for disabled people

A final motivator is the researcher's personal experience of temporary disability which has made her far more aware and sympathetic to the needs of the disabled. Influenced by Huxley's (1956) assertion that "experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you", this project provides an opportunity for the researcher to make use of her encounter of disability, and associated difficulties.

Structure of Report

The sociology of disability has undergone profound changes, moving from a focus on essentialism, via structuralism to contemporary peculiarism. The strengths of these have been synthesised into a reworked IL paradigm, so facilitating an interactive conceptualisation of disability. The first section examines this theoretical framework, showing how an adapted IL paradigm has influenced the two dimensional analytical model informing the structure of this report. Before discussing methodological considerations in the third section, the second explores the literature pertaining to disability. Also influenced by a reformed IL paradigm, this section moves from an investigation of the sociology of disability, to a study of disability in South Africa, and in education, and finally examines disability at an individual level. The reader is shown that historically disabled people have been marginalised within both the theory of disability and the physical, social and academic environments of society at large, but that a modified IL paradigm has theoretically facilitated the mobilisation of disabled people in efforts to challenge environmental barriers. Also included is an overview of the literature relating to needs analyses in which efforts to create an ideal situation are examined.

The fourth section of this report discusses and analyses the findings made. Again the binary levelled analytical model will be referred to as the reader moves from the current situation within South Africa, Wits and the Disabled Students Programme (DSP), towards an idealised situation as perceived by disabled students, in which they are integrated within the physical, social and academic environments of Wits. Linked to this is the question of who should assume responsibility for implementing the changes that disabled students identified as needed for their participation. By locating this query within a modified IL paradigm, the role played by disabled students in promoting their integration is evaluated, and it is shown that this paradigm is not embraced by disabled students at Wits. Instead of assuming responsibility for themselves, and their participation, they subscribe to structuralist conceptions of disability, identifying the

government and Wits as being the major role players in altering the physical, social and academic environments of Wits.

Theoretical Framework: A Sociology of Disability

Essentialism

A synthesis of three sociological traditions, essentialism, structuralism and peculiarism facilitate an understanding of disability as an interactive experience between the disabled individual and a broader social context. Such a conceptualisation necessitates a distinction between impairment and disability. Differentiating between the two is possible with a paradigm shift in understandings of disability. Earlier rehabilitative models located the source of the problem within impaired people, and expected them to adapt to the environment with professional assistance. Within this tradition, the disabled were separated from the rest of society, isolated in institutions and cared for by able-bodied 'custodians'.

Essentialism Versus Structuralism

Such essentialism and institutionalisation was challenged in the 1960s by an embryonic North American IL movement which identified the environment as problem causing. The World Health Organisation (WHO) adopted this view in the 1980s in its International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH). The ICIDH considers disability as "any restriction or lack, resulting from an impairment (seen as any damage or irregularity of mental, physiological, or skeletal structure or function) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being", while a handicap is defined as "a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or disability, that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal, depending on age, sex, social and cultural factors, for that individual".

Structuralism

Recently this view that "our (impaired) bodies disable us but society handicaps us" (Jagoe, 1983:2) has been challenged. In particular, Disabled People International (DPI) have criticised the implied essentialism of the ICIDH, specifically its view that impairment leads to disability which results in handicap. The DPI definition rejects the

term handicap, maintaining that disablement has nothing to do with an impaired body, but is a consequence of society's failure to remove barriers facing those with impairments. This structuralist understanding promotes the view that 'while our bodies are impaired, it is society that disables us'. The implication is that disability does not arise from impairment, but from society, which obstructs impaired people with barriers, for example legislation, architecture, or attitudes. Structuralist understandings view society as flexible, expecting it to change so as to accommodate those with impairments.

Peculiarism

Inferences of a one sided relationship between society and impaired individuals in this structuralist approach have recently been moderated by Postmodernity. With its emphasis on the uniqueness of experience and empowerment, Postmodernity challenges structuralist views of the disabled as passive victims of societal discrimination. Instead it provides them with freedom and choice at a theoretical level. This new found independence moderates structuralist understandings by locating the solution to environmental barriers within disabled people, viewing them as the experts. As such, it promotes the mobilisation of the disabled in attempts to be integrated, so challenging a 'victimisation view' of disability. As Postmodern theories include an examination of the technicist solutions offered to those asserting their rights, they also allow for a discussion of how policies are often not translated into practice.

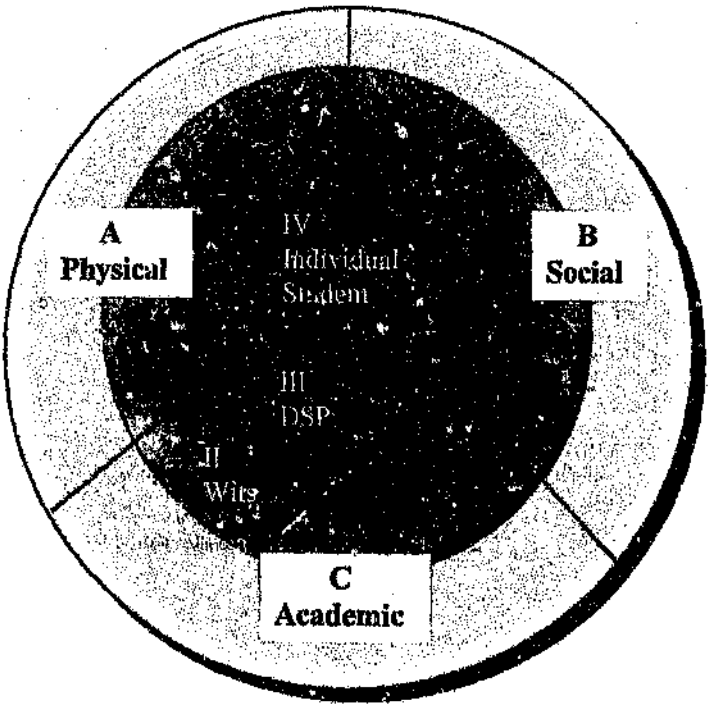
An Adapted IL Paradigm

In a revised IL paradigm, disablement is the consequence of both environmental barriers, and individual choice, should disabled people elect exclusion as opposed to promoting their rights. Essentialist approaches advance an examination of how impaired individuals are expected to adapt to an environment catering for the non-impaired, as well as facilitating an exploration of the influence a history of institutionalisation has on mixed integration. Such an investigation is also aided by the inclusion of essentialist based interpersonal theories. Seeking to uncover how society disables those with impairments entails the subscription of this project to a structural tradition, more specifically, that of the DPI. Including this sociological tradition also

facilitates an exploration of the ways in which society can be changed so as to accommodate those with impairments. In attempting to transcend the 'victim view' of structuralism, Post-modern conceptions of disability will also be drawn on. Not only do these facilitate an examination of the unique experience of disability, they also give the disabled freedom and choice to create social movements which challenge the status quo. The impact of these will be examined, facilitated by basing this report on an interactive view of disability. In short, an adapted IL paradigm sees disability as a dialogue between impaired individuals and a broader social context.

Two Dimensional Model of Analysis

Figure 1: "Two Dimensional Model of Analysis showing the Interaction between the Physical, Social and Academic Environments of South Africa, Wits and the DSP as perceived by Disabled Students"



An interactive conceptualisation of disability forms the foundation of this project. By studying the experience of disabled students, it locates them within a social context and explores their interaction on three levels, South Africa, Wits and the DSP. As is illustrated in Figure 1, this involves a distinction between four levels of analysis. Firstly, in order to contextualise this research, it locates disability and Wits within contemporary South Africa. At this level, it identifies barriers that obstruct disabled people, as well as exploring attempts to transcend these. The next level studied is Wits itself. Here too, barriers that moderate disabled students' functioning are explored. As part of such an examination, a needs analysis was undertaken to identify these barriers, a necessary first step to overcoming them (Kimmel, 1977). Efforts on the part of disabled students at Wits to challenge physical, social and academic barriers are also included. The third level of examination explores the DSP located within Wits, focusing on how it attempts to address barriers disabling impaired students, and its mediatory role between Wits and disabled students, as well as between Wits and a broader South African society. The final level of analysis is disabled students, the fulcrum around which this research operates, exploring as it is their experience of disability. This level examines the tension between the perceived rights of disabled students, and environmental barriers, together with efforts by the disabled to assert their rights. Here, as well as when analysing the needs of the disabled at Wits, disabled students are viewed as the experts. Thus, this project also operates within a reworked IL paradigm by locating the solution to environmental barriers within disabled people themselves.

A distinction is also made between three environments:

- **A: Physical Environment**

  The interaction between the disabled and their material surroundings are explored here. Issues considered are the extent to which buildings and facilities are inaccessible to disabled people as a consequence of their design, as well as measures undertaken to make this environment more available.

- **B: Social Environment**

  Distinguishing this environment facilitates a discussion of the social participation of disabled people. The attitudes of the those with and without disabilities are considered here in attempting to understand mixed social integration.

- **C: Academic Environment**

  The interplay between disabled people and their academic environment, either at school or university is explored. Here too, an interactive conceptualisation of disability is drawn upon to examine the extent to which disabled people participate within an educational environment.

Although explored more thoroughly in the literature review, briefly tracing the theories influencing this research shows that an interactive view of disability embraces essentialism, structuralism and peculiarism. These three sociological traditions have been synthesised in an adapted IL paradigm which has informed the two dimensional model of analysis structuring this report, particularly the Findings. The two dimensions contained within this model facilitate an exploration of the interaction between the physical, social and academic environments of South Africa, Wits and the DSP as perceived by disabled students. By locating disabled students as the fulcrum of this research, this model facilitates their perceptions of an 'ideal Wits' in which they are integrated within its three environments. It also allows for an exploration of the role disabled students envisage for themselves in bringing about this desired situation.

Literature Review and Analysis of Data

Disability and Society: The Sociology of Disability

"(D)isabled people are not only relegated to the margins of society, they are relegated to the margins of sociological theory"

(Oliver, 1996: 19)

Tracing the sociology of disability is a relatively simple task arising from a paucity of information (Oliver, 1996). Prior to the 1960's two broad approaches were embraced when discussing disability, both located within an essentialist tradition. The first was the Parsonian paradigm (Oliver, 1996) which is responsible for two interdependent conceptualisations (Bury, 1982), both of which still dominate perceptions of disability (Oliver, 1996).

The first of these was influenced by Parson's (1951) notion of the sick role. According to him, this is a temporary condition involving rights and privileges. While an individual assuming this role is absolved of social obligations and responsibilities, s/he must abhor being sick and want to get better, and so must co-operate in efforts towards this end (Parsons, 1951). This involves obtaining professional advice and adhering to it.

The second conceptualisation is referred to as the health as an adaptation or the rehabilitative model. Expanding on the sick role, it was developed by Safilios-Rothschild (1970) who argued that once an individual becomes aware of her/his impairment, s/he is obligated to adjust to this change. To do this, s/he must maximise her/his existing abilities by co-operating with professionals who can help in two ways. Firstly, by offering rehabilitative programmes and secondly through psychological counselling, whereby the impaired person is expected to accept her/his new identity, moving through various stages like shock, anger and denial (Oliver, 1996). In this theory impaired individuals are not exempt from social responsibilities and obligations,

but must adjust accordingly. Thus the disabled individual is seen as responsible for adapting to the environment, although help from professionals is available.

Both of these conceptualisations of disability are linked to the institutionalisation of the disabled (Jagoe, 1997). Although the disabled have historically been shunned (Jagoe, 1997), by the Second World War their isolation from society was legitimised by a developing medical profession (Jagoe, 1997; Oliver, 1996). Not only did this 'save' many impaired individuals from dying, it also legitimised their institutionalisation. Within such institutions, the able-bodied became [illegible] so securing their domination over the disabled. This differential [illegible] well as the isolation of those with impairments from society contributed to developing about the disabled (Jagoe, 1997).

In attempting to explore these perceptions, the second essentialist approach towards disability was developed. Referred to as interactionism, these theories expand on the individualistic models discussed above, locating sick individuals within a social context, and exploring interactions within it. Interactionist theories of deviance were developed extensively by Goffman (1963), in which he explored mixed interactions, analysing the relationship between societal stereotypes (virtual social identity) and the attributes of the disabled, or their actual social identity. According to him (1963:14) stigma is "really a special kind of relationship between attribute and stereotype" and occurs with a discrepancy between the former and latter. Thus, societal expectations impact on the interactive relationship between society and the disabled as these are discordant with the actual attributes of those with impairments (Williams, 1987). As this research is not concerned with the discrepancy between actual and virtual social identity, but rather with how disabled students **experience** this, Scambler's (1984) distinction between enacted, and felt, stigma is more useful. In Scambler's terms, felt stigma refers to perceived societal discrimination, while enacted stigma is concerned with actual discrimination. His work allows for an examination of the interactive experience of disability by including the individual's perceptions of social prejudice. Through such a conceptualisation he locates the disabled individual within a societal context, seeing their experience of stigma as distinct from actual discrimination.

Both the Parsonian paradigm, and interactionist theories have been criticised by Oliver (1996). The sick role and rehabilitative versions of the former approach are denounced for three reasons. They are determinist as behaviour is only acceptable if it conforms to professional's exceptions of what it should be. They ignore the differential impact of economic, political and social factors, and finally, they deny subjective interpretations of impairment by the affected individual. In short, they are described as "a personal tragedy theory" falling within an "individualistic medical approach" (Oliver, 1996: 21). Interactionist theories, despite their emphasis on mixed interactions, are also criticised by Oliver ( ) as subscribing to a tragedy view in which the disabled are victims. As such, the segregation and inferiority of impaired individuals is taken for granted in these analyses.

Despite these criticisms, both essentialist approaches are still in use, illustrated in the following example which embraces both the Parsonian and interactionist paradigms. Although Parson's notion of a temporary sick role does not make provision for the distinction between illness and impairment (Sieglar and Osmond, 1974), it has been applied to disability. Freidson (cited in Nettleton, 1995) has expanded on Parson's notion of the sick role, arguing that the rights and privileges extended to the sick are dependent upon whether their illness is viewed as legitimate by society. In this way Freidson allowed for the possibility that the sick person may be held responsible for their illness, and thus denied access to the sick role (Nettleton, 1995). Three types of legitimacy were identified by Freidson (cited in Nettleton, 1995), firstly, conditional legitimacy in which the illness can be treated and the person restored to health. This type is congruent with Parson's notion of the sick role. Secondly, is unconditional legitimacy in which the sick person is unable to get well, and so is assured of automatic acceptance. The final type is that of illegitimacy in which the illness is stigmatised and where society does not extend the rights and privileges of the sick role to the ill person (Nettleton, 1995).

Further embellishing Parson's notion of the sick role, Nettleton (1995) has distinguished between either minor or serious sick role deviance, and shown how these

intersect with the three types of legitimacy discussed above, resulting in six variations. Relating this typology to disability, disabled individuals are 'classified' as serious deviants whose access to the sick role is illegitimate (Nettleton, 1995). Therefore disabled individuals are not afforded access to the rights and privileges associated with the sick role, and while some obligations may be suspended, new ones are imposed (Nettleton, 1995). In summary, while occupants of this position are absolved of the obligations of the sick role, they are ascribed the status of "second class citizenship" (Sieglar and Osmond, 1974: 116).

Oliver (1996) argues that the reason these two essentialist approaches are still hegemonic is because they emphasise the individual. In both, the disabled individual is the victim who is forced to assume responsibilities and obligations, and is expected to adapt to the environment. At a structural level, such essentialism absolves society of any responsibility, which means that the status quo remains unchallenged, expressed thus "personal tragedy theory has served to individualise the problems of disability and hence to leave social and economic structures untouched" (Oliver, 1996:29).

As a consequence, structural conceptions of disability began to develop during the 1960's, arising in response to the struggles of the disabled in North America who were pushing for civil rights and independent living. This second tradition was based on the assumption that a distinction can be made between disability and handicap. While the difference between the two is captured in the slogan "our bodies disable us, but society handicaps us" (Jagoe, 1983:2), the WHO (1987:3) formalised the distinction in its ICIDH. As mentioned, it understood impairment as a disturbance at the level of the organ, disability was viewed as disturbances at the level of the person, while handicap referred to the consequences for the individual resulting from the presence of impairment and disability (Thilpott, 1997). In this approach society plays a handicapping role, discriminating against individuals with impairments in employment and education, as well as in people's attitudes (Townsend, 1973; Cock, 1988). The importance of the latter in inhibiting or promoting mixed integration has been especially emphasised (Donovan, 1990; Lazzaro, 1993).

Despite the popularity of the ICIDH (Philpott, 1997), it has been widely criticised. Citing a number of authors, Philpott (1997) summarises critiques of the ICIDH, which has been condemned as based on a medical model of disability so sidelining the impact of economic, political and social factors. Further, it does not acknowledge differential experiences of impairment, and is flawed in its causal analysis of impairment leading to disability which results in handicap. As argued by Pfeiffer (cited in Philpott, 1997) "(d)isability does not give rise to handicap. Society does. The diagram is blaming the victim (the person with a disability) when the handicap is the blame of society". Linked to this point is the criticism that the ICIDH, like rehabilitative models, is essentialist in that it locates the problem within the individual rather than in society. In addition, the distinction made between disability and handicap has been questioned, as there seems little difference between the two. The ICIDH also makes assumptions about normality, without acknowledging that normality is culturally located. Finally, it has been denounced for using unacceptable language, most notably handicap, which is seen as discriminatory with its 'cap-in-hand' connotations.

As a consequence the disability rights movement has redefined the terms used. According to Philpott (1997) one of the main differences between the ICIDH and the proposal of the disability rights movement, called the DPI definition, is that of causality. As mentioned, the WHO holds that impairment leads to disability, which results in handicapping. In contrast, the DPI rejects the term handicap, and maintains that disablement has nothing to do with the body. Instead it occurs as a consequence of society's failure to remove barriers facing those with impairments. At odds with the ICIDH, the DPI definition argues that impairment refers to individual limitation or function loss, while disability refers to socially imposed constraints (Philpott, 1997). This current understanding that 'our bodies are impaired, but society disables us', is elaborated on by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (1976:3) which claims that "(d)isability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society".

The DPI definition has also been criticised, firstly, because of its tendency to deny the importance of impairment, focusing instead on disablement. Crow (cited in Philpott, 1997) has argued that impairment and disability can disadvantage individuals, and that both should be included in analyses of discrimination. Secondly, the DPI's emphasis on societal restriction denies the autonomy of those with impairments, who are seen as passive victims of society, a view succinctly expressed by Sutherland (1981:22).

> "it is widely assumed that most (impairments) impose considerable restrictions, such as lack of mobility, limitations in finding and holding employment, isolation and difficulty in integrating with able bodied people. (We) do have to face all of these restrictions, and others, but such restrictions are imposed by a society which discriminates against people, creating restrictions by denying people the means to exercise their capabilities".

In such a conceptualisation, it is society that must change to facilitate those with impairments, while no attempt is made "to change disabled people to fit in with the existing environment" (French, cited in Philpott, 1997).

These criticisms of the DPI have been compensated for by the rise of Postmodernity. Emphasising subjectivity and individual rights (Harvey, 1990) it has allowed the disabled to interpret their experiences (Lather, 1991) facilitating a plurality of voices (Oliver, 1996). By stressing empowerment, Postmodernity has also 'enabled the disabled', seeing them as the specialists in efforts to promote their rights (Lather, 1991).

Involving as it does the time-space compression of globalisation (Harvey, 1990), Postmodernity has also facilitated the rise of social movements and the internationalisation of disability rights (Riddell, 1996). For example, two United Nations (UN) documents (*The World Action Programme Concerning Disability* (1982) and *The Standard Rules On The Equalisation Of Opportunities For Persons With Disabilities* (1993)) both emphasise the equalisation of opportunities, and have

informed the legislation of a number of countries, including South Africa (Disability Action Research Team, 1996). This example also illustrates another Postmodern tendency, namely that solutions tend to be technicist in nature (Burris, cited in Wexler, 1990). Thus, the demand for rights by marginalised minorities are often bowed to with the passing of legislation, but despite the existence of such policies, these are often not translated into practice.

Despite the advantages derived from including Postmodernity, it too has been criticised, particularly when taken to the extremes of relativism and deconstructionism. As argued by Gellner (1992:29), fanatical forms of Postmodernism can imply "the abandonment of any serious attempt to give a reasonably precise, documented and testable account to anything". Including Postmodernity in no way implies the communication breakdown that some critics have identified.

Having traced the sociological history of disability, it can be seen that each tradition has its strengths and weaknesses, and so a synthesis has been used in this project. An interactive understanding of disability has been facilitated by a reformed IL paradigm, which identifies the disabled as the experts in attempts to transcend environmental barriers (DeJong, 1984). Unlike earlier models, in which the impaired individual was the source of the problem, and was expected to adapt to the environment, albeit with professional assistance, an adapted IL paradigm sees disability as a dialogue. Although it acknowledges that the environment may well disable the impaired, the impaired also play a role in their disablement. They can either withdraw from society, and become socially invisible, or push for their right to be integrated (Lather, 1991). Such an acknowledgement is crucial for this project, allowing disabled students to be acclaimed for their efforts to push for their rights, or blamed, at least in part, for their marginalisation as they fail to challenge environmental barriers.

A crucial link between the disabled and their environment is **assistive technology**, which allows the disabled to integrate and participate in a social setting, so facilitating their "independence and self-sufficiency" (Lazzaro, 1993: iii). Lazzaro (1993) has defined assistive technology in a useful way for this research, seeing it as any

mechanism which facilitates an individual's independent acquisition of information. Two types of assistive devices have been distinguished by the NCSNET/NCESS (1997b). The first type are personally owned, independence promoting devices, for example spectacles, white canes, wheel-chairs, hearing aids, talking calculators and magnifying glasses. The second type, owned by learning centres, facilitate the academic integration of disabled learners, allowing them to access lecture and tutorial content, academic debates and literature. Assistive devices that fall into this category include Perkins Braillers, typewriters, photocopiers with magnifying facilities and computers kitted with voice technology like voice recognition and synthesis systems.

Naturally the barriers confronting disabled people vary with the individual and the impairment, a critical issue when discussing how assistive devices can facilitate disabled integration. In a learning environment visually impaired students (both blind and partially sighted) are unable to access written information, those who are deaf are excluded from verbal communication, while wheel-chair users are often constrained by architectural barriers, which limit their access to information. As such, various assistive devices have been developed, catering for different impairments as is shown in Appendix A, "Assistive Technology Catering for Visual, Aural and Mobility Impairments".

One major barrier to the utilisation of assistive devices is their expense (Lazzaro, 1993). As a consequence, Lazzaro (1993) has suggested that a combination of private and public funds be used by the disabled when attempting to access assistive technology. This recommendation adds a further dimension to analyses of the disabled, in which acknowledgement needs to be made that those with assistive devices are less disabled than those without, and that it is the wealthy who can afford such technology. In short, the socio-economic position of the impaired impacts significantly on their disablement as it determines the assistive technology they have access to.

Disability in South Africa

Currently, there are no accurate numbers of disabled people in South Africa, with figures ranging from five to twelve percent. The absence of such information is criticised by the UN as reflecting a "lack of commitment to disabled people" (United Nations Children's Fund, 1993). The truth is that this dearth is reflected in the whole post-apartheid South Africa, and is not unique to disability. Irrespectively, the Department of Health is attempting to address this deficiency as part of a National Integrated Disability Strategy (Document, 1996), and is currently preparing to undertake a national disability prevalence study and needs assessment in 1998. Only on completion of this study will reliable information be available, so this section is written 'blindly', drawing on outdated information, localised studies and newspaper reports.

Although accurate quantitative information is unavailable, existing sources clearly demonstrate that the disabled in South Africa are "among the most marginalised and oppressed groups within society" (Disability Action Research Team, 1997:1), with many denied basic facilities like toilets, and services for example health and education (Ramponeng, 1997b). The differential impact of apartheid on South Africans has meant that race has coincided with class. As such, Whites have traditionally enjoyed a superior socio-economic status than Blacks[1] (Pearce, 1995), an observation that is extended to the disabled. As such, Black disabled South Africans are an oppressed grouping within an otherwise marginalised population. They, more than White disabled South Africans can be viewed as "among the worst victims of the apartheid system" (Lawyers for Human Rights, 1997).

At the level of income, the disabled in South Africa "make up the bulk of the poorest of the poor" (McClain, 1996: 2), partly because of meagre disability grants. However, this money is often not accessed, a consequence of a distribution system described by

[1] Refers to Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

Chalklen of the National Disability Office as "punitive and highly unsatisfactory" (*The Star*, 1995c), with Whites benefiting more than Blacks.

Linked to their destitution is the discrimination of the disabled at an employment level. A Government discussion document released in March 1996 claims that less than one percent of the disabled are formally employed in South Africa (*The Star*, 1996). The reasons for this are identified as poor quality education (discussed in the next section) as well as discriminatory legislation, and employer prejudice (*The Star*, 1996). As such, the new Labour Relations Act (LRA) has been identified as a progression, providing protection for the disabled in its prohibition of unfair discrimination (*The Star*, 1996). Arising from it, Gauteng government departments have recently employed seventy four disabled people, albeit in low level posts (Healy, 1997). However Tony Healy, the managing director of an industrial relations consultancy has criticised the LRA for not providing sufficient protection for the disabled, a situation worsened because there is little lobbying for the rights of disabled employees (Healy, 1997).

Inaccessible transport is another obstacle curtailing the disabled, obstructing access to employment and basic services. Transport Users Group (TUG), a pressure group challenging this obstruction, argues that accessible and affordable transport is not a welfare issue, but a right (Thom, 1997). This is also the stance taken by the National Environment Access Programme (NEAP) which is currently targeting government buildings to make them more accessible for those with impairments (Ho, 1997).

The disabled in South Africa are also marginalised as a consequence of attitudes. Discrimination from the non-disabled leads to feelings of isolation, depression and despair (Simon, 1995). However, the attitudes of the disabled also have to change, as was argued by Nkeli, a wheel-chair using human rights commissioner. He argues that "the disabled (must) change their self perception as object(s) of pity who need perpetual care" (Ramponeng, 1997b).

As a consequence of their marginalised status, Cook (1988:43) argues for a politicisation of disability through a "three stage agenda for change". The first stage,

and in keeping with international trends, involves a paradigm shift from an individual to an IL based understanding of disability. Kathy Jagoe, an instrumental figure in promoting the rights of the disabled in South Africa, has argued that such a paradigm shift is occurring in South Africa, pointing out that disabled people have "begun to realise that society has an obligation" (1983:4), and so they are banding together in efforts to politicise disability.

This mobilisation of disabled people is the second stage identified by Cock (1988), and is seen as necessary by many disabled South Africans, for example Chareen Grobler who maintains that "we disabled people must get off our rear ends and do something for ourselves" (cited by Peacock, 1996). Linked to a reformed IL paradigm of disability such mobilisation has at its centre the belief that disabled people, as opposed to professionals, are the specialists. This is certainly the case with regards to TUG and NEAP mentioned above, which consist of the disabled lobbying for their rights, rather than attempting to meet their needs (Rowland, cited in Peacock, 1996). Disabled People of South Africa (DPSA) is another important movement. Launched in 1983, it is an organisation bringing together racially diverse disabled people. Consisting of over 70 self help member organisations in 1988 (Cock, 1988), it is seen by Jagoe (1987) as a democratic movement of disabled people from all over South Africa, which aims at achieving equality and participation in society. The importance of having such a unifying and politicising body is concisely expressed by a disabled person, "our civil rights are like muscles - the more we exercise them, the more they'll develop and what you don't use you'll lose" (cited in Scherer, 1993:60).

The final stage in politicising disability in South Africa according to Cock (1988) involved linking the struggle of disabled people to the fight against apartheid. The first democratic elections in 1994 largely invalidated this final criterion, but the legacy of South Africa's history is still apparent from the newspaper articles discussed above which show clearly that the disabled, particularly Blacks, are apartheid victims (Lawyers for Human Rights, 1997). As such, the effects of apartheid still need to be countered by both non-racial organisations like DPSA, as well as by a representative government.

The elections of 1994 mark a new South Africa, with its emphasis on participatory democracy in its transformation process. This has meant that laws and policies are currently being evaluated and that public participation is requested in this process. For instance, the NCSNET/NCESS first discussion paper expresses a desire to "reflect the views of all stakeholders...All people who are concerned about the issues which will be addressed by the NCSNET/NCESS are invited to respond to this important document". Another culmination of consultation is the *Disability Rights Charter of South Africa* (Lawyers for Human Rights, 1997), which is a product of a lengthy participative process. A new South Africa's emphasis on participative democracy has meant the empowerment of the historically oppressed, affording them the opportunity to influence laws and policies, and ensure that they are represented.

The transformation of South Africa has also meant the formulation of a new legal framework, for example The Constitution with its Bill of Rights which makes it illegal for the State or any person to "unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, **disability**, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth" (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996). Further promoting the rights of disabled South Africans, a National Strategy for Disability has been launched, in an effort to promote equal opportunities (*The Star*, 1995c). Thus, at a policy level, the rights of the disabled are recognised, and the issue is one of translating these into practice. This is in keeping with the technicist solutions contained within Postmodernity, a trend which is criticised as policies are often not realised as will be shown in later sections.

The mediatory and equalising role played by assistive devices has been explored in South Africa. The Disability Action Research Team (DART) recently undertook an investigation in KwaZulu Natal for the Health Systems Trust. Its report (1997) argues that the need for assistive devices is recognised in the Equality Clause of South Africa's Constitution which states that "Everyone is equal before the law...Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms" (*The Constitution of*

the Republic of South Africa, 1996). However, the researchers identify a number of barriers inhibiting the provision of assistive devices. These include their high cost, a lack of knowledge regarding available services, the absence of an integrated strategy for their provision, as well as environmental inaccessibility.

Another study undertaken by DART (1996) questioned who should assume responsibility for providing assistive devices. Findings indicated that many disabled people are themselves responsible, either personally or via their families or medical aid schemes. Researchers reported that disabled informants felt that they should not have this responsibility, particularly considering the low disability grants they receive. Thus, they are rejecting one of the responsibilities associated with being disabled in South Africa (Nettleton, 1995). Informants argued that the government should help the disabled cover the costs, a finding confirmed in this study, where disabled students identified the government as having a role to play in providing assistive devices.

However, governmental responsibility is complicated for four reasons (DART, 1996). Firstly, by the fact that there is no provincial policy on the provision of assistive devices, so provinces, districts and hospitals have different policies. Secondly, there is no provincial or national procedure for the allocation and maintenance of assistive devices. The third problem involves hospital tenders in which providers of assistive devices are chosen on a tender basis with no consideration for the quality of products provided. Finally, governmental funding is limited and unequally distributed, with only the Departments of Health and Welfare currently contributing. Recognising this, the NCSNET/NCESS discussion document (1997b) has identified the Department of Education as another provider of assistive technology. By including this Department, the NCSNET/NCESS is envisaging that it will assume responsibility for assistive technology required for academic integration, while the Department of Health will provide independence promoting assistive devices.

Even by including another Department, Governmental support for disability issues is uncertain as a post apartheid government attempts to address the fact that the majority of South Africans "still live without basic needs" (*The Star*, 1995a and 1995b). As

poverty has been linked to impaired physical and mental development (*The Star*, 1995a), governmental efforts to address the poverty gap and its effects do include disability, but indirectly. The emphasis is more on combating high mortality rates, particularly of infants, as a consequence of malnutrition and communicable diseases (*The Star*, 1995a). So while the role played by assistive technology in integrating the disabled has been recognised at a policy level, translating this into practice is beset with difficulties.

Disability in Education

The issue of integration has been crucial when discussing learning, and disabled student integration into mainstream education is a much debated topic. This is particularly so because of international policies which affirm the rights of the disabled to education (UN, 1982 and 1993). Objectors point out that mainstreaming means disabled learners are compared to those who are able bodied, entailing peer rejection, and stifled initiative (Scherer 1993; Waldman, 1993). Another argument opposing mainstreaming is that it dilutes a disabled identity by not allowing the disabled to share their experiences and ideas (Scherer, 1993). However, this view is countered by the observation that the disabled are divided along the lines of impairment within special learning environments (Hurst, 1996; Roberts, 1993).

Supporters of mainstreaming argue that uniting disabled and abled students is a means of enhancing the communication and social skills of the former (Kershaw, 1973). This is because the learner is not isolated in a special school, but remains within the family, community, and with able-bodied peers (Department of National Health and Population Development, 1987). However, the efficacy of this belief is moderated by Mittler's observation (1978) that "merely placing handicapped (sic) children in a normal school does not guarantee that any social or educational integration will take place". The implication is that although an institution has disabled learners, their participation is not guaranteed by their presence. Arising from an interactive conceptualisation, disabled marginalisation can be either a consequence of disabled submisiveness and lack of organisation, an explanation affirmed during this research. This point was made by a Canadian disabled university student who pointed out that

the disabled need to be assertive and confident when demanding their right for equal education (cited in Donovan, 1990).

Marginalisation can also be the result of inaccessible physical, academic, and particularly social environments. To illustrate, North America and Europe have secured the participation of disabled learners at both the physical and academic levels through legislation and technological advances (Hurst, 1996; Scherer, 1993). Yet prejudicial attitudes, resulting from a lack of awareness, still detract from disabled participation (Donovan, 1990). As education, particularly tertiary learning, is so crucial for disabled empowerment, Hurst (1996) has promoted the effectiveness of awareness workshops in challenging ignorance based prejudice, raising three questions about them.

The first question asks 'who are awareness workshops targeting ?' Some maintain that every person in an institution should attend, so as to create an informed environment. Objectors say this is too large an enterprise, and that the people who need to attend are the least likely to. A compromise is to target specific groups, for example, those who have contact with disabled learners. Secondly, Hurst (1996) questions 'who should provide these workshops ?' suggesting either disabled organisations, or disabled staff and students within an institution, the latter occurring at Wits. Finally, Hurst (1996) asks 'when should awareness workshops be held ?', before meeting with the disabled, or waiting until awareness has been promoted by means of mixed contacts ? In attempting to answer these questions, institutions need to be aware that raising awareness is an ongoing process (Hurst, 1996), so solitary events will not alter prejudicial outlooks. That Wits has recognised this is clear from its holding disability awareness workshops on an annual basis, the efficacy of which are discussed at a later stage.

Sheffield Hallam University (1994) in Britain has stressed the importance of independence and choice for disabled learners, and has identified seven principles in promoting such autonomy and freedom. Briefly, these include providing information in an accessible medium, recognising the rights of the disabled to assistive devices and

personal assistants, making the environment accessible in ways that allow the disabled to utilise the most direct and used routes, ensuring that buildings and facilities are accessible and having accessible and affordable transport. Finally, and in keeping with awareness promotion, the disabled are given the autonomy to express themselves, as Sheffield Hallam recommends that they share their experiences with others.

That South Africa's education system does not subscribe to these principles is clear from the description of it as "(s)eparate, unequal and inadequate" (Waldman, 1993). Although 92 out of every one hundred impaired children is Black, a legacy of apartheid has meant that White children receive sixty two percent of available services, while Africans get only eight percent (Waldman, 1993). This discrimination was acknowledged by the Government in 1987 when it admitted that "compared to educational provision for the impaired White in the Republic of South Africa, education and training for the impaired Black have fallen far behind owing to socio-political-historical events and views" (Department of National Health and Population Development, 1987:9).

Apartheid not only entailed the separation and discrimination of disabled learners on a racial basis, a system of specialisation also meant their isolation from families, communities and abled peers. Such institutionalisation is seen by disabled South Africans as detracting from their participation, and integration, and isolating them from reality (Nkeli cited in Ramponeng, 1997b; Roberts, 1993 and Waldman, 1993). Further, and in contrast to the belief that specialisation facilitates the creation of a disabled identity, learners are divided along the lines of impairment within special schools (Roberts, 1993). This observation was made in a study undertaken by Roberts (1993: 24) who recounts the experience of two blind students. The first was told by a physically disabled peer "'nkanoba nja kunaligury kibe sifofo' (I would rather be a dog than blind)", while the second maintained that blind students are "a rejected minority...the physically disabled click their fingers when we come past, they think we are dogs". That these divisions are still found in a mainstream environment became apparent during this research, especially between the blind and partially sighted, and the visually impaired, and wheel-chair users.

In comparison to conventional schools, special schools have also been accused of providing inferior education (Cock, 1988; Nkeli cited in Ramponeng, 1997b; Roberts, 1993). Those catering particularly for Black learners have been denounced for discriminatory curriculums, with maths and science not being taught (Roberts, 1993). As a consequence, students are automatically excluded from scientifically oriented tertiary education (Roberts, 1993).

Arising from these criticisms and the fact that separate special education costs two to eight times more than conventional schooling (Waldman, 1993), there has been a move towards mainstreaming education at all levels in South Africa. As such, the NCSNET/ NCESS were recently established by the Minister of Education, and are responsible for developing a "single educational system that is responsive to diversity...no learners shall be prevented from participating in this system, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, language or other differences" (NCSNET/ NCESS, 1997b). There is also an acknowledgement that mainstreaming does not simply involve allowing disabled learners into a conventional system, but that they have to be provided for. Topliss (1982) has argued that unless adequate resources are directed towards this end, disabled learners will continue to be marginalised, albeit in a conventional schooling system. However, in a situation of increasing need, coinciding with cost cutting and budgetary constraints, there is a need for the mobilisation of the disabled who have to lobby for their right to an equal education (Roberts, 1993; Waldman, 1993).

Disabled Individual

This section explores the experience of disability at a theoretical level, questioning what it means to be disabled from the individual's point of view. Arising from the interactive experience of disability, the writings on the individual disabled person cannot be separated from those on disability within society. As such, the sociological traditions and authors referred to in this section have already been mentioned.

Located within an essentialist tradition, rehabilitative understandings of disability allow for an examination of the impact of institutionalisation on the disabled, as well as the ways in which the disabled are expected to adapt to the environment. Both have already been referred to, with institutionalisation criticised for isolating the disabled and contributing to negative perceptions about them. The discussion of disability in South Africa also showed how those with impairments are excluded from a social context because of the barriers within it. Also within this essentialist approach, interactionist writings on stigma facilitate an exploration of how mixed contacts are threatened by an impairment and consequential stereotypes (Goffman, 1963; Williams, 1987). They allow for an examination of the ways in which the disabled moderate the influence of their impairments in mingled interactions. This is especially relevant when studying young adults who are asserting their independence and expanding their social roles (Thomas and Bax, 1988), but whose impairments isolate them as "feelings of self worth and attractiveness are threatened at a time when the need for intimacy, and belonging is greatest, causing a sense of loneliness and isolation" (Glass et al, 1978).

Goffman (1963) has identified three characteristics of impairments that determine the amount of discrimination encountered. Firstly, the visibility of a particular impairment, how obvious it is, will impact on the interactive relationship. Secondly, how common an impairment is will also influence societal knowledge, its known-about-ness, although this understanding may be incorrect. Finally, the obtrusiveness of disability, or the extent to which it interferes, is another mediator on the impact of stereotyping. From these criteria, Goffman (1963) distinguishes between those who are discredited, and others who are discreditable. Individuals are discredited when their particular impairment is obvious, known-about and invasive, resulting in societal expectations of their attributes. For this reason, the person with the impairment has to deal with identity spoilage, resulting from a discrepancy between her/his actual attributes and societal expectations. For example, there is a tendency by society to view the physically disabled as "sexless eunuchs" (Nagler, 1990:309). By being obvious, invasive and known-about, the physically impaired are easily discredited, and so have constantly to deal with a stereotype which denies their sexuality. Such identity spoilage is a consequence of institutionalisation, although in North America, the

physically disabled, as well as those with other impairments, are pushing for their sexuality to be recognised (Nagler, 1990).

Discreditable people are those whose disabilities are less visible, recognised or intrusive, and therefore they do not have to cope with the tension of spoiled identity, but rather with ways of controlling knowledge about their impairment. Their concern is one of "to display or not to display; to tell or not to tell, to let or not to let on, to lie or not to lie, and in each case, to whom, how, when and where" (Goffman, 1963:57). Goffman (1963) identifies passing and covering as two strategies used by the discreditable to manage information about their disability. While these may reduce the tension associated when individuals are discredited, new forms are created as the individual concealing his/her stigma has constantly to be alert (Williams, 1987).

By including visually, aurally and mobility impaired students, Goffman's (1963) identification of discredited as opposed to discreditable is more relevant. A loss of sight, hearing and movement are all obvious, know-about and invasive, resulting in these students having to cope with the tension associated with identity spoilage. While those with partial sight could be seen as discreditable rather than discredited, that five of the eight informants were albino means that they too are easily discredited.

Structuralist accounts of disability are included in an effort to transcend the essentialism implied within interactionist theories, which locate the problem within the impaired individual. By including structuralism, it is possible to acknowledge that the experience of being disabled is linked to the social context, and that structural marginalisation has a secondary effect. This point is made by Cross (1994:164) who argues that,

> "(w)e live in a world which depends for its smooth functioning on marginalising all those for whom its living, working and leisure space was not designed. But we are not just marginalised, we are oppressed and the oppression and abuse have one central identical effect - to make the victims blame themselves and feel that they are bad"

In short, Cross (1994) is describing how the oppression of the disabled is viewed as acceptable by them, so facilitating their continued marginalisation.

The implication of structuralist views is that the environment must be altered to accommodate people with impairments, but they are given no role in being more integrated. As such, Postmodern approaches are again included. These empower the disabled, giving them the autonomy to push for their rights (Oliver, 1996, Lather, 1991), or to withdraw from society. In Postmodernist accounts, the impaired are the experts as they are experiencing disability.

One way in which the disabled can enforce their rights is by means of disability movements (Riddell, 1996). These aim at achieving social change, thereby challenging the status quo (Heberle and Gusfield, 1993). An example are movements initiated by the deaf, which aim at achieving recognition of deaf sub-cultures (Hurst, 1996) as has occurred internationally. Particularly in North America and Europe, disability movements have been influential, playing a significant role in the passing of anti-discriminatory and equal opportunities legislation (Scherer, 1993; Hurst, 1996). But these gains can be criticised because they are often not translated into practice especially in a context of budgetary constraints. As such, they do not address the structures that oppress (Oliver, 1996) despite the mobilisation of the disabled. The implication of this is that even if the impaired at Wits challenged their disablement, for example, through the already established Disabled Students Movement (DSM), it is likely that technicist solutions will be offered which are not translated into reality. This raises the question of whether the disabled should even concern themselves with mobilising and organising. Such apathy is rejected in this project and by locating this research within an adapted IL paradigm, the disabled are urged to challenge their oppression instead of accepting it.

Postmodern theories also facilitate an understanding that the experience of impairment and disability are unique, so generating a plurality of voices (Lather, 1991). Acknowledging this does not imply that communication between the abled and disabled is impossible (Appleby et al, 1994) as is argued by critics of Postmodernity

(Gellner, 1992), but rather that dialogue is needed to convey the disabled experience. This facilitates awareness promotion of disability and its associated needs.

Needs Analysis[2]

"All needs assessments contain elements of the future...needs assessments serve as a guide to planning future actions"
(Witkin et al, 1995:210)

According to Kimmel (1977) a needs assessment involves evaluating a condition to determine what is required. This is a difficult endeavour because it entails identifying something that does not exist (Kimmel, 1977; Witkin et al, 1995). In short a need can be seen as the "gap between what is...and what should be" (Witkin et al, 1995:4). Assessing this gap entails three assumptions (Kimmel, 1977). The first is that of change, secondly that this involves expansionism in that an assessment will lead to more services, resources or facilities. Thirdly, is the assumption that new data is better than previous studies.

Assessing needs is complicated by the fact that definitions of needs are culture and value laden. According to Kimmel (1977) this has meant that multiple, as opposed to single approaches to needs assessments are advocated in the literature. Witkin et al (1995) identify three data gathering methods. The first involves archival information in which existing data like statistics and past studies is analysed. Secondly, are communication processes, which can be either non-interactive, for example survey questionnaires, key informant and individual interviews; or active, like in group interviews and public hearings. Finally, analytic processes which involve techniques such as cause and consequence, task and risk analyses can be used. A criticism of these approaches is that they do not assess needs, but merely identify them (Kimmel, 1976). As such, those undertaking a needs analysis must acknowledge their input in assessing identified n

[2] Analysis and Assessment are used interchangeably in this report.

A complication encountered when undertaking a needs analysis is that three levels of need have been identified within a single system (like at Wits), or across a number of systems (Witkin et al, 1995). These are a primary level involving service receivers, for example students, a secondary level which includes service providers, like lecturers and librarians, and a tertiary level which comprises resources, such as buildings, equipment, and technology. According to Witkin et al (1995:12), a valid needs assessment focuses initially on the primary level as it "seeks to determine the needs of the people for whom the...system exists". Needs assessments focusing on the next two levels should develop from level one assessments.

Three stages have been identified when conducting needs assessments (Witkin et al, 1995):

- **Preassessment**

  This is an exploratory phase during which the researcher identifies the target group, obtains the support of this group, determines what is already known about them, and decides how to go about gathering data.

- **Assessment**

  This stage involves data collection, which indicates the 'what is', that is, the current situation. It also entails the development of a target or end state in either quantitative or qualitative terms.

- **Postassessment**

  Although this stage is often excluded from needs analyses, it is the "bridge from analysis to action" (Witkin et al, 1995: 75) in which findings are practically used. This entails prioritising needs, selecting solutions and then formulating a plan of action.

Needs assessments have a number of advantages. Firstly, they have an analytical function in that they are a logical first step in planning, and policy formulation. In this way, the identification of needs facilitates the allocation of resources to meet them, once they have been assessed. They are also a "tool of participatory democracy" (Kimmel, 1977: 291) in that affected people are included in analyses. Therefore, a needs assessment is political as it implies empowering affected individuals, and

facilitating their participation in policy formulation. Needs assessments also imply change, and improvement, although one has to question who will advantage from alterations Witkin et al, 1995).

By exploring the needs of disabled students at Wits, the needs analysis component of this project conforms to Witkin et al's (1995) conception of a valid assessment, focusing as it is on service receivers. In assessing disabled students' perceptions of what is needed to make Wits an ideal learning environment, an interactive conceptualisation of disability must constantly be referred to. This will facilitate an examination of what students identify as necessary in the physical, social and academic environments of Wits, as well as an examination of the role they will play in meeting these needs.

Conclusion

A review of the literature has firmly grounded the theoretical framework of this research. It has expanded on, and explained how the sociology of disability has altered with time, and the implications this has for understanding disability. Relying particularly on documents, especially newspapers, it also located disability within South Africa and education, showing that the disabled in South Africa are extremely oppressed, with Blacks being the most marginalised. The autonomy of the disabled was also recognised. Instead of viewing them as the passive victims of societal discrimination, the literature review identified examples of how the disabled challenge their oppression. In doing this, it has acknowledged that those with impairments have their own understanding of how they are disabled, and of what an ideal situation would be. This view of the disabled is included in the needs assessment, which aims to explore what disabled students identify as necessary for their integration within the physical, social and academic environments of Wits.

Methods

As this research aimed to explore the experience of disability and associated needs at Wits, it makes no claims to generalisability. This modified sampling challenges as the original aim was to include interested disabled students in the focus groups, and **all** disabled students in the survey. However, the impossibility of including all disabled students at Wits was realised, and DSP registered students were targeted. The reason for focusing on these fifty eight students was that they could be easily contacted as the DSP has a record of student whereabouts, or messages can be left for students either on notices or via DSP personnel.

That students are the subject of this research was thought to carry with it a number of advantages. As mentioned, their captive nature was one such advantage and it was thought that this would lead to the sidelining of many logistical issues, an important consideration in view of the time constraints imposed on this project. Exploring the experience of disability at Wits as perceived by disabled students was also though to be facilitated by the fact that all disabled students spoke English, which reduced the risk of mis-interpretation This proved largely true in both the focus groups and survey so contributing to the richness of the findings. However, the discussion with deaf students was complicated by the fact that no interpreter was present. The need for an interpreter had been recognised, but the single interpreter employed by the DSP was in hospital at the time of the focus group discussion with deaf students. This meant a lengthy focus group discussion as the researcher found it difficult to understand what was being said and had to write informants' comments down so they could verify the accuracy of these. The consequence was that this focus group was very superficial, with little information being gleaned, although this was moderated as both students were included in the survey.

Since disabled students would benefit from this project their interest and involvement, and thus co-operation was thought to be secured, so facilitating the generation of detailed data. That the discoveries made were rich with detail cannot be denied, but the reality was that the majority of disabled students were uncooperative, with only a

third of DSP registered students involving themselves in both the focus groups and survey. This lack of participation in the survey crushed another identified advantage from having students as subjects. In contrast to the belief that lor 'ical issues would be sidelined with a self-administered questionnaire, only eleven completed questionnaires were returned. Securing the other ten involved administration by the researcher, who acted on the advice of key student informants that blind students would not complete a questionnaire on disc. In this way input from nine blind, and one partially sighted student was secured. This lack of interest and involvement is a finding in itself, indicating an apathy and complaisance within the disabled student population as a whole. This was identified by Morgan (1997) and Roberts (1997a) as an obstacle to researching disabled students, expressed by Roberts as "you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink". While discussed at a later stage, such submissiveness is a crucial reason that disabled students are still marginalised, being unorganised in efforts to promote their rights.

Before examining the sampling and research techniques used in this project, it needs to be noted that the context within which it took place was one of constant change, with a number of knowledgeable people leaving during its course. The first key informant to leave was the head of the DSM, a crucial mediator between the researcher and the researched. As a result, meeting with disabled students was delayed, as it was uncertain who would replace this student as a link. Ron Carter, the Dean of Student Affairs who was very popular with disabled students, seen by them as a champion of their rights on Senate House's eleventh floor (Morgan, 1997), also left Wits 'his year. As he departed before the proposal to this project was finalised, he was not interviewed, and Morgan (1997) suggested, Charlton, the vice-chancellor as the next most knowledgeable person to contact, although he too is leaving at the end of 1997. The final person to resign was Ruth Morgan, the DSP co-ordinator. Despite her crucial role as an ongoing key informant, her leaving was not disruptful, firstly because her role as adviser was completed, and secondly because she was replaced temporarily by Archie Roberts who had already been contacted and a relationship established.

Sampling

Prior to introducing this research to disabled students, Morgan (1997) and Roberts (1997a) were contacted for suggestions as to how to go about this initial stage. They felt that disabled students would have to be 'bribed' to attend an introductory talk. Morgan (1997) suggested an evening meeting at David Webster Residence Hall where beer, cider and snacks could be served, and gave the names of students involved in the DSP who could offer help and suggestions. These two were contacted and a meeting arranged. At this meeting they, along with another four disabled students refuted Morgan's idea of an evening engagement and suggested a lunchtime meeting with disabled students in the DSP Common Room. Lunch and cold-drinks were provided, and twenty five disabled students attended (both deaf students, one wheel chair user, nine blind students, and nine with partial sight being present), having been informed of the meeting by word of mouth and notices left at the DSP offices. While disabled students were eating, the researcher introduced herself, and the proposed research. In order to obtain the co-operation of disabled students, time was spent outlining how this project would benefit them, and particular emphasis was made that this research would document their experiences and needs, so allowing them to lobby for their rights. In addition, disabled students were assured that research findings would be submitted to the NCSNET/NCESS, as well as the vice-chancellor, Ministers of Education and Labour, and a number of organisations for the disabled. Students were also assured of anonymity, a guarantee that proved important in focus group discussions in which sensitive issues, like anger towards Wits and the DSP, as well against various disabled student sub-groupings was expressed. The role to be played by disabled students was also outlined at this lunch meeting, and they were asked to attend a focus group discussion, and fill in a questionnaire. From this meeting, three contacts were made, one each for blind, partially sighted and wheel-chair using students, who played a role in informing other disabled students of focus group times and survey deadlines. A contact was not made with deaf students, but as there are only two, they were easily reached.

Research Techniques

In attempting to meet both of the aims included in this project, quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. A questionnaire was undertaken as part of the former method, and interviews, group discussions, participant observation as well as the use of documentary evidence were made use of as techniques of the latter. While Bryman (1988) has warned that using both quantitative and qualitative methods may result in discrepant research findings, Room (1984:173) notes that the two can act as "useful correctives of each other". By embracing both methods this project aimed to supplement the findings of one with those of the other. For example, while surveys have been criticised for inhibiting responses (Kimmel, 1977; McNeill, 1985), this deficiency was overcome by interviews and group discussions, which allowed informants greater freedom (Burgess, 1993; Harding et al, 1990). This overlap in methods was especially useful in determining what disabled students perceived of as the ideal situation. While solutions to rectify the current situation at Wits were made in focus group discussions, the extent to which these were seen as beneficial to disabled students was evaluated by means of the survey questionnaire.

Documentary Sources

Documents proved central to this project, facilitating firstly, an analysis of the breakdown between policy and practice. Documents like the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996), *Disability Rights Charter of South Africa* (1997) and NCSNET/NCESS Discussion Documents (1997a and b) were cited as they show that while the disabled in South Africa are protected legally, they are still marginalised at the physical, social and academic levels.

The inclusion of documentary evidence secondly, contextualised this project, allowing it to be located within a process of policy formulation. To illustrate, a comparison of consecutive NCSNET/NCESS Discussion Documents (1997a and b) reveals how ambitious and unrealistic the goal of creating a single education system which includes all learners is, as the crucial issue of where resources will come from is never addressed. Comparing Wits' policy documents also allowed the researcher to identify

changes between Wits' First Mission Statement and the Draft Vision and Mission Statement (Forum for Further Accelerated and Comprehensive Transformation, 1997) which is currently under review. While this revision mentions disability, unlike the first Statement, it is only referred to once, with race and gender being the focus of this document, an issue discussed in greater detail in the Findings of this report.

Interviews

Individual interviews were undertaken with both staff and disabled students at Wits. The advantage of including these "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess, 1993:102) is that they yield rich and detailed information, and allow informants freedom in responding (Burgess, 1993; Harding et al, 1990, Witkin et al, 1995). Such 'independence' proved central in both the aims of this research, portraying the situation as it currently exists at Wits, as well as identifying possible solutions.

Staff members at Wits involved with disabled students were approached and interviewed before contact with disabled students was made. The reason for this was that staff members were easily identified and contacted, and it was assumed that they would have an intimate knowledge of the DSP and disabled students registered with the Department. A number of informal discussions were held with both Ruth Morgan, and Archie Roberts, as well as another three staff members. They contextualised this project, informing the researcher of the current situation in South Africa, and at Wits regarding disability, describing how institutionalisation has meant that the DSP is expected to play a 'mothering' role at Wits, so clashing with a reformed IL paradigm which emphasises the independence and expertise of the disabled.

Two 'formal' interviews were held with staff members, one with Morgan in which she maintained that disabled students are unorganised and de-motivated which would make researching them a challenging task. As a result, she suggested enticing disabled students to obtain their interest and co-operation, a proposal that was supported in informal meetings with disabled student key informants. Morgan also told the researcher of Wits' lack of any disability documentation, and the challenges facing the

DSP as a consequence of prejudicial attitudes, a lack of resources, and a legacy of welfarism.

The second interview was conducted with the vice-chancellor of Wits, Professor Robert Charlton. Unlike other interviews the difference in power was especially apparent, and very little information was gleaned, with Charlton throwing questions back at the researcher, or denying any responsibility for the situation. This too is elaborated more in the findings, but could be partly attributed to Charlton's imminent resignation, the effect being that he was absolving himself of responsibility.

Disabled students were also interviewed, but on a very informal basis. Such informality was facilitated because friendships were made with a number of students, most notably a wheel-chair user, and a partially sighted student, although a blind student was also an important contact. These three in particular linked the researcher and researched, although a number of disabled students assumed this role throughout the course of this project. In this way greater information was gleaned, and advice sought on how to 'go ahead' with various steps.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are a qualitative method of research under the specific heading of group interviews. They consist of between eight and ten people brought together to discuss a particular topic or question for one to two hours. The interview is led by a moderator who attempts to keep the respondents focused on the particular issues (Frey & Fontana, 1993), in this case on the experience of disability at Wits. As group discussions were not attempting to be representative of Wits disabled students, there was no attempt made to proportionally involve students. So, despite the fact that there are three times as many blind and partially sighted students as wheel-chair users, it was decided that only one focus group for each of the impairments would be held, with an open invitation being extended to all students with that particular impairment. Four focus group discussions were held, one each for blind, deaf, partially sighted or wheel-chair using students (a profile of the students who attended is in Appendix B: "Profile of Disabled Students who attended Focus Group Discussions"). These divisions were

deemed important in light of Bertcher's (1994) and Witkin et al's (1995) observation that the success of focus groups depends very much on their composition. Distinguishing between descriptive (for example age, race, gender or disability) and behavioural characteristics (talkative, domineering, shy), they argue that successful groups are those which are similar with regards to the former attribute, but heterogeneous in their behaviours.

Focus groups have one definite advantage as a method of inquiry in that they facilitate the empowerment of informants, allowing them to discuss questions amongst themselves (Burgess, 1993). In addition, the validity of knowledge gleaned from focus group discussions is seen as authentic because people are expressing an opinion in a group situation, and according to Albrecht et al (1993:54) "opinions about a variety of issues are generally determined not by individual information gathering and deliberation but through communication with others". However, the validity of research findings is also questionable because people are formulating opinions in a group, as opposed to in "situations of social isolation" (Albrecht et al, 1993:54). Albrecht et al (1993) identify three processes that can impact on opinion formulation in a group situation. The first is compliance, in which respondents answer in ways they feel the researcher expects, but this process was not evident during focus group discussions, with informants refuting a number of the researcher's assumptions, most notably that the DSP inhibits mixed social integration, and that it is isolated from the rest of Wits. The second detraction occurs because of identification, in which compliance is achieved because one or more group members identify with another, occurring particularly when the group is hierarchically divided. This process proved more of a danger, especially along gender lines, as the few women students involved did not offer their opinions, especially in the focus group for partially sighted students.

Finally, internalisation poses a threat. Internalised opinions are deep-seated beliefs that people have, and are extremely valuable to the researcher. However, these are often not 'tapped' in a group situation, particularly because of the sequencing effect. This refers to when respondents are asked for their opinion one at a time, those responding last tend to echo former responses. While detracting from the findings, this process, as

well as the previously mentioned one of identification, were moderated in three ways. Firstly, by asking focus group members to each recount their experiences, which forced shy people to talk. While this was successful to an extent, two partially sighted women still withdrew from offering their input. Secondly, sequencing was countered by the fact that respondents could complete a survey questionnaire that assured them of anonymity, and contained space for comments. Finally, students were encouraged to contact the researcher at any time, either by phone, e-mail or letter as a pigeonhole in the DSP common room was allocated for this purpose. It was felt that this suggestion would be positively responded to as the power differential between the researcher and the researched was modified by all being Wits students. As such, disabled students would not feel intimidated by the researcher, but would approach her with information. This was the case, with additional input received via e-mail and letters, although the content of this was more encouraging than informative.

According to Witkin et al (1995), the purpose of focus groups is not to obtain consensus, but rather to elicit how respondents feel about a topic. This was invaluable for both aims of this research, allowing for an exploration of the diversity of views about the situation as it currently exists at Wits, as well as how it should ideally be. In this way focus groups conformed to the assessment stage of needs analyses as described by Witkin et al (1995).

The focus groups for the blind and partially sighted students, consisting of six and eight members respectively were especially clear, with rational solutions offered to facilitate disabled students' integration. These interviews, particularly that for Braille users, were very structured, with problems identified and discussed, and solutions offered. Part of the reason for this is that students are aware of what they need to be integrated, but another explanation for the structure, especially for the blind students, was that ordered conversation allowed members to identify who was talking, and concentrate on what was being said. In contrast, the four wheel-chair users interviewed were irate, and while a lot of anger was expressed in this discussion, fewer solutions were identified. Most of the suggestions offered by this group were physically oriented arising from the spin-off effect the physical inaccessibility of Wits has for their

academic and social integration. However, this group discussion proved the most relevant for the researcher, as arising from her experience of temporary disability at Wits, she was able to empathise more with wheel-chair users than with other disabled students. The final group discussion consisted of the two deaf people linked to Wits, one of whom is currently studying through the University of South Africa (UNISA) (Informant D8). However, as he is an ex-Wits student, it was felt that his input would enrich the findings of this discussion. As mentioned above, the group discussion involving deaf students was the least successful, as no interpreter was present.

Participant Observation

The final qualitative technique used in this project was participant observation. Gold (1958) has identified four roles that a researcher can assume, that of full participant, or observer, observer as participant and lastly, participant as observer. During the course of this project, the researcher assumed two positions, that of observer as participant, and participant as observer.

Four workshops were attended by the researcher which allowed her to obtain first hand knowledge of the issues and debates around disability. The first was a South African National Council of the Blind conference on the 8 March 1997 where the researcher assumed the role of observer as participant as her part at the conference was never explicitly stated. Here it was observed that the learning skills taught in special schools is a source of conflict between teachers at these schools, and those in tertiary education, with the latter claiming that they have to educate learners how to cope in tertiary institutions as they are not taught at school.

Again assuming the role of observer as participant, the researcher attended a meeting between deaf South Africans, and representatives from Gallaudet University, an American University for the deaf. This meeting (held at Wits on the 20 May 1997) allowed the researcher firstly, to observe that South Africa does not have a national sign language, and secondly, to comprehend the inferiority of the education the disabled receive at special schools.

The third incident was at a People for Awareness on Disability Issues (PADI) workshop also held at Wits for first year Medical students. Here the researcher assumed the role of observer as participant, pretending to be a student in the class, and thereby learning more about the difficulties facing the impaired in South Africa, as well as efforts to transcend these by various organisations. This workshop also facilitated a comprehension that the disabled are unique individuals, having their own ways of seeing the world, and solutions to making it more inclusive, but that prejudicial attitudes are a significant obstacle to participation.

Finally, the researcher attended a two day workshop conducted by CASE, the research organisation contracted by the Department of Health to undertake a national prevalence study of disability, as well as identify the needs of disabled South Africans. As the researcher represented another organisation at this workshop, she was able to assume the role of observer as participant, thereby noticing the confusion surrounding disability, manifest in accurate estimates of disabled South Africans, as well as in debates about whether to embrace an ICIDH or DPI conception of disability.

Conducting focus group discussions at two residences, Barnato Hall and Trinity House also allowed the researcher to observe the conditions within which disabled students live. She was able to see that deaf students lose their privacy, having no say over who enters their rooms as they have to keep them unlocked for safety reasons, while wheel-chair using students are curtailed by a broken lift in Barnato as their rooms are on upper floors. Pushing a wheel-chair student back to David Webster Hall after the focus group discussion also allowed the researcher to comprehend how difficult it is for wheel-chair users to move around in manual wheel-chairs. This served to reinforce the experiences of the researcher when she was temporarily disabled.

Also sitting in the DSP Common Room for a week, in an attempt to obtain greater survey input allowed the researcher to observe disabled students interacting. It was noted that visually impaired students made the most use of this room, with wheel-chair users and deaf students not being seen at all, and that groupings along the lines of impairment were apparent. As such, blind students congregated together, while the

partially sighted did too, although a few cases of mixed interactions regarding visual impairments were seen. The most striking observation was that the Common Room is used exclusively by disabled students, so reinforcing a 'cubby-hole' or 'dumping ground' view of the DSP, an issue discussed at a later stage.

Survey

A survey, in which information was collected by means of a questionnaire, formed the quantitative component of this project. This questionnaire was formulated from the four focus group discussions as the postassesment stage of the needs analysis and included both open and closed questions (Refer Appendix D "Questionnaire used in Survey as part of the Needs Analysis of Disabled Students at Wits"). Being a "bridge from analysis to action" (Witkin et al, 1995: 75) it attempted to prioritise what is needed to make Wits more integrated.

Arising from the captive nature of the subjects of study, and the fact that they were all literate, it was originally envisaged that every DSP registered student could be included in the survey. The survey findings would thus be representative of Wits disabled students, while the focus groups involved only twenty students. As mentioned, aims at representivity were crushed as only twenty one completed questionnaires were secured, ten of these administered by the researcher (a profile of these is in Appendix C: "Profile of Disabled Student Survey Respondents"). However, such supervision proved beneficial as it meant that these visually impaired students (nine being blind and one partially sighted) could transcend the limitations of the questionnaire by asking questions about it, and commenting beyond the prescribed solutions offered. It also allowed the researcher to become aware of the limitations of the questionnaire, most notably its length, its failure to acknowledge that students are disadvantaged by both their impairments and disability, and because questions were not posed as either/or but as additive. For example, a number of disabled students indicated that library accessibility would be greatly enhanced if a librarian was employed whose job description included helping disabled students, but that they would prefer the installation of technology which would promote their independence. However, in the questionnaire they could not indicate this, but appeared to support both.

That only twenty one completed questionnaires were received, indicated firstly, that disabled students are demotivated and apathetic when it comes to pushing for their rights. Secondly, it means that the formulation of any plan of action to make Wits more integrative will be based on the input of only a third of its disabled students, thereby detracting from any claims to representivity of Wits' population. Despite this, the survey is referred to during the course of this report, as those received indicate the perceptions of some disabled students studying at Wits, and so add to the detail of this report.

In exploring disabled students' experience of disability at Wits, as well as identifying their needs, both qualitative and quantitative research techniques were employed. While these did at times reveal contradictions in students' understandings, on the whole, both contributed to this research, so supplementing one another.

Findings: Discussion and Analysis

In accordance with the two dimensional model referred to in the theoretical framework of this report, this section will move from a discussion of disability in South Africa, Wits, and the DSP, exploring primarily how disabled students experience the physical, social and academic environments of each. This section also includes an evaluation of what disabled students identify as necessary to facilitate their integration at these three levels. Finally, an exploration is made of who should assume responsibility for altering the environment to make it more accommodating. As this project aimed at studying Wits disabled students' perceptions, these final two sections discuss their suggestions against the backdrop of a reworked IL paradigm which locates the solution to environmental barriers within the disabled.

The: Current Situation, 'what is'

"I never knew that one day I would end up in a wheel-chair, but it's true, here I am Disability is a reality and one day it might happen to you"

(Wheel-chair Using Informant 17)

Disability in South Africa

There is little consistency in estimates of disabled South Africans, with figures ranging between 5% and 12%. While such statistical uncertainty is reflected throughout South Africa, the UN (United Nations Children's Fund, 1993) has seen such disparity as confirmation of disabled marginalisation within society. Like essentialist approaches, this social exclusion can be traced to a belief that the disabled should be institutionalised where possible, or must adapt to the environment, albeit with little professional help, especially for Blacks (Waldman, 1993). In attempting to increase professional assistance, the Department of Health has recently contracted a research organisation (CASE) to undertake a national prevalence study of disability, as well as a needs assessment of disabled people. While this attempt to include the disabled within health policies can be criticised for subscribing to individualistic and medical models of disability, it can also be commended as being a move consistent with a new South Africa emphasising human rights and equality (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* 1996).

Despite a discrepancy in quantitative information, there is a comprehension at a governmental level that disabled people are "among the most marginalised and oppressed groups within society" (DART, 1997:1), discriminated against in the physical, social and academic environments of South Africa. The advent of democracy has meant the constitutional protection of many historically disadvantaged people, including those with impairments. As of 1996, the rights of the disabled are protected by the *Bill of Rights* which declares that neither the State or any person may "unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including...**disability**..." (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996). Another recent policy document advocating the rights of the disabled is South Africa's *Disability Rights Charter*, the product of wide consultation within the disability sector.

However, the protection endorsed by the *Bill of Rights* and *Disability Rights Charter* is moderated in two ways. Firstly, by the fact that South Africa, unlike America with its Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), has no comprehensive legislation relating to the rights of the disabled (Bizos, 1996). Although a technocratic solution has been offered to protect the disabled, even at a policy level this is insufficient by being incomplete. Secondly, the defence of the disabled is curbed by a breakdown between policy and practice, partly because there is no comprehensive legislation, but also a consequence of insufficient lobbying by the disabled for limited resources. In the current context of an increased call for state support, coinciding with budgetary restrictions, it is impossible for the government to fully back all policies, particularly when there is little pressure to guide resources in a specific direction. As a consequence, the disabled in a democratic South Africa are still described as the "bulk of the poorest of the poor" (McClain, 1996:1), denied access to land, education, employment housing, safety and health (McClain, 1996).

Disability in South Africa: Physical Environment

When including an examination of the interaction between the disabled and their physical surroundings, it is also possible to observe a discrepancy between policies and practice. Despite building codes of 1976 which stipulate that all buildings in South

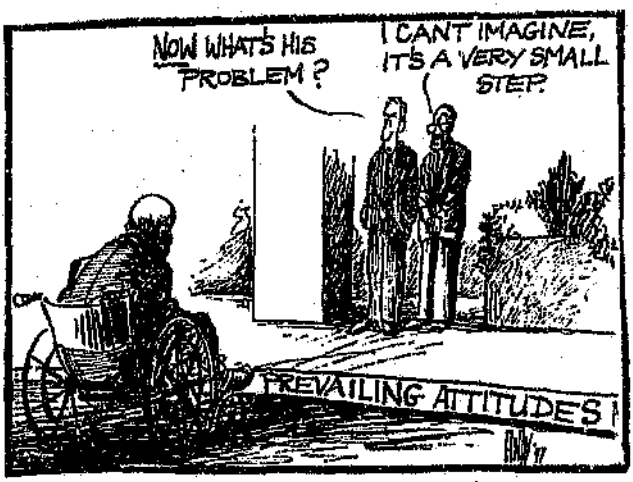
Africa must be accessible and have facilities for disabled people, these are not enforced (Ramponeng, 1997a). Not only are buildings inaccessible (Ho, 1997; Ramponeng, 1997a), a significant obstacle in the movement of disabled people is the inaccessibility and expense of transport (Garrun, 1997). As a consequence, disabled South Africans are unable to access facilities and services.

A study done by David (1996) on the subjective well-being of disabled students at Wits revealed that they encountered difficulties in accessing areas off campus, particularly shops. Focus group discussions reiterated this, most notably those with visual and mobility impairments. The former maintained that it was too dangerous for them to go off campus alone, thus requiring either transport or guidance by sighted students. While they were referring to crossing busy roads, another threat to their safety is crime, as was seen in the stabbing to death of Sexton Sebolai, a blind Wits student, in Hillbrow earlier this year. Wheel-chair users also found it difficult to access off campus facilities, particularly because of unattainable transport. Despite sharing this problem, angry wheel-chair users recounted how, without consulting them, the visually impaired dominated Disabled Students Movement (DSM) rejected a DSP offer to provide transport into town for disabled students. Discussed more at a later stage, this example shows firstly, that Wits' disabled student population is divided along impairment lines. Secondly, it reinforces arguments of disabled student apathy as the reason the DSM rejected this suggestion was that it entailed fundraising by disabled students to pay for this service.

Although disabled students are apathetic in challenging physical barriers beyond Wits, their complaisance is not duplicated completely within this context. NEAP, an arm of the DPSA is an organisation challenging the physical inaccessibility of South Africa (Ho, 1997). Through lobbying and advising, NEAP is attempting to fulfil a demand made in the *Disability Rights Charter of South Africa* (Lawyers for Human Rights, 1997) that built environments be safe and accessible for disabled people. According to Neville Cohen, the Gauteng chairman of NEAP, advances are being made, with most police stations, post offices and courts being accessible to disabled people, but that these are only the tip of an iceberg.

Disability in South Africa: Social Environment

(Source: *The Star*, 1997b)



While a lack of resources and apathy on the part of the disabled detract from environmental accessibility campaigns, these are also hindered by ignorance and prejudice within society. As a consequence of these, the physical environment remains inaccessible, disabled people are uneducated and underemployed and negative stereotypes are perpetuated, which ultimately imply the poverty and isolation of disabled people in South Africa.

Societal perceptions of disability were discussed in the focus groups with disabled students. It was felt that disability has historically been disdained, and that within South Africa there is an understanding of disability as "inability, and therefore uselessness" (Blind Informant 2). Differential responses to disability were also raised, with braille users claiming that Africans are more accepting of disability than Whites, although three blind survey respondents indicated they felt more accepted by White Wits students than by Africans. Discussed at a later stage, the point being made is that disabled students perceived a racially based differential acceptance of disability within society at large. This could be attributed to an apartheid legacy in which race takes

precedence over disability, with the mixed integration of the disabled being influenced more by their race than impairment. So within society at large, disabled students feel more accepted by Afri. as than Whites, although they are marginalised within African cultures too, as was claimed in other focus groups. For example, wheel-chair users maintained that disability has historically been denounced by Africans, referring to Chaka's reign to illustrate how the disabled and ill were killed.

The stereotyping of disabled sexuality was also discussed with disabled students and Nagler's (1990) assertion that the institutionalisation of the disabled has denied them a sexual identity was confirmed. This disallowance was expressed by a focus group informant (Wh ir user 19),

> ple assume that you are a child, a big child and that you are child-like, you don't know about sex, you don't think about those things, you're innocent, helpless. This idea of being helpless has to do with a child, a child is helpless, and they associate that with somebody like myself, an adult".

Wheel-chair using and blind students in particular discussed this stereotyping, highlighting its importance in inhibiting their social integration. As both impairments are obvious, known-about and invasive (Goffman, 1963), these students are dealing with a situation of identity spoilage, resulting from a discrepancy between their sexuality, and society's denial of this. Deaf students, whose impairment is less obvious, though still known-about and invasive, did not indicate how society perceived them sexually, a result of the superficiality of the discussion with them.

What did became apparent in the deaf focus group, reinforced at the CASE workshop, is 'hat deafness is not viewed as a disability by deaf people. Deaf individuals encountered during this research confirmed Hurst's (1996) observation that deaf people incline towards deaf sub-groupings. In apparent accordance with an adapted IL paradigm, the deaf are pushing for a recognition of their rights within South Africa. However, unlike other disability movements which aim at integrating the disabled, the deaf want to be recognised as a unique grouping with their own deaf culture (*The Star*, 1997a), thereby rejecting stereotypical views of the disabled as inferior.

This move is complicated because unlike the United States and United Kingdom, South Africa does not have a national sign language. This was observed when representatives from Gallaudet, an American university for the deaf, met with a number of deaf South Africans (Wits, 20 May 1997). Three interpreters were present, one for Americans, and two for South Africans. This indicates that the deaf in South Africa cannot easily communicate with one another, or share the interpreters who facilitate their communication with the hearing world.

Linked to the diversity of sign language is that South Africa does not have an officially recognised sign language which could become nationally practised. Although the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DEAFSA) estimates that 500 000 people in South Africa accept sign language as their first language, it "is not afforded the same official recognition and status as the languages of some other minority groups whose numbers are estimated to be smaller than sign language users" says Nell van Lieres of DEAFSA (*The Star*, 1997a). Although efforts are being made to develop a national sign language, and to have it recognised as South Africa's twelfth official language (*The Star*, 1997a), this process has been inundated with difficulties, not least of which are debates over whether the government or organisations for disabled people should assume responsibility for this process. This uncertainty also casts doubt on the assertion that the deaf are operating within a reformed IL paradigm. If this were the case, their involvement through organisations for the disabled in formulating a national and officially recognised sign language would be clearly perceived.

A number of organisations for the disabled exist in South Africa, both locally and at a national level, providing support and promoting disabled rights. One of the largest is DPSA, an umbrella organisation that provides support for many smaller groupings fighting for the rights of disabled people. DPSA describes itself as a "democratic, non sexist, non racial, no-governmental (sic), independent and non-aligned national assembly of disabled people in South Africa" (DPSA Mission Statement). But claims to representivity were moderated in the focus group for blind students who argued that the DPSA represents only mobility impaired people, and when discussion arose over

where this research should be submitted, these students expressed reservations about sending DPSA a copy. This again illustrates that the disabled are divided, so complicating efforts to push for their rights at a national level. It also indicates the antagonism between those with various impairments. Should the DPSA represent only the mobility impaired, their experience at Wits is also included in this report, which could inform the DPSA about the experience of being a wheel-chair user at Wits. The blind disregard this in their rejection of the DPSA as representing impairments other than theirs.

As shown, Postmodernity has facilitated the unification of the disabled in efforts to promote their rights. As such, at an ideological level, organisations for the disabled subscribe to a reformed IL paradigm in which the disabled are viewed as the ones with the knowledge and power to challenge the status quo. The DPSA clearly subscribes to this model, maintaining that "(o)nly disabled people can fully understand the discrimination faced by our people and only disabled people can lead the struggle for equal rights" (DPSA Mission Statement). People for Awareness on Disability Issues (PADI) is another organisation attempting to change societal perceptions of disabled people. By conducting workshops nationally it promotes awareness that disabled people are "capable, independent and able" (PADI Information Booklet), and so it too subscribes to an IL paradigm in which disabled people are viewed as the experts.

A challenge facing organisations which aim at uniting disabled people in the struggle for their rights is a legacy of institutionalisation. This point was made by Morgan (1997), the former head of the DSP who said that South Africa was still dealing with "the aftermath of the welfare model", and that the IL paradigm has only recently hit South Africa at an ideological level. Although special education is discussed more fully in the next section, it has played a significant role in socially isolating the disabled.

Firstly, and in accordance with apartheid principles, disabled learners were divided along racial lines, with White schools receiving the bulk of resources (Waldman, 1993; Department of National Health and Population Development, 1987). As a consequence, the disabled in South Africa are not only divided along racial lines, but

also along associated socio-economic-educational divisions. This in turn means that some are more disabled than others. For instance, wealthy, predominantly White people are able to afford assistive technology which links them to their environment. As a consequence they would be less affected by the environmental barriers confronting poorer, mainly Black people with impairments. By not sharing a similar experience of disablement, racially divided people with impairments are less likely to unite to challenge their oppression.

Secondly, disabled learners were separated from their non-impaired peers, being sent to one of eighty nine special learning centres, fifty six of which were allocated to White disabled learners (Waldman, 1993). As a result of so few special schools, this meant thirdly, that disabled learners were isolated from their families and home communities as they boarded at schools catering for them. Consequently, many never acquired the confidence and skills necessary to assert their rights in a society of mixed integration. The focus group discussions, particularly the one with wheel-chair users indicated a lack of assertiveness and confidence on the part of respondents, as it appeared that these students were very concerned about people's reactions to their coping mechanisms and did not want to draw attention to themselves as they adapted to an environment catering for the non-impaired. One mobility impaired student in particular (Wheel-chair Using Informant 19) expressed anxiety about interacting with non-wheel chair users in a social setting, saying "I don't want to be in public with my deformities".

Fourthly, special education divided disabled learners along the lines of impairment as visually, aurally and mobility impaired students were not in the same classes, or residences. As shown in the literature review, antagonism between students with differing impairments has been observed, the consequence being that disabled people "don't have that oneness" (Wheel-chair Using Informant 17) needed to promote their rights.

Thus, organisations aimed at promoting disabled integration and participation face a significant challenge in uniting disabled people in such struggles, especially in light of

DPSA's assertion that "(f)or DPSA to succeed, it is necessary that very (sic) disabled person in the country should be activists...DPSA believe that all disabled people must unite in the struggle for equal rights and development" (DPSA Mission Statement).

Disability in South Africa: Academic Environment

"Specialisation has caused a lot of stereotyping...the disabled person is seen, as the person who needs to be helped, as a useless person"

(Blind Informant 3)

Not only has a history of welfarism impacted negatively on the social integration of disabled people, but their institutionalisation, for example in special schools, has also meant their academic isolation. Special education in South Africa has been described as "separate, unequal and inadequate" (Waldman, 1993), a point made clear in a number of ways in the course of this research. At the meeting between Gallaudet University representatives and key deaf people (Wits, 20 May 1997) deaf South Africans opposed Gallaudet's proposal to train leaders within the deaf community, arguing that a more pressing concern was the education of deaf adults as the learning received at school was of such an inferior quality. Confirming Roberts' (1993) criticism of special education as inhibiting scientifically oriented tertiary education, deaf students told how they could not take certain subjects like maths and science at school, and when they could, these were on a lower grade than the higher grades needed to get into university. This point was reasserted in the interview with Morgan (1997) in which she pointed out that the two deaf students associated with Wits are legally challenging the education offered for deaf students because of its secondary character. Roberts (1997a), the current acting head of the DSP commented in one conversation that special schools are a barrier to academic integration, that the lifeskills programmes offered at these institutions are "a joke", and that students are suffering by not being taught adequate learning skills, which has meant that the DSP has to compensate for this dearth, an issue discussed at a later stage .

As a consequence of these criticisms, an effort is currently underway in South Africa to ensure that all learners have access to an integrated and equal education system. The *Bill of Rights*' assertion that "everyone has the right to a basic education...and further education" (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Afr* 1996) is reiterated in both the *Disability Rights Charter of South Africa* (Lawyers for Human Rights, 1997) and the *South African School Act* (1997). This Act argues that the mainstreaming of special learners will be encouraged where practical, and that support services will be made available to such learners to facilitate their academic integration (Department of Education, 1997).

In an attempt to establish academic inclusiv' ·nd equality the NC.NET/NCESS were established by the Minister of Education. scribing explicitly to a structuralist model, the NCSNET/NCESS has identified the education system, as opposed to individual learners, as at fault and requiring transformation. Thus, it promotes the metamorphosis of South Africa's learning system to ensure that "ALL (their emphasis) learners will have equal access to all levels within a single education system that is responsive to different needs .. ong the learner population. All learners should be educated within this framework and no centres of learning should prevent the participation of learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and language differences" (NCSNET/ NCESS 1997a). This is an extremely commendable, but ambitious goal, a point that can be made about the NCSNET/NCESS Public Discussion Document (1997b) as a whole. While recommendations made in this document ensure that all learners be included, and participate within a single educational system, the question raised is how such proposals will be implemented. In effect, will the recommendations made by the NCSNET/NCESS be another policy document, filled with good intentions, but never translated into ¡ .tice ? This is a worthy question when considering that transformative efforts are constrained by both budgetary restrictions and the apathy of the disabled.

Disability at Wits

"The denial of education and its ripple effects have denied many disabled people of their freedom, human dignity and equality as full citizens"

(McClain, 1996: 2)

In light of the above quote, disabled students at Wits are a privileged minority, being able to access tertiary education despite a legacy of discrimination at all of South Africa's levels. The fact that disabled learners have historically been relegated to special schools has tremendous consequences for their integration at Wits. Not only were such schools impoverished in comparison to mainstream schools, under apartheid, special schools for Blacks were even more under-resourced. The influence of this has to be acknowledged as all the respondents in this study are Black, and twenty of the survey respondents (95%) attended special schools. The reason for one disabled student (Informant 20) not attending a special learning centre is a consequence of her being impaired near to the end of her school career, and that she could be catered for at the mainstream school she had been attending.

That all respondents are Black reflects the fact that most disabled students at Wits are Black. When questioned why this was so, two contradictory responses were given, both referring to the differential impact of apartheid on Whites and Blacks. Firstly, informants said that as Whites were richer than Blacks they could afford to attend overseas learning institutions which catered fully for them, unlike South African learning centres. The second explanation contradicts this view that South African learning centres do not cater adequately for both Whites and Blacks. Referring instead to the unequal distribution of resources within these learning centres, this explanation argues that White students were more institutionalised than Blacks, a consequence of having the means to be isolated. Black learning centres, because of impoverishment, were forced to be more 'open' to the rest of society, making use of resources outside of these learning centres. As a consequence, Black learners have more social skills than Whites, and are more able to cope in mainstreamed learning centres than their

White counterparts, who, having secured their education, are employed in disabled organisations in which they are still isolated from the rest of society. Both these explanations point to the greater advantages that Whites had, either by being able to go overseas, or of having the resources to remain isolated. However, this institutionalised isolation, while it may protect the disabled, also denies them an independent life, in effect, Whites were disadvantaged by their advantages. This points to another reason for there being racial differences in a nationally based disabled movement, because Whites are less aware of the discrimination 'out there', being separated from it by their greater institutionalisation. In a contradictory way, one could argue that the impoverishment of special schools for Blacks has facilitated their greater social integration at Wits. While the efficacy of this conclusion will not be verified in this study, partly because no White students were involved, and even if they had been, they would be exceptional within this hypothesis, it is a point worth noting, albeit a controversial one.

By admitting disabled learners, Wits is supporting mainstreaming, although it is debatable whether disabled learners are fully accommodated, or merely accepted. Doubt is raised from an examination of Wits' documentation, which reveals that Wits does not have an official policy document on disability. The reason is that it does not have the assets to back such a document (Morgan, 1997), in Charlton's words, "we don't have special resources to cope" (Charlton, 1997). As within South Africa, incomplete legislation and limited resources combine to maintain the marginalised status of the disabled.

As Wits does not have an official disability document, the rights of disabled students are protected by South Africa's Constitution (Bizos, 1996; Charlton, 1997 and Morgan, 1997), and disability as an issue is included under non-differentiation and affirmative action. Therefore, efforts to confront inequalities relating to disability are meant to be addressed through Wits' commitment to "non-discrimination in its student body" (Wits' Letterhead), by means of "affirmative action, equal opportunity policies and effective labour relations policies" (Draft Mission Statement, 1997). The reality is that such policies are more concerned with racial and gender inequalities, as is evident

form other Wits policy documents For example, Wits' original Mission Statement made no mention of disability, while the Draft refers to disability only a single time, maintaining that one of Wits' central goals is to abolish discrimination based on "race, class, gender and **disability**" (Draft Mission Statement, 1997). When asked why disability was only mentioned once in the Draft Mission Statement for Wits, Charlton (1997) maintained that considering South Africa's past, Wits must first address racial, gender and then disability inequalities, and that it has traditionally concerned itself with race in particular. Such an emphasis has been noted by McClain, a Senior researcher in the community Law Centre at the University of the Western Cape. She makes the point that "(t)ransformation forums at universities throughout the country are occupied with the reduction of racial and gender divides, but unfortunately the same cannot be said for disability. At many of the transformative stages disability has been completely (her emphasis) omitted" (McClain, 1996: 4). This marginalisation of disability means that the historical isolation of the disabled is not being addressed. This in turn highlights how essential the mobilisation of the disabled is to ensure that their rights are recognised.

The isolation of the disabled in transformative efforts at Wits is worrying, particularly considering the view that Wits, "Serving the Community...for 75 years" (Wits' General Information Booklet for Applicants, 1998) should be an agent of change and challenge the marginalised status of disabled people. This point was made not only by McClain (1996), but by a number of disabled students in focus group discussions. One informant (Blind 3) argued that "Wits University must be the trend setter, the university is for the community, so I think the university is more influential to the community than anything else". Implicit within this is an optimism that Wits can still be an agent of change within the community despite the fact that disabled students feel it is failing to include them at a physical, social and academic level, a perception discussed next. Also contained within this excerpt is a noticeable absence of what role disabled students will play in helping Wits be a trend setter and accommodate them in these three environments. It clearly shows the structuralist understanding within which the majority of disabled students perceive their marginalisation. As such,

students expect the environment to alter to ensure their accommodation, and identify institutions lil e Wits as being responsible for bringing about change.

Disability at Wits: Physical Environment

> *"It's very important for us to use facilities that other students are using, to get where other students are getting if you are to be part of the university. There's nothing wrong with the cheques we give them, they don't know they come from a disabled student"*
>
> (Wheel-chair Using Informant 19).

This quote illustrates the tension between students' right to be fully integrated at Wits, and perceptions of exclusion from its physical environment. Problems regarding physical accessibility were an issue for visually impaired students (both blind and partially sighted), but posed more of an obstacle to wheel-chair users, although West campus was seen as more accessible to them, perhaps because it was recently built. Only deaf students were largely unaffected, with their problems revolving around integrating socially and academically within a hearing world.

Although orienteering helped braille users, a blind informant (3) insisted that assumptions not be made about blind students' abilities to move around, but that "everything should be designed in a way that even blind students can fit", thus "everything that can be brailled must be brailled". This view by students of the r right to full accommodation was found in all the focus groups and supports Crow's assertion (cited in Philpott, 1997) that the structurally based DPI distinction between impairment and disability denies the importance of the former, focusing exclusively on the latter. As shown in the literature review, the DPI definition, unlike the ICIDH, maintains that disablement is unrelated to the body, being a consequence of environmental barriers. By arguing that 'if Wits accepts us, it must fully accommodate us', disabled students are denying that their impairment also disadvantages them. If they acknowledged that both impairment and disability have a role to play in their marginalisation, the disabled could focus their energy on fighting disablement, instead of attacking the disadvantages associated with being impaired. To illustrate, in

discussion with blind students they commended the fact that the lifts servicing the 11th floor in Senate House were brailled, and suggested that the braillling of all lift buttons would facilitate their integration at Wits. When evaluated in the survey, this proposal was identified as a necessity by eight of the nine blind respon' 'ts, with one blind student (Informant 1) saying it would be of no benefit. The reason being that even if buttons were brailled, he would still not know if the lift had stopped at the correct floor. It seems here that the eight students who identified the braillling of lift buttons as a necessity were focusing on their disablement by society, seeing any efforts to make the physical environment more accessible as a necessity. The student who questioned the advantages of braillling lift buttons was recognising that both his impairment and disability disadvantage him, and that this suggestion would not be of benefit as he still could not see which floor the lift had stopped on.

That only those lifts servicing the 11th floor of Senate House have brailled buttons and lowered lift panels for wheel-chair users was also debated in the focus groups. Disabled students saw this 'accommodation' as politically motivated, as students rarely use these lifts, but the impression given to newcomers is that Wits does accommodate disabled people. While the reality is that impaired students are expected to adapt to a disabling environment, the perception given is that the environment has been changed to accommodate them. This example was proof, according to one student that decisions are made without consulting affected people (Blind Informant 5), an opinion discussed later.

Other examples of the ways in which the physical environment of Wits disables the impaired were also uncovered in the focus groups. Not only are lift button panels too high for wheel-chair users, they pointed out that lifts are often broken which means they are unable to attend lectures, and for those living in Barnato Residence, are sometimes unable to even leave their rooms. Some partially sighted students also found it difficult to read the numbers on lift panels. This, combined with the fact that they cannot distinguish the edges of steps, made their movement around campus difficult, a situation exacerbated by the darkness of some of the corridors at Wits, in particular those in Central Block.

Partially sighted and blind students were also unable to distinguish between male or female toilets, the latter because they cannot identify the symbols used for male and female. Neither do they know which lecture or tutorial room they are entering as the room numbers of these cannot be seen, even by some partially sighted students as these are often too small and placed at a height. Another problem encountered by visually impaired students were mobile obstacles which blocked pathways, so dustbins, noticeboards, and workmen's tools like ladders was seen as endangering them. this finding, supported by David (1996), also shows that Wits does not conform to a demand made in *The Disability Rights Charter of South Africa* (Lawyers for Human Rights, 1997), that built environments be both accessible and safe for the disabled.

Ramps around Wits were perceived by wheel-chair users to be widely dispersed, steep, narrow and difficult to negotiate. Thus, they were at odds with the recommendation made by Sheffield Hallam University (1994), that the environment be accessible in ways that allow disabled students to use the most direct and public routes. The inaccessibility of ramps was especially problematic for students using manual wheel-chairs, who consequently relied on others to push them around. Help was also needed by wheel-chair users when negotiating doors, particularly spring loaded ones. Two of the wheel-chair users in the focus group (Informants W 17 and 19) had the use of only one of their arms, which meant that they were unable to negotiate doors which automatically shut. The help they require around Wits was affirmed by Morgan (1997) who said that wheel-chair users rely on the DSP to find people to push them around. This dependence on others was discussed in the focus group and wheel-chair users saw it as contributing to their alienation, expressed thus, "I know we are different, we don't fit, but this (dependence) makes us feel more different" (Wheel-chair Using Informant 20). The fact that some buildings at Wits did not have wheel-chair accessible toilets (for example Central Block and the Student Union Building) also detracted from wheel-chair users' sense of comfort, and they admitted to anxiety when accessing new buildings on campus over this issue.

Anger was expressed in all the focus groups over the fact that students are charged for facilities and written material, but they are unable to access these. While the latter concern is discussed at a later stage, the former issue was raised by both wheel-chair users and deaf students. For example, one wheel-chair using student staying at David Webster Hall is being charged a laundry fee, despite being unable to access the laundry as there is no lift in the building, which means that her friends have to do her washing, thereby undermining her independence. Another wheel-chair user staying at West Campus Village (Wheel-chair Using Informant 19) is being charged for MNet though he cannot enter the Television room which is controlled by a two door cubicle. Although he has been fighting this, in his words, "been in their faces for quite some time", he maintains that he'll have his PhD before anything gets done. Deaf students at residence also complained that they are charged for telephones and intercom systems which they cannot use, and that their privacy is often violated as the receptionist just allows visitors into their rooms which must not be locked for safety reasons.

These examples are clearly based on an essentialist understanding of disability in which the disabled individual is expected to adapt to the environment by paying for the services that would be accessible if s/he were not impaired. This in turn reinforces the status quo as the impaired are seen as at fault, rather than society. Such a view must be modified by a recognition that the physical environment can obstruct the disabled. However, this structuralist understanding needs to recognise the disadvantages associated with both impairment and disability. While impairments do inhibit, so does the physical environment of Wits, which admits disabled students, but does not fully provide for them.

This breakdown between acceptance and accommodation was recognised as a drawback in the mainstreaming of disabled learners, as it implied their isolation (Mittler, 1978). The NCSNET/NCESS (1997b) has also identified this as an obstacle to the creation of inclusive and safe learning centres, and has recommended that barrier free learning environments be built. However, and in line with earlier criticisms of NCSNET/NCESS recommendations, it is uncertain how this will be funded. That Wits does not have the resources was clear from the interview with both Charlton (1997)

and Morgan (1997). Government too is financially constrained, which means relying on private funding to implement changes. However, fundraising is a tedious process, especially in an environment of extreme need, like South Africa. As such, the transformation of Wits into a barrier free and safe learning environment (Lawyers for Human Rights, 1997) will be a lengthy process, and requires the mobilisation of the disabled to channel resources in their direction.

Disability at Wits: Social Environment

The extent to which disabled students are socially integrated at Wits was seen by the majority of respondents in essentialist terms, having more to do with the individual than the environment. As such, most respondents saw their social integration as dependent on an intrinsic personality. One student who is especially isolated, and who described himself as "loneiy", went on to say that "I am a shy person, that's how I am, so I just have to accept that that's my personality and that I'm unable to change" (Partially Sighted Informant 7).

A second explanation drew on both an essentialist and structuralist understanding to clarify the extent to which disabled students are socially integrated at Wits. Here disabled students argued that the extent to which they are socially integrated is influenced by the age at which they became impaired. Those impaired at a later age were believed to be more integrated as they had already learnt the skills needed in social engagements. That they had these skills was attributed to their going to special schools at an older age. As mentioned, these schools have been criticised for not providing scholars with adequate skills training, which impacts negatively on their social integration outside of these institutions. While this implies a structuralist understanding, it is seen in essentialist terms in this project because institutions like special schools were established with the aim of 'rehabilitating' and protecting the disabled, without acknowledging that in many cases it was society that was disabling these people.

Special schooling has a secondary effect on the social integration of disabled students. Of the 95% of survey respondents who matriculated from special schools, 76% went

to Filadelfia School for the Disabled, while 14% matriculated from Siloe Catholic School for the Blind and Partially Sighted. The consequence of this shared schooling is that students continue to be friends at Wits, so inhibiting mixed integration. This was reaffirmed by the shy informant cited above who said that the only friends he has at Wits are those he went to school with.

Both the explanations offered by disabled students to account for their social integration deny them any autonomy in affecting this inclusion. Instead, the extent to which they are integrated is seen as dependent either on an inherent personality or attendance at a special school, which means that disabled students have not learned sufficient social skills. In neither are students able to challenge their isolation by cultivating a more social personality, or acquiring the skills needed in mixed interactions. Here too is further support of the tendency for disabled students to deny their autonomy and ability to challenge their marginalised position in society.

Although they can be challenged, environmental barriers do inhibit the social integration of students with impairments at Wits. Such an acknowledgement provides an understanding of why a wheel-chair using informant (20) is socially isolated, although she did not attend a special school. While this could be attributed to her being an inherently shy person, the environmental barriers encountered by disabled students point to another explanation. As argued by Cross (1994) and confirmed by David (1996), continued oppression makes the disabled more accepting of their marginalisation. Thus Informant 20's social isolation can be understood in structuralist terms. Some of the barriers faced by her, and other disabled students are physical, while the rest are the result of prejudicial student and staff attitudes. Before discussing the impact of these on the social integration of disabled students, the isolation of the deaf at Wits will be mentioned as this is divorced from both the physical and attitudinal barriers identified by other students.

A significant barrier to the inclusion of the deaf is that interpreters are often not available in a social (let alone academic) setting. The isolation this heralds was demonstrated in the interview with the two deaf students (Informants 15 and 16)

associated with Wits as the DSP paid interpreter was absent. The consequence was that communication was time consuming and superficial, and much insight was lost, as notes had to be written to communicate. This clearly confirms DEAFSA's identification of sign language interpreters as being "the most crucial assistive device" (*The Star*, 1997a) for the integration of the deaf at both a social and academic level. As mentioned, assistive technology forms a crucial link between the disabled and their environment, allowing the disabled to integrate and participate. As interpreters fulfil this role for the deaf, they can clearly be described as an assistive device. However, as they promote independence and are needed for academic integration, they do not slot easily into either of the two categories of assistive devices identified in the NCSNET/NCESS Discussion Document (1997b). This raises the question of whether interpreters will be paid for by the Department of Education or Health, or whether a debate over this issue will result in neither assuming responsibility.

The physical inaccessibility of Wits for certain students, particularly wheel-chair users, impacts negatively on their social inclusion. The truth of this was demonstrated during the course of this research, when wheel-chair users were unable to attend Morgan's farewell party as the lift in the Student Union Building was broken on that day. But this is just one example, and many others exist, both in residences and around campus. As mentioned, the Television room for West Campus Village is inaccessible to the wheel-chair user staying there (Informant 19) as a result of a two door cubicle system, leading to his isolation from others. The wheel-chair user staying at David Webster Hall, which does not have a lift, also expressed feelings of isolation and dependence within residence, saying "I can't go and visit my friends because they're all on the third floor, I've just got to sit in my room and do nothing" (Informant 29). Around campus, turnstiles at coffee shop and canteen entrances inhibited the integration of wheel-chair users, and one informant questioned why they were even installed considering that these are meant to welcome students, not restrain their admission (Wheel-chair Using Informant 19). As the Student Union Building does not have a wheel-chair accessible toilet, wheel chair using students did not want to fraternise within the very building aimed at student socialisation.

Sheffield Hallam's (1994) identification of accessible information as one of the principles contributing to the independence of disabled students was also confirmed. Focus group discussions indicated that disabled students at Wits are often socially excluded because information is either not placed on noticeboards, or is in a medium inaccessible to them. Deaf students are reliant on notices to inform them of social activities, and when not posted, they are effectively barred from these events. This was succinctly demonstrated during this study when deaf students did not attend the above mentioned farewell party held for Ruth Morgan, as they did not have the correct times, and thought the party started at 4 O'clock instead of finishing at this time. Even when notices are posted, they are often inaccessible to disabled students. Obviously, braille users cannot see written notices, but focus group discussions indicate that partially sighted and wheel-chair users encounter problems with reading small print, and notices placed at a height. So, they too cannot always access information, and so are excluded from the social life taking place at Wits.

The issue of integration around shared sporting facilities was raised in both the focus groups and survey. Analysis of survey responses indicated that 48% of respondents, mainly the visually impaired (56% of braille users and 57% of partially sighted students), made use of sporting or recreational activities offered at Wits. Partially sighted students were the most integrated. Similar to braille users, they played soccer and goal ball, but a number indicated that they made use of the gym and swimming pc One of the deaf students played chess, but none of the wheel-chair users made any use of sports or recreational facilities. Reasons for not utilising facilities varied. Twenty seven percent of respondents said that they were not interested, while 55% maintained that the inaccessibility of such facilities inhibited their use. All the wheel-chair users indicated that facilities were inaccessible, and in the course of their focus group discussion expressed great anger over this, especially as their fees were used to maintain these facilities. The swimming pool on East Campus provides a good example of their isolation as it is one facility that could be utilised by wheel-chair users, but they are effectively excluded because it has no ramps to it. While Roberts (1997a) is challenging this, his efforts are undermined by bureaucratic and financial constraints as well as by disabled students' apathy in backing this effort. The impassivity of the

disabled implied in structuralist definitions of disability can be seen in a blind survey respondent's (2) explanation for his exclusion "no-one took me there (to these facilities) and oriented me". Instead of seeing himself as responsible for his inclusion, he feels that the non-disabled involved in sporting and recreational activities should make the effort to include disabled students. That they have not is seen as proof by the disabled of their discrimination by the non-disabled. Such prejudice on the part of non-disabled students was alluded to in the survey by a partially sighted respondent (13), who said that non-disabled students "don't want to see us...because we will disturb them. We are not welcome, we are interfering". This view is in keeping with structuralist explanations of disability in which barriers to integration are located within the environment. As such, the disabled are exempt from being responsible for isolation, seeing themselves as the helpless victims of society.

A significant finding was that despite disabled students' perceptions of the physical inaccessibility of Wits, over half of the respondents (52%) who completed the survey saw themselves as fully integrated within the student body. When further questioned, they pointed to the fact that they feel involved in student organisations, that they are treated nicely, just like other students are. Thus their perceptions of integration hinged more on attitudes than the physical environment, so confirming Lazzaro's (1993) and Donovan's (1990) identification of attitudes as a significant determinant of inclusion and participation. This implies that physical accessibility is less of a factor to how socially included students feel, than are the attitudes of people.

This hypothesis was confirmed when the 43% of survey responses who indicated a negative sense of integration cited examples to illustrate their isolation, with most resulting fr[illegible]erceptions of prejudicial attitudes and practices. Examples of felt stigma ([illegible], 1984) include the view that disabled students are more costly to educate [illegible]ther students, and that this money should be used to educate non-disabled students as more would benefit. Disabled students are also seen as a "burden" (Partially Sighted Informant 12) because of their dependence on others, which detracts from their social integration. As mentioned, actual dependence serves to exaggerate

the difference between disabled and non-disabled students, eroding disabled students sense of autonomy and privacy.

However, stereotypes of the disabled as helpless and weak are also perpetuated as a consequence of their institutionalisation in which they are protected by able-bodied custodians (Jagoe, 1997). Linked to such perceptions are feelings of stigmatisation (Scambler, 1984) manifest in the patronising help the disabled receive from the non-disabled. Here, the non-disabled "define themselves (because) when they help you, you are helped, they are the helper and in the process of helping, they are not thinking about you, about how you feel, essentially it's not helping you at all, it's about helping themselves" (Wheel-chair Using Informant 19). Another example of felt stigmatisation (Scambler, 1984) is disabled students' perceptions that student organisations only include them when they want their vote, approaching the disabled "whenever they need support, whenever they have to go and toyi-toyi or whatever" (Blind Informant 5). One exception to this "exploitation" (Blind Informant 5) was Residence House Committees, especially that of David Webster, which were seen as representative and inclusive. Another exception could be the admiration expressed by fellow students that disabled people can cope in an academic environment. However, this was also seen as a consequence of prejudice, especially when incredulity was accompanied by suspicions that disabled students receive special privileges, for example tip offs about exams and tests, in order to pass.

While difficult to decide whether the above examples refer to actual stigmatisation, the point is that disabled students experience such prejudice, and maintain that it makes them feel excluded and isolated. This distinction between enacted and felt stigma is also relevant when discussing racial responses to disability. As mentioned, while disabled students indicated that they felt more accepted by Africans than Whites within society at large, this observation was not duplicated within Wits. Instead, disabled students, most notably braille users, perceived White students as more accommodating than Africans. The difference between the two was described by one student, "Blacks, my own people, see me as an unimportant person, they don't feel like socialising with such a person, in their eyes I am not a full person, but White students are helping me"

(Blind Respondent 9). When questioned why there was this racially based response to disability, braille users again referred to cultural differences, so contradicting their previous assertion that Africans are more accepting of disability in society at large. As has been mentioned, part of an explanation could be that Wits, like South Africa, is also experiencing an apartheid legacy and so is still racially divided in its social environment. As such, disabled students are largely excluded from integration at all levels, and White students only appear to be more accepting because, by being Black, disabled students are excluded at a racial level anyway. Thus in White-Black interactions race takes precedence, while in Black-Black interactions, impairment becomes more of an issue. To draw on Goffman's work (1963), Black disabled students are discredited by Whites on the basis of their race, and by Blacks because of their impairment. However, this hypothesis could also not be explored as no Whites students were involved in this study, which reports only on the felt stigmatisation of Black students.

The view that disability belongs with disability was also made, with one informant (Blind 6) saying there is a perception by students without disabilities that "we (disabled students) have our own type of life, so we have to associate by ourselves, and let them associate with themselves". This can be seen as a consequence of institutionalisation in which those with and without impairments were separated. Linked to the view that the disabled and non-disabled should be separated is the loss of independence that the former feel in mixed interactions. This was explained by one student who saw his integration within the student body thus, "there is some sense of being integrated, but it's not pure integration, as my own definition of integration is having a choice of being with other students or not, but I don't always have that choice" (Blind Respondent 7). This quote verifies Sheffield Hallam's (1994) argument that the independence of disabled students entails their right to choice. By not being able to choose who to socialise with, this respondent (blind 7) is pointing to a lack of independence within a social environment.

An important detail is that the social integration of disabled students is not only contingent on students, but is also affected by staff attitudes. While canteen and coffee

shop staff were viewed as helpful, librarians were seen instead as impatient and rude. Many students urged that where possible, technology should replace staff which would facilitate their independence, so confirming Lazzaro's (1993) definition of assistive technology as independence promoting. The attitudes of lecturers and tutors varied, with some making great efforts to include disabled students. However, their poor attendance at DSP co-ordinated disability awareness workshops was seen as proof of staff intolerance.

Hurst (1996) has promoted the efficacy of awareness workshops in altering attitudes towards disability. He argues that these will only be effective if held on an ongoing basis. While Wits holds workshops annually, poor attendance means their effectiveness in altering attitudes towards disability is undermined. That lecturers do not attend was commented on by both staff (Morgan, 1997; Roberts, 1997a) and students, with one student (Blind 6) arguing that while there has been much talk about sexual harassment, people need to talk about "disability harassment". He further questions, when "most of the academics have been talking about being gender blind, why don't they become disabled blind ?". Although race is not mentioned by him, his question is ultimately aimed at Wits' focus on race and gender issues at the exclusion of disability. In keeping with essentialism, disabled students are expected to conform to an environment catering for the non-disabled, so failing to acknowledge that this same environment disables those with impairments.

A lack of consultation with disabled students by Wits Administration has already been alluded to, and is manifest in two examples. The first, and one already discussed at length, is that while students commended the fact that lifts servicing the 11th floor in Senate House were permanently brailled and had lowered button panels, they argued that this decision was politically motivated as students rarely use these lifts, and a better decision would have been to braille buttons and lower button panels in lifts servicing only to the third floor of Senate House. The second example, also mentioned above, relates to wheel-chair users who saw the physical inaccessibility of Wits, made evident in steep, narrow and widely dispersed ramps, as proof that attempts to make Wits more accessible for wheel-chair users did not really have them in mind. Instead

ramps "are erected for the sake of them being there, but not really to make it easier for us to go about campus" (Wheel-chair Using Informant 17). These two illustrations clearly highlight the essentialist paradigm within which Wits is accepting disabled students, expecting them to adapt to the environment, and thereby absolving itself of being responsible for accommodating them. This points to the need for acknowledgement that the environment does inhibit the disabled, and that Wits' staff must change their attitudes and adopt a Postmodern perspective which facilitates a recognition that disempowered people are aware of their needs, and can make a valuable contribution towards their own integration.

Affirming a point made above, it is not always clear whether prejudicial attitudes are actual or perceived, as is shown by referring to Informant 19's denouncement of Wits' staff as prejudiced, being more concerned with aesthetics than inclusivity. To illustrate this point, this wheel-chair user referred to Central Block, which has no wheel-chair ramp at its North or main entrance, with wheel-chair users having to access it from either its West or South sides. According to Informant 19, a ramp will never be installed at this main entrance, a symbol to him of Wits, and thus academic achievement, as Central Block is a "classical building". Falling within a structuralist understanding, he attributes his exclusion from this symbolic entrance to prejudicial attitudes which obstruct the transformation of Wits to make it fully accessible. The reality is that Central Block can be accessed by wheel-chair users from two entrances, so his feelings of stigmatisation may not be real or enacted (Scambler, 1984) despite the symbolism attached to Central Block's main entrance. This example can be used to highlight the tendency for structuralist understandings of disability, particularly DPI based ones, to sideline the experience of impairment. This wheel-chair using informant is able to access Central Block from two sides, yet he feels discriminated against because the main entrance is inaccessible. He is thus disadvantaged by his impairment, but is not being disabled by physical obstacles or attitudinal barriers which make Central Block impenetrable to him.

But can this argument be extended to the presence of steep, narrow and dispersed ramps ? The truth is that wheel-chair users can access most of Wits, although not

along the most direct or public routes (Sheffield Hallam, 1994). Answering this question requires acknowledging the influence of subjectivity as the researcher feels that while inaccessible ramps disable wheel-chair users, the absence of a ramp at Central Block's main entrance does not. Thus, the researcher is judging informant 19's perceptions of stigmatisation, claiming that his feelings of exclusion from Central Block are the result of felt as opposed to enacted stigmatisation. Distinguishing between the two is necessary when undertaking a needs analysis, as the assessor must decide whether identified needs are actual or imagined, a decision complicated by the value-ladeness of needs (Kimmel, 1977). By not making this decision, the disadvantages associated with impairment and disability will be targeted, instead of focusing efforts on the ways in which the environment disables those with impairments.

Another example which raised tempers is over what was perceived as a half-hearted attempt to make Yale Road safer for disabled students by limiting traffic. A blind student (1) questioned why safety measures were not implemented before, implying that the needs of disabled students have been marginalised even though their safety has been put at risk. What is significant about this example is how disabled students scapegoated Wits Administration, seeing it as at fault. However, this view is contradicted by newspaper articles (Greenberg, 1995 and 1996) which reported a battle waging between Wits and the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council after the death of a blind student, Xolile Ngozi, in October 1995, resulted in Wits' request that Yale Road be donated to it so that traffic flows could be controlled. While Wits' Administration was constrained by a broader social context, disabled students had a limited understanding of this structural inhibition, focusing on the immediate (Wits' Administration), and not the removed (Johannesburg Metropolitan Council). This example shows not only that disabled students are unaware of the pressures constraining Wits in attempting to accommodate them, but also affirms a lack of consultation between disabled learners and personnel. This communication breakdown can be attributed to both students and staff, the latter's role illustrated in the interview with Charlton (1997) in which he clearly absolved himself of being responsible for disabled students. For example, when questioned why Wits does not have a policy document on disability, he inquired "should we have one ?", and when asked whether he felt the DSP was a dumping

ground, initially said "I'm only the vice chancellor, I can't be an expert on every aspect of what happens at the University". If this blasé attitude is found in upper management, it is expected to be duplicated at lower levels, a point raised later on.

The consequence of the social isolation of disabled students at Wits is that the more marginalised they are by the student body and staff, the more acceptable this isolation becomes (Cross, 1994). Informant 20's acceptance of this "second class citizenship" (Sieglar and Osmond, 1974:116) has already been discussed, t is not only her who is affected. That continued oppression results in the oppressed blaming themselves means that attempts to mobilise the disabled in efforts to confront marginalisation have first got to challenge their acceptance of this oppression.

Disability at Wits: Academic Environment

Wits, as a university, is first and foremost an academic institution, but disabled students are marginalised from this environment, a consequence of both the physical and social barriers discussed above, as well as their own apathy in challenging these.

Before discussing this academic exclusion, a number of disabled students indicated that they felt isolated at an administrative level, arguing that they found it difficult to negotiate the bureaucratic procedures required, for example to register or obtain student cards. Most focus groups identified the mobility impaired as facing the greatest obstacles, as wheel-chairs do not easily fit into designated queues, users are overlooked by other students, and counters are too high which means a loss of privacy in interactions with staff. So, in the process of entering Wits, disabled students already feel isolated from it. Here too is proof that disabled students are expected to adapt to the environment, and are not absolved of the responsibilities and obligations that those in the sick role enjoy (Nettleton, 1995).

Although the academic environment has been distinguished from the physical, it must be acknowledged that such a disaggregation can at times seem contrived. For example, the fact that noticeboards are largely inaccessible to disabled students contributes to their academic isolation, as they are unaware of meetings and debates, as

well as administrative issues and events. Libraries were also perceived as inaccessible by students for a variety of reasons, most stemming from their physical layout, such as the absence of ramps, turnstile controlled entrances, narrow aisles, high shelves and small shelf numbers. Nevertheless, such physical inaccessibility impacts on some library users, inhibiting them from accessing information necessary for academic integration.

One informant (Wheel-chair user 20) said that she has never been into a library at Wits, and that her friends obtain the information that she needs, which effectively detracts from her academic autonomy. An interactive understanding of disability is needed to understand this example as this wheel-chair user could access the libraries if she wanted to. Other wheel-chair users utilise them, and one focus group member (Wheel-chair Using Informant 19) has repeatedly offered to assist this informant. Instead of assuming responsibility for herself, Informant 20 views her disability from a structuralist understanding, seeing it as the consequence of perceived unconquerable barriers. Thus she is bowing to her oppression, thereby confirming Cross' (1984) prediction that societal oppression means that the affected passively accept their social and in this case academic marginalisation. Note needs to be made that the submission of this wheel-chair user to her oppression is unrelated to institutionalisation, as she was the only survey respondent not to have attended a special school, a consequence of being impaired two years ago. Concurring with Safilios-Rothschild's (1970) rehabilitative model, she is currently adjusting to her new identity as a wheel-chair user, and accepting this is required before taking on responsibility for challenging her oppression.

Computer centres were also perceived as inaccessible for most student respondents. Again students highlighted that if Wits accepts the disabled, it must ensure that they are fully integrated and able to participate. So although the DSP has a computer centre for disabled students, including voice activated computers, and computers with zoom text and voice synthesisers, most students felt that all computer centres should contain such assistive technology, and the fact that they do not was perceived as stigmatisation. Although the expense of installing technology was acknowledged, students saw it as justified because disabled students "want to use whatever resources

are available, so if I'm studying on West Campus, why am I forced to come up to this (East) Campus to be able to write (using a computer) ?" (Blind Informant 6). Anger was also expressed because students are excluded academically as a consequence of the physical inaccessibility of Wits, but that their fees are being used to maintain an environment which effectively excludes them.

The issues raised here relate to discussions above of the tension between the rights of the disabled and perceptions of discrimination. Also pointed to is how structuralist DPI definitions of disability focus on the ways in which individuals are disadvantaged by the environment, with little attention paid to how impairments thwart functioning. The actuality is that disabled students are able to access computers at Wits, just like wheel-chair users can enter Central Block, and so they are accommodated by the university. Yet the recognition of this as accommodation is individually based, with some students denouncing it, claiming it as proof of stigmatisation. This is because such accommodation rests on an essentialist/ structuralist divide. Unlike the NCSNET/NCESS Discussion Document's (1997b) structurally based recommendations that the environment be fully accommodating, the environment of Wits has been partially altered to accommodate disabled students, and they are expected to adapt to this environment. That disabled students perceive such adaptation on their part as discrimination clearly indicates the structuralist paradigm within which they understand their disability, expecting the environment to be altered to fully accommodate them and perceiving this shortfall as discrimination.

Deaf students do not face many of the physical obstacles challenging other disabled students. Achieving social and academic integration is more of a problem for them. The fact that interpreters are often not available means the isolation of deaf students from both lecture and tutorial content, as well as in exams when announcements are made by envigilators. Even when interpreters are present, signing is a slower process than talking, especially when new terms have to be finger spelt. One of the deaf informants (Deaf 15) expressed a fear of asking questions in class as he was unsure if these issues had already been covered in spoken language. Another problem encountered by deaf students was that they are unable to take notes and watch their

interpreter which meant that they, like some partially sighted students, relied on note-takers to obtain a record of lecture and tutorial content. Wheel-chair users also identified note-taking as necessary when they are unable to attend lectures, for example, because a lift or their wheel-chair is broken. Disabled students recognised that their reliance on fellow classmates for notes detracted from their independence and they saw themselves as a "burden" (Partially Sighted Informant 12).

One way to circumvent reliance on fellow class mates is to approach lecturers directly and obtain their help. Forty two percent of survey respondents felt that lecturers accommodated them, being helpful, understanding, co-operative and friendly, quite happily carrying a tape recorder around so students can record lectures, giving out lecture notes and granting extensions to students. Twenty nine percent of respondents felt that one could not generalise, as some lecturers are helpful while others are not, as expressed by one informant (Partially Sighted Respondent 14) "some are terribly understanding and concerned, while others give me the cold shoulder and make me feel I am a burden to them". A further 29% of respondents felt that lecturers did not accommodate them, discriminating for various reasons, showing impatience and a lack of recognition that disabled students have different needs. Discriminatory teaching styles were also alluded to, for example, visually impaired students were excluded from information written on the board or displayed by overhead projector, especially when the lecturer did not read this out, and referred to "this" and "that".

Although the DSP holds disability awareness workshops for lecturers to overcome such discrimination, attendance at these is often low, especially from the Arts Faculty, which is where most disabled students study. When questioned why, one possible explanation offered by both Morgan (1997) and disabled students, was that lecturers "take it for granted that they know how to deal with us" (Blind 5), "which is wrong" according to another student (Blind 6). The truth of this is seen in the tendency for lecturers to generalise the abilities of disabled students on the basis of their past experience. For example, in the partially sighted focus group it was apparent that some informants were more impaired than others, but that lecturers expected them to cope in the same way, and with the same assistance. There is clearly a need on the part of

teaching staff to recognise the uniqueness of each student, and to cater for them, as opposed to expecting students to adapt to their teaching styles. However, this also means that students have to assert their right to be taught and inform lecturers of their needs. While some informants acknowledged this, they located their lack of skills within an essentialist understanding of disability, arguing that they should adapt to the academic environment, and seeing their inability to challenge this as a consequence of their special schooling in which they never learned the skills needed in a mixed class of many learners.

Not only do lecturers not attend disability awareness workshops, there is also a perception by disabled students of departmental 'buck passing', in which some departments do not assume any responsibility for the disabled students studying within them, despite charging them the same as other students. As mentioned, this tendency towards exemption of responsibility was noted in the interview with Charlton (1997), and its manifestation at lower levels is affirmed here. This point was made particularly by visually impaired students who said that when they encounter problems in their academic life, they are often referred to the DSP. One partially sighted student (12) maintained that staff members at Wits "think the DSP is our home and Ruth Morgan our mother, she'll take care of us, they think the DSP can do anything, even if they have the capacity to do something, they still refer us to the DSP". As argued, this view that 'disability belongs with disability' can be traced to a history of institutionalisation which protected the disabled from the 'outside world'. Like the facilitative role played by professionals in rehabilitative models of disability, Morgan is viewed as the professional. As such, it is assumed that she, or subsequent DSP co-ordinators, will have the knowledge and power to integrate the disabled. Unlike a reformed IL paradigm, disabled students are deprived of any autonomy, not seen by departments as able to facilitate their own integration.

Disabled students also don't see themselves as responsible, often not standing up for their right to be included. As has been mentioned, a legacy of special schooling has much to with their lack of confidence and assertiveness, which means they often do not confront the problems they are facing. This was expressed by a partially sighted

student (Informant 12), "I'll give you my own experience, for a first year student who is used to being in a class of thirteen people, to suddenly find yourself in a class of fifty people or more, it's a problem to stand up and say something, especially if it affects you alone". Feelings of shyness and embarrassment were cited by many to explain why they won't stand up for their rights. For instance, a deaf student claimed he did not have the confidence to ask questions in lectures and tutorials, blaming slow and simplified interpretation for not understanding, rather than attributing this confusion to a poor lecturer or tutor.

Fear of repercussions should a challenge be made were also mentioned, especially by albino students. Five of the eight partially sighted focus group members are albino, allowing for a discussion of its effects. These students felt that this "social condition" made them visible or "easy to track" (Partially Sighted Informant 7), and thus vulnerable as there "is nowhere you can hide, you can always be seen, your lecturer can easily mark you, so you don't want to be discriminated in a class because you were thought to be rude" (Partially Sighted Informant 7). Students are referring to the fact that albinos are easily discredited (Goffman, 1963) arising from their visibility. However, less easily discredited people also expressed a fear of asserting their rights as was shown in this focus group when other partially sighted students affirmed the fear felt by albinos.

Instead of assuming responsibility for their academic integration, disabled students see it as 'somebody else's problem'. That it is a staff responsibility was expressed by one student (Blind Informant 3) "I think the question lies with the lecturers, of how serious they are when it comes to the disabled". This view that staff members are responsible for including disabled students academically was further supported in the survey. For instance, one respondent (Blind 2) maintained that blind students should not be penalised for incorrect referencing as nobody taught them how to reference accurately. Instead of assuming responsibility for learning himself, this respondent sees lecturers as obligated to showing him.

Not only are staff members identified as responsible, departments were also held accountable. For instance, blind students blamed the DSP for not preparing written information timeously. As such, they insisted that the departmental procedure of dismissing unprepared students from tutorials be put aside for them as they are not to blame. However, the DSP argues that readings are not prepared as they are not received timeously, so laying the blame on both departments and students. When confronted with this, blind students blamed academic departments for not giving the DSP the information in time for its preparation. This argument is a circular one as nobody will assume responsibility. Yet disabled students are the ones who are affected, which would indicate the need for them to identify themselves as accountable.

Disabled Students Programme

This section will evaluate disabled students' perceptions with regard to the role of the DSP. The main issues discussed are whether the DSP facilitates or inhibits their integration, with regards to two environments. Firstly, the social in which discussion centres around the newly established common room in the DSP corridor, and secondly the academic environment. Also explored is the mediatory role the DSP plays between disabled students and both Wits and South Africa, within its academic environment.

Disabled Students Programme: Physical Environment

When the DSP was started eleven years ago by Kathy Jagoe, it was particularly concerned with addressing the physical inaccessibility of Wits. Despite Charlton's pride (1997) in 'accessibility features' like reachable, brailled lift buttons and noise enhanced pedestrian lights on Yale Road, Wits is still inaccessible to many disabled students. Although one could debate whether some examples indicate felt stigmatisation, it is clear from others that the physical environment of Wits does actually disable students. This means that a number of DSP functions still need to be undertaken, most notably those dealing with physical accessibility problems and inhibitory architectural styles (DSP, 1997). When challenging these, the DSP must be aware that students are disadvantaged by both environmental barriers, and their impairments, and that it must challenge the former when attempting to make Wits more physically accessible. In doing this, it needs to determine whether instances of

disablement are felt or enacted (Scambler, 1984) so that it focuses particularly on the latter. However, the subjectivity of this decision may well alienate the DSP from disabled students as the two have different views of whether students are actually stigmatised, or feel that they are. This point thus underscores the need for disabled students' mobilisation which ensures that they are involved in decisions about whether instances of stigmatisation are felt or enacted, as this will determine which are targeted.

Although the DSP does recognise many of the barriers facing the disabled is clear from both Morgan (1997) and Roberts (1997a), but its confrontational power is constrained by a lack of resources as well as bureaucratic procedures. To illustrate, mention was made above of how the DSP offered to provide transport into town for disabled students. As a consequence of financial constraints, the DSP could only co-ordinate this service, while students, via the DSM, would be responsible for payment. While attempting to integrate students within, and beyond Wits, the DSP requires assistance, particularly from students themselves.

That the DSP is constrained in its efforts to challenge the physical inaccessibility of Wits explains why wheel-chair users are so disparaging of it. As revealed, many of the barriers confronting wheel-chair users are located within the physical environment of Wits, which in turn impact negatively on their integration as a whole. As the DSP is unable to effectively transcend these barriers, the mobility impaired are also constrained socially and academically. Consequently, they blame the DSP for their marginalisation within Wits as a whole. Such blame highlights the 'mothering' role they see the DSP as fulfilling, mediating between them and the rest of Wits. By regarding the DSP in this way, wheel-chair users are effectively absolving themselves of being responsible for challenging the physical barriers they have to transcend to be integrated socially and academically. In addition, by accusing the DSP, wheel-chair users are failing to attack the source of their isolation (financial and bureaucratic constraints) but are instead attacking a sympathetic ally.

Disabled students Programme: Social Environment

The role played by the DSP in promoting or inhibiting the social integration of disabled students proved a hotly debated issue, especially when questions were asked about the newly established DSP common room. Conversations with DSP staff members and students indicated that learners affiliated with the Disabled Students Movement (DSM) initiated the establishment of the common room. Although the DSM is meant to represent all disabled students, being a social club and fundraising mechanism for them, by 1996 it had collapsed concerning these functions. It no longer raised funds, and was dominated by the visually impaired, especially the blind, a consequence of their greater numbers. Thus it was visually impaired students who requested a student common room, claiming that they did not feel accepted or safe enough to go out and socialise with other students (Morgan, 1997). The issue of acceptance has been discussed, with disabled students attributing their isolation particularly to perceptions of prejudicial staff and student attitudes, as opposed to the physical inaccessibility of Wits. Safety has also been alluded to in this report within the context of the physical environment. 'Used as a justification for establishing a common room, it implies that students feel threatened by the mixed environment of Wits, wanting a 'safe place' for themselves. That it is visually impaired students, particularly braille users who wanted a common room indicates that they are the ones who feel the most threatened, yet they are the most defensive about the role played by the DSP and the common room in inhibiting mixed integration.

This protective posture is apparent in the fact that no students indicated a perception of the common room as a secure area, protecting them from a threatening Wits. Instead, three positions were adopted, with the majority of respondents (53%), all visually impaired, maintaining that the DSP was a neutral body, playing no role in their social integration. In their view, such inclusion has more to do with individual personality, so conforming to an essentialist understanding, or individual accountability in which students argued that they get their own friends, and "are responsible for integrating with other people" (Partially Sighted Respondent 11). The latter responses indicate that these students see themselves as responsible for their own socialisation, a

significant finding considering their tendency to observe disability from a structuralist viewpoint. Their conformity to a Postmodern sense of accountability stems from a belief that the DSP is first and foremost an academic department, and has no place beyond this role.

When questioned about the effect of the common room on mixed integration, these respondents maintained that it did not purposely affect such inclusion, and that any indirect effect was positive in that it facilitated mixed interactions, being a place for all students to meet. This view is contradicted by other responses, and the researcher's observation that the common room was frequented by visually impaired students, with deaf, wheel-chair using and non-disabled students not being in attendance at all, proof that the common room is a 'safe place' for disabled students despite their denial.

Forty one percent of survey respondents supported this, indicating that the DSP inhibited mixed integration, while promoting disabled socialisation, "what the DSP achieves is to separate disabled students from other students, it's not open to other students, it's only for disabled students" (Wheel-chair Using Informant 19). Students with this opinion were divided over whether the role played by the DSP in promoting disabled student integration at the expense of mixed interactions was negative or positive. Pessimistic opinions identified the common room as playing an especially inhibitory role, "the DSP common room is creating a community of disabled within the DSP" (Blind Respondent 5), and so they urged for its closure, a position supported by Morgan (1997).

In contrast, positive responses saw the DSP as promoting disabled student solidarity, so facilitating a unified struggle for their rights. The DSP co-ordinated common room is a home away from home in a deaf informant's opinion (16), allowing disabled students to meet and chat, thereby bringing the disabled community closer together. While Morgan (1997) did comment that the common room is used by students with visual, aural and physical impairments, so affirming Informant 16's view that it unites the disabled, this is moderated by the researcher's observations, as well as by a recognition that disabled students are not a unified grouping. Instead tensions within

various subdivisions are found, which could detract from any 'coming together' on their part. As such, the DSP common room can be seen as a haven for certain disabled students, most notably the visually impaired.

The final position, that the DSP actively promotes mixed social integration was made by a deaf student. In his opinion, the DSP allowed disabled students to interact with one another, and "'normal' students to interact with disabled students" (deaf Respondent 18). This opinion was not repeated by any other student, with the DSP seen in either neutral terms, or as an inhibitor to mixed integration, although the effect of this on the unification of the disabled was debated. That only one student identified the DSP as playing a positive part in the mixed integration of disabled students is significant, as this is the role that the DSP has identified for itself. As such, it is soliciting Wits bursary students to undertake tasks within the DSP, as well as pushing disabled students to sort things out for themselves, rather than 'mothering' them. This 'mothering' role has already been mentioned, and can be traced to a legacy of institutionalisation in which the DSP is viewed by various departments as 'The Department' that deals with disability. According to Morgan (1997) students also view the DSP as fulfilling a parental role, being protective and authoritative. An understanding of this mothering role was made at a meeting held for the disabled students in which attempts by Morgan to promote student independence were countered by one learner's shock, expressed thus, "but you can't expect us not to have a mother" (Morgan, 1997). This comment clearly shows disabled students' insecurity, and sows doubt about the view that Black disabled students are more independent than Whites as a consequence of their disadvantaged schooling. Instead, many actively oppose taking responsibility for themselves, and so are not operating within a Postmodern conception of disability which empowers the disabled in attempts to challenge their marginalisation.

Disabled Students Programme: Academic Environment

That students are not assuming responsibility for themselves also means that the DSP has a significant role to play within an academic environment. Here too a debate was waged over whether the DSP facilitates or inhibits academic integration, and for

whom, and a discrepancy was apparent between the survey and focus groups over the role of the DSP at this level. Discussions students indicated that the DSP is dominated by the issues of the blind and partially sighted. But this finding was contradicted in the survey as students with other impairments identified the DSP as facilitating their academic integration. Before exploring this argument more fully, note needs to be made that in contrast to the debate between the mobility and visually impaired, deaf students indicated in both their focus group and the survey that the DSP facilitated their academic integration. Although two deaf informants were included in this research, only one of them is currently studying at Wits (Informant 15). As such the DSP has only to provide one interpreter. Acting as an assistive 'device', this DSP affiliated interpreter links Informant 15 to Wits' academic environment, a role recognised by both deaf students.

While deaf students identified the DSP as facilitating their academic integration, wheel-chair users claimed in their discussion that while the DSP may help other students, most notably those with visual impairments, it does not do much for them. One informant (Wheel-chair User 20) in particular said that she does not rely on the DSP at all, but assumes responsibility for herself, "I never go to the DSP and ask for something, I always do things on my own, so for me it has done nothing". The implication that she is subscribing to an IL paradigm involving personal accountability is undone as Informant 20 is the disabled student who has never entered a Wits library, seeing them as physically inaccessible, passively accepting this perception. In contrast to her claim that the DSP does nothing for her or other wheel-chair users, Informant 20 asserts that "blind students, are the ones who get all that special care, they're the ones who are special". This perception of the DSP as providing specifically for the blind, and more generally for those with partial sight can be explained by the dependence of these students on the DSP. The visually impaired, especially braille users, rely completely on this Department to convert material into an accessible medium for them. In addition, its computer centre is invaluable for their academic integration. This dependence of the visually impaired on the DSP was recognised by a blind survey respondent (7), who said that "if you don't want to be a member of the

DSP, there is no way you will cope as a blind student, maybe with another disability, but it's really for blind students that the DSP facilitates academic integration".

In attempting to answer why this is so, a number of explanations are identified. The greater numbers of visually impaired students means that their issues take precedence. Linked to this is the fact that the DSM is dominated by the visually impaired. While observations of, and questions about the DSM indicate that it is not an established and co-ordinated mouthpiece of those with visual loss, let alone other impairments, its existence alone indicates a degree of organisation. This allows its issues, by implication those of the visually impaired, to be articulated and responded to. That wheel-chair users have not challenged the hegemony of the visually impaired in the DSM, or created their own movement is not clear, especially as two of the focus group members were very charismatic and forceful individuals.

Another reason for the DSP being dominated by the needs of the visually impaired stems from the fact that these fall within the DSP's sphere of influence, while the physical obstacles inhibiting the academic integration of wheel-chair users do not. As a consequence, wheel-chair users were very disparaging of the DSP in their focus group, maintaining that it does nothing for them.

However, this view was repudiated in the survey, so contradicting the view that the DSP is dominated by the needs of the visually impaired. Survey responses indicated that 71% of respondents felt that the DSP allowed disabled students to integrate academically, and 66% maintained that the DSP had facilitated their academic integration. Of these, only 67% of braille users and 71% of partially sighted students said that the DSP enabled them to integrate academically at Wits. Although a majority in both cases, these figures indicate that the role played by the DSP in integrating the visually impaired is not clear-cut. This assertion is further supported because 67% of wheel-chair users claimed that the DSP had facilitated their academic integration in some way, despite assertions to the contrary in their focus group.

These findings indicate either that using qualitative and quantitative research techniques resulted in discrepant findings (Bryman, 1988), or that there is a contradiction in students' understanding of the role played by the DSP. While focus group discussions pointed to a DSP dominated by the needs of the visually impaired, the survey reveals that disabled students perceive the DSP as playing a mediatory role between them and the academic environment of Wits. Assuming that the focus group discussions and survey complement one another (Room, 1984) an explanation accounting for this discrepancy refers to the inferior education of Black disabled learners. The poor quality of education, combined with a lack of facilities, programmes and trained staff has meant that students perceive the DSP as playing an integrative role, as shown in the survey. Yet their disappointment in some of the ways it academically integrates the disabled were uncovered in the focus groups. Specifically, regret was expressed by informants over the failure of the DSP to assume an authoritative and protective role.

The view that students are disappointed by the DSP's failure to 'mother' them is supported by referring to the explanations offered by the 24% of respondents who claimed that the DSP did not facilitate their academic integration, or the integration of other students. In clarifying this, respondents referred to the fact that converted material is often received late, that staff members are incompetent, and that the role played by the DSP in facilitating the academic integration of disabled students is constrained by the prejudicial attitudes of Wits students and staff. Not one response indicated that the DSP does not facilitate their academic integration, or the integration of other students as they can cope without such 'mothering'. Instead these explanations argue that the DSP is failing to provide for disabled students because of inefficiency, incompetence and prejudice.

The above discussion shows that at an academic level, the DSP plays a mediatory role between disabled students and Wits, a role recognised in the Undergraduate Admission Application Booklet (General Information for Applicants, 1998: 17) in which disabled people applying to Wits are assured that the "Disabled Students Programme will make special arrangements to assist any such student who gains admission to the

University...if advised in advance". This mediatory role is further acknowledged in the *Disabled Students Programme 1997 Guide for Lecturers*, in which the DSP sees itself as responsible for facilitating between disabled students and departments, and co-ordinating DSP academically oriented services like reading and brailling programmes, sign language and maths tutorials.

The DSP plays an additional mediatory role, negotiating between disabled students and the broader South African society by means of its bridging programme. According to Roberts (1997b), this is intended particularly for blind and partially sighted students, aiming at getting them to become independent, and proof of claims that the issues of the visually impaired dominate the DSP.

Independence promotion involves teaching students how to:

- Ask relevant questions about their environment
- Use a long cane
- Become computer literate in which they learn keyboard and typing skills, as well as how to use word perfect, the scanner, brailler, zoom text, and printer
- Use cassettes as a study medium

These skills need to be taught at Wits as students do not learn them at school, a consequence of the inferior education offered for disabled learners. Thus, the DSP is bridging the gap between Wits and a broader South African society which does not prepare students adequately for the 'big world', both socially and academically. That the DSP plays this mediatory role further supports the claim that discrepancies in students' perceptions over the role played by the DSP can be attributed to the contrast between their experiences at school and at Wits. Alluding to the oppression resulting from institutionalisation, Roberts (1997b) argues that "(a) philosophy of education needs to be developed where students with special needs are empowered to function as equitable members of society". As discussed, the need for such an education system has been recognised, with the NCSNET/NCESS (1997b:53) recommendation that "lifeskills education be provided at all levels of education". If this is implemented, Wits will no longer have to compensate for the inadequacy of school education.

A final issue considered under this section is whether the mediatory role played by the DSP between disabled students, Wits and South Africa means that the DSP is a 'dumping ground' for disabled students Charlton (1997) was adamant that this was not the case, maintaining that the DSP "is part of the university", playing an assistive and supportive role. A number of disabled students supported this claim, arguing that "if it wasn't for the DSP, if we were acting as individuals, we wouldn't be recognised" (Blind Informant 5), and that when disabled students are referred to the DSP it is a sign that departments "recognise the existence of the DSP, so it's not isolated" (Partially Sighted Respondent 13).

However, Ruth Morgan (1997) questioned this, saying that historically the DSP has been detached from the rest of Wits, and that it is seen by both students and lecturers as playing a mothering role for disabled students. The fact that departments refer disabled students to the DSP on the basis of their disability rather than their grievance is proof, according to her, that the DSP has a tendency to be a 'dumping ground' within Wits. As has been argued, this can be traced back to the institutionalised separation of the disabled from society. However, it is also a consequence of disabled students' acceptance of their oppression. Instead of challenging this as a Postmodern understanding of disability urges them to, they are conforming to essentialist or structuralist conceptions of disability in which they adapt to the environment, or expect the environment to accommodate them.

In an attempt to overcome this 'dumping ground' syndrome, which involves an attitude of "you're disabled, so let that department deal with your grievances" (Morgan, 1997), awareness workshops are conducted for staff. As another example of mediation by the DSP between disabled students and Wits, these attempt to change prejudicial attitudes, and show staff members at all levels how to treat disabled students simply as students (DSP, 1997). The authoritative stance of the DSP is clear as these workshops are co-ordinated by this Department with little student involvement. So although the DSP is attempting to challenge the disablement of impaired students as implied within structuralist understandings of disability, this

endeavour is located within an essentialist paradigm in which the DSP is the professional authority.

One workshop co-ordinated by the DSP was especially ambitious, revealing to the deans and vice-chancellor that the DSP ... not be held predominantly responsible for raising the funds needed to integrate disabled students at Wits. Charlton (1997) recounted this incident, saying that it was "educational...it was ten minutes worth of finding out what it would be like to be blind". Morgan (1997) too spoke about this awareness bid, saying that it "stunned them (the deans and Vice-chancellor) into silence", and that after the "educational ten minutes", there was a suggestion that departments should start assuming more responsibility for disabled students studying under them, and that government must be lobbied for more funding. However, the DSP was identified as the body co-ordinating such fundraising, which indicates that it is still a 'cubby-hole' within which to slot disability issues.

The Desired Situation, 'what should be'

"it's very unwise of the university to be proud of accepting, and of having so many disabled people and the best equipment for them whereas in fact it's not like this. Either the university must stop accepting disabled people or alternatively, they must do as much as they can in order to accommodate them in everything, in every respect"
(Blind Informant 5).

Having described and analysed the situation as it currently exists at the level of South Africa and Wits, this section will explore disabled students' perceptions of what is needed to achieve the desired situation, one of integration and participation within the physical, social and academic environments of Wits.

By exploring students' perceptions of what is needed, the needs analysis component of this research conformed to Witkin et al's (1995) criterion of a valid assessment. As shown in the literature review, a needs assessment is deemed valid if it focuses initially on the primary level, consisting of service receivers. Only once the needs of this level have been evaluated should assessments focusing on service providers and resources be undertaken. Thus, this research can be viewed as providing a foundation for further analyses.

In addition, assessing the needs of disabled students at Wits entailed subscribing to the three stages identified by Witkin et al (1995). As part of the preassessment, DSP registered students were identified as the target group, and an investigation was undertaken about how to contact this group, and obtain data. In the assessment stage, a multiplicity of research techniques were used, so conforming to Kimmel's (1977) recommendation. Analysis of documents, interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation were all embraced to assess the situation as it currently exists at Wits, as well as to formulate a target state. Finally, this ideal situation was evaluated

in a survey, the findings of which are reported here. As such, this section is based predominantly on the twenty one survey responses received, in which students were asked to evaluate suggested solutions in terms of their benefit. Consequently, this section in no way represents the views of all disabled students at Wits.

In attempting to concisely express students' perceptions of this desired situation, the five-point rating scale used in the survey to evaluate how beneficial suggestions were has been collapsed. In this section, the first two and last two options of this measure have been combined, which allows a discussion of whether students identified solutions as not beneficial, or as very beneficial. While most proposals were supported by all disabled students, even though they were aimed at integrating students with one impairment rather than another, differences of significance will be referred to.

Wits: Physical Environment

By asking students to evaluate suggestions aimed at making Wits more physically accessible, the survey was conforming to a structuralist understanding of disability. As such, it recognised that those with impairments, particularly of a visual and physical nature are disabled by material obstacles. While many of the suggestions in the questionnaire were aimed at a particular impairment, unaffected respondents frequently supported these, even though they would not benefit. This indicates that despite differences between impairment defined groupings, disabled students are often aware of the obstacles confronting their peers, and uphold their integration within Wits' physical environment.

To illustrate, suggestions to make access routes around Wits more accessible for disabled students, were positively received, with 80% of respondents indicating that placement areas should be established for mobile obstacles like dustbins and noticeboards and that sound synthesisers be installed on all traffic lights bordering Wits. Although this latter suggestion will only benefit the visually impaired, 67% of wheel-chair users, and half of deaf students identified this as beneficial. Similarly, of the 13 positive responses (64%), for erecting wheel-chair accessible ramps around Wits, 78% of braille users saw this as favourable. Over half of respondents (57%) also

supported closing Yale Road to all motor vehicles, a solution that was seen to be beneficial to braille users in particular, though it was argued that all Wits students would be safer should this proposal be implemented. Marking the edges of stairs so they can be easily seen, was supported by 57% of respondents. While this will only benefit partially sighted students by aiding their depth perception, 44% of braille users, 67% of wheel-chair using, and half of deaf students supported this proposition.

Not all proposals were supported, as was noticed in a number of suggestions, particularly those pertaining to wheel-chair users. For instance, most survey respondents saw no derived benefit from the removal of spring loaded doors and turnstiles from canteen and coffee shop entrances, both of which were identified by wheel-chair users as inhibiting their social integration. A suggestion to transcend the inaccessibility of certain buildings for wheel-chair users was also not resolutely supported. Although focus group discussion highlighted the necessity of lifts for wheel-chair users, only 52% of respondents supported a proposal that more lifts be installed at Wits to ensure that every building and floor at Wits is serviced by a lift. All the wheel-chair users supported this suggestion, while 56% of braille users, 14% of those with partial sight, and no deaf students showed solidarity over the plight of wheel-chair users. This poor support can either be seen as a consequence of a lack of empathy about the obstacles facing the physically disabled, or a result of ignorance. Both of these explanations imply a division within the disabled population along impairment lines. The first points to an antagonism between students, but is not likely considering the support other suggestions received. The second explanation is more probable, but it nevertheless implies a breakdown in communication between disabled students, as some of the obstacles confronted are not well known and so solutions are not supported. While such a communication breakdown does not imply the active antagonism contained within the first explanation, there is an acknowledgement that the disabled student population is divided, and that the needs of the physically impaired are the least recognised. This observation supports the arguments made above that the DSP is dominated by the visually impaired. As a consequence, wheel-chair users are excluded from it, and the barriers they face are not as well known as those obstructing visually impaired students.

Nevertheless, some of the obstacles facing wheel-chair users were recognised as the following two examples show. Firstly, a convincing majority of respondents (76%) supported the suggestion that every building at Wits have a wheel-chair accessible toilet. In addition, recognising that lifts are inaccessible to both the mobility and visually impaired, 61% of respondents supported the lowering of lift button panels so wheel-chair users could easily reach these, with the same percentage of students endorsing the enlargement of lift buttons so they are easily seen by those with limited sight. The issue of brailling lift buttons was also positively responded to, with most respondents (71%) supporting this suggestion, including all but one blind student (Informant 1). As mentioned above, this student recognised that he is disadvantaged by both his impairment and disability, pointing out that brailling lift buttons would still not indicate whether the lift had stopped on the correct floor.

This incident was cited to illustrate the tendency for the disabled, in this case blind students, to insist that the environment be altered to facilitate their complete integration. While these students acknowledged that orienteering familiarised them with lecture and tutorial venues and toilets, they viewed their disability from within a structuralist framework, insisting that assumptions not be made about their mobility. Instead, "everything that can be brailled must be brailled" (Blind Informant 3). However, this assertion was not supported totally in the survey. While 89% of braille users support the brailling of lecture and tutorial numbers (a suggestion that received a support total of 66%), only 56% endorsed brailling the labels of toilets. This suggests that some blind students recognise that their impairment necessitates orientation, but once mastered, the brailling of "everything that can be brailled" (Blind Informant 3) will not accommodate them any more than they already are. In short, they are recognising that they are disadvantaged by both their impairment and disability, a point expressed by a number of students who argued that even if labels for toilets and lecture and tutorial rooms were brailled, they would still not know where to find these brailled notes.

These examples point to a failure of the survey questionnaire to adequately distinguish between impairment and disability, and to acknowledge that both disadvantage the individual. Such a recognition was facilitated by the partial administration of the survey by the researcher. Interacting with respondents, especially blind students, allowed them to criticise suggestions made, these faults arising as a consequence of the disadvantages associated with being blind. As this interaction was not replicated with other disabled students, apart from one partially sighted respondent (10), distinctions between impairment and disability were not obtained from them, which explains their absence from this report.

As deaf students are not constrained by the physical accessibility of Wits, the focus of this section has been on the needs of the mobility and visually impaired. As argued throughout, wheel-chair users are especially constrained by physical obstacles, which impact negatively on their social and academic integration. That these obstacles are not being sufficiently challenged by the DSP has been traced to bureaucratic and financial constraints. The significance of these are reinforced in this section as the implementation of most of the wheel-chair user oriented proposals involve major structural changes. As such, removing turnstiles and spring loaded doors, and installing ramps, lifts and wheel-chair friendly toilets require administrative consent, and financial resources. In attempting to challenge the physical inaccessibility of Wits wheel-chair users need to be aware that Wits itself is structurally constrained.

However, challenges aimed at barriers in the physical environment of Wits are not only bureaucratically and financially constrained. Many of the obstacles identified, especially by the partially sighted, could easily and cheaply be transcended. A can of paint is all that is required to mark the edges of steps, enlarge the numbers of lecture and tutorial venues or write men and women on toilet doors as the partially sighted are not able to differentiate between the symbols for male and female. The simplicity of these solutions points to both negative staff attitudes towards the disabled, as well as a lack of communication between staff and students, both of which have been discussed. Such discrimination and unknowingness points yet again to the necessity for disabled students to be involved in promoting awareness of their experience and needs, as this

section has attempted to do. Although it conforms to a structuralist understanding of disability, Postmodern conceptions of the disabled as the experts are also contained within this discussion of what students' perceive as needed within Wits' physical environment. As such, the disabled are viewed as the specialists, knowing the solutions to the obstacles they encounter.

Wits: Social Environment

Drawing on an interactive view of disability, discussions pertaining to the social integration of disabled students at Wits identified a role for both the students and the broader social context. As shown, discriminatory staff and student attitudes were identified as a greater inhibitor to disabled integration than was the physical environment. In many cases such negative attitudes are a consequence of ignorance. An interactive understanding of disability identifies disabled students as being accountable for this lack of knowledge by not promoting awareness of their experiences and needs. Such awareness promotion can occur informally in interpersonal interactions, or in more formalised seminars.

Hurst (1996) has promoted the efficacy of awareness workshops in overcoming discriminatory attitudes, raising a number of questions about them. One of these is 'who is being targeted?'. With regards to DSP co-ordinated workshops, the answer is lecturers, but a problem encountered is that many do not attend these workshops. A possible solution is that participation be made mandatory for either staff, students or both. While Hurst has questioned the effectiveness of this, 43% of disabled students indicated that all staff members should attend workshops on a compulsory basis, while just 19% said that only employees having contact with disabled students should attend workshops on a mandatory basis. This discrepancy stems from an 'investment view' of awareness by disabled students in which they argued that although many staff members do not at present have dealings with disabled students, they may have in the future, and should be educated prior to such interactions. As such, students are answering a second question raised by Hurst, namely 'should awareness workshops be held before or after meeting with disabled people ?'.

Suggestions that student attendance at awareness workshops be made mandatory received little support. Only 29% of respondents felt either that all Wits students or only bursary students having dealings with disabled learners should attend. In contrast to the more formal approach to altering staff attitudes, disabled students maintained that changing the attitudes of fellow students was their responsibility, having little or nothing to do with Wits or the DSP. Discussed more in the next section, this finding suggests the appropriation of responsibility by disabled students. Similar to the view expressed by students that they are responsible for making their own friends independently of the DSP, here too is the endorsement of a Postmodern conception of accountability.

Assuming responsibility for altering fellow student attitudes towards disability was moderated by a suggestion in the focus group for blind students that the DSP make use of nationally recognised days, for example National Disability Day (19 September this year), to co-ordinate a disability open day. In students opinion, this would facilitate mixed social integration and the promotion of awareness, and was supported by 76% of survey respondents. While disabled students would be involved in such an attempt, they do not see themselves as co-ordinating it, but place this facilitative role in the hands of a 'mothering' DSP.

Wits: Academic Environment

The academic integration of disabled students at Wits is influenced by both the physical environment, and their need for assistance. Lazzaro's (1993) definition of assistive technology as any mechanism facilitating the independent acquisition of information is a useful one. As references to interpreters have done, personnel will also be referred to as assistive devices, thereby recognising that people can also play an assistive role. That disabled students viewed support from people as a detraction from their independence needs noting as this meant their greater support for technology.

Before exploring how the physical environment as well as the need for aid impact on academic integration, perceptions by disabled students of their isolation from administrative procedures will be discussed. As pointed out, a number of disabled

students felt excluded from Wits prior to accessing its academic environment, with the focus group discussions for the visually impaired identifying wheel-chair users as the most affected. A suggestion made to overcome this isolation was that disabled students be granted concessions when it came to bureaucratic administrative procedures. In effect, this proposal was asking students whether they wanted to reject the responsibilities and obligations they, like other Wits students assume. While acquiescence would ultimately isolate disabled students from the rest of Wits, 67% of survey respondents felt that disabled students should be granted concessions. That two thirds of respondents supported this suggestion indicates their perception that the disabled should be granted the special concessions associated with the sick role (Nettleton, 1995).

A significant finding was the discrepancy between the focus groups and survey with regards to the obstacles facing wheel-chair users at an administrative level. Only one third (33%) of wheel-chair users identified the need for special concessions here, although the focus groups identified them as being the most influenced, a consequence of narrow queuing areas, fellow students' discrimination and high counters which detract from their privacy. This reaffirms the argument above, that students with different impairments are not always aware of the obstacles confronting others, proof of a communication breakdown along impairment lines.

With regard to physical features, the potential of noticeboards for the academic, and social integration of the disabled was not emphatically recognised, with only 57% of respondents saying that noticeboards should be set aside for the disabled. Those not supporting this option felt that notices placed on other noticeboards would not be posted on those set aside for the disabled, a consequence of apathy and ignorance on the part of Wits staff and students. By blaming the rest of Wits, these students dismiss what could potentially include them, although requiring their involvement in promoting the full use of noticeboards. In short, they are quick to blame others for faults that they also exhibit.

Of those who indicated support for designated noticeboards, 80% said notices should be placed at a lower level, 81% supported enlarging the text of these notices, while 83% maintained that notices placed on designated boards should be brailled. Students supporting the designation of noticeboards catering for the disabled acknowledged the need for placed notices to be in an accessible medium. Thus, they confirm Sheffield Hallam's (1994) identification of accessible information as contributing to their independence.

Arising from the inaccessibility of Wits libraries, most proposed solutions received conclusive support. With regards to assistive technology, the needs of partially sighted students were recognised with 76% of respondents supporting the installation of zoom text on library computers. Although this proposal implies financial outlay, the installation of paper guides on photocopy machines which clearly show the placement direction of material being copied is not. Supported by 66% of respondents, implementing this would greatly enhance the independence of partially sighted students. In contrast to the researcher's original understanding of the problems encountered while photocopying, it appears that students with partial sight are able to distinguish the buttons to push on photocopy machines, but are unable to discern where to place papers for copying. As these students rely completely on photocopiers to make readings accessible by enlarging them, this suggestion would mean their freedom from the DSP photocopier which currently caters for them.

However, just 57% of respondents felt that library shelf numbers should be enlarged particularly for the partially sighted, although wheelchair using students would also benefit. In comparison to the 67% of wheel-chair users who supported this proposal, only 43% of partially sighted students identified this as beneficial. From the survey, it appears that enlarging library shelf numbers will not greatly advantage students with partial sight, despite assertions to the contrary in focus group discussions. This discrepancy could also be attributed to the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in this research (Bryman, 1988). However, as the two can act as "useful correctives of each other" (Room, 1984:173), another explanation is that partially sighted students are not homogeneously affected. As such, only those with extremely

limited vision identified this proposal as beneficial. Arising from the limitation of surveys (McNeill, 1985) this could not be confirmed.

Most (76%) survey responses sympathised with the problems the blind have in accessing academic information. This was shown by endorsing the suggestion that networks be established between Wits libraries and the South African National Library for the blind so that brailled material could be easily accessed. This proposal was originated in the focus group for blind students on the understanding that libraries would assume this responsibility, and not the DSP as it is already overworked in converting course handouts and reading packs. Again supporting an argument throughout, this shows that students do not see themselves as responsible for their academic integration. Instead they identify other structures as having the capacity to include them, thereby viewing their disability within a structuralist viewpoint in which the environment must alter to accommodate them.

Argued above, personnel can also be viewed as a link between the disabled and their environment. As some students argued that using personnel as opposed to technology detracted from their independence, they supported the latter more, at least in discussions. However, this is not adequately reflected from the survey as questions were posed as additive, and not as either, or. Nevertheless, 85% of respondents felt that a librarian whose job description included helping disabled students should be employed in each library, while only 56% identified Wits bursary students as being able to help disabled students access libraries. The justification for this differential support was that bursary students have the same demands and pressures on them as do disabled students, and so empathy was expressed to fellow students. Another explanation is that students are criticised for shoddy work. Not taking pride in what they do was levelled at bursary students who read material onto cassette for the DSP. Disabled students argue that such readers merely clock up the hours with little regard for the work undertaken in that time. As a consequence of this experience, these respondents rejected making use of bursary aided learners to assist them in libraries.

Although the DSP has a computer centre, a point made was that any facilities, including computer centres, should be accessible to all disabled students and suggestions made here received the most unanimous support. However, some of the findings in this discussion are flawed by a previously mentioned criticism of the survey, that it did not distinguish between the disadvantages associated with impairment and those with disability. As such, it included suggestions on ways to make Wits fully accessible to the disabled, without acknowledging that the impairments of students also inhibit their functioning. As a consequence, the survey has a tendency of being a wish list in which students indicated support for any proposal which could enhance their functioning without considering the consequences of its implementation. The truth is that all disabled students are accommodated within the DSP computer centre, with computers containing the technology required for disabled students' independence. Despite this accommodation by the DSP, 67% of respondents wanted zoom text to be installed on computers in centres, a suggestion that would benefit partially sighted students. While there was a tendency in the focus group to insist that all computers be kitted with zoom text, a moderated view is that one or two computers in centres have this technology installed.

Although 71% of respondents supported the installation of a voice synthesiser and voice recognition system on one computer in each computer centre at Wits, these suggestions illustrate the tendency for the disabled to insist that the environment be altered to accommodate them without acknowledging that they are disadvantaged by their impairments. Not only did they question why only one computer in each centre be fitted with this technology, thereby denying the costs involved, students also ignored the disruptive influence of such technology on other learners. Both of these assistive advances make use of sound. While voice synthesised technology could be silenced by earphones, voice activated computers require the user to speak out loud, so requiring that separate cubicles be built containing such technology. However, the creation of niches containing technologically enhanced computers will detract from the mixed integration of learners in computer centres as disabled students would still be separated from their non-disabled peers.

The final suggestion with regards to computer access also received overwhelming support. Eighty percent of respondents endorsed the proposal that greater use be made of information technology. That all braille users identified this option as a necessity stems from the fact that computers and information technology like the Internet and e-mail represent a break from written material for them, so heralding their independence from readers who convert material. With information technology, blind students can easily access computed information, an invaluable advance in an academic environment. Another attraction is that this information is frequently updated meaning that disabled students, particularly those with visual impairments, have access to the most recent data, so transcending their dependence on the outdated cassettes and brailled material they usually rely on. Mobility impaired students would also benefit from such technology as they could obtain valuable information independently of the physical environment. Providing they could access a computer centre, they could obtain such information. E-mail access would also inform disabled students of social and academic events happening at Wits. Such information is usually posted to all user addresses, which would include disabled students. In short, making greater use of information technology would allow impaired students to transcend much of their disablement within an academic environment. This is partly because information is in an accessible medium, however, such technology also detracts from the individual, making users faceless. As a consequence, the impairments of students would not be recognised, and so prejudice, felt or enacted, would not be an issue.

Accessing lecture and tutorial content was also shown to be an obstacle facing both deaf and visually impaired students, most notably the partially sighted. As such, they made up the bulk of the 61% of respondents who supported the reservation of front row seats for disabled students. Not only would this allow blind students to supervise the recording of lecture content, the deaf and partially sighted would be closer to written notes on the blackboard and overhead. Many of the students who supported this suggestion did so on the understanding that front row seats be reserved for disabled students if they request this, although they themselves would not derive any benefit. Thus, disabled students are seen as responsible for securing a favourable seat, instead of automatically accessing this on the basis of their impairment.

Discriminatory teaching styles have already been alluded to, and students expressed optimism that workshops would promote awareness of the problems disabled students encounter in lectures and tutorials. This entailed lecturers not referring to "this" and "that", but describing these, as well as spelling out new words both verbally and on the board for the deaf and visually impaired. Students also expressed optimism that these workshops would facilitate the recognition by staff that disabled students may require extra tuition. Sixty six percent of respondents felt that consultations in addition to mainstream lectures and tutorials should be arranged if needed.

The assistive role played by people was also recognised with regards to accessing lecture and tutorial content. That deaf students are denied access to these was recognised in that 67% of survey responses supported their need for sign language interpreters. Although this suggestion will only benefit the hearing impaired, 78% of braille users, 43% of those with partial sight, and 67% of wheel-chair users supported this suggestion, so affirming the view that students do support one another providing they have knowledge of the barriers inhibiting those with different impairments.

Another obstacle faced by both the deaf and partially sighted are the difficulties in recording lecture and tutorial content. Yet only 57% of respondents identified the presence of note-takers as being of benefit, with blind students not supporting this suggestion at all. Such a lack of support can be explained by braille users belief that the partially sighted should record lectures as they do. It is also proof that braille users are unaware of the problems facing students with other impairments, in this case the deaf, who are unable to both observe an interpreter and take notes.

While the difficulties facing the hearing impaired in converting verbal communication into written information was not emphatically recognised, the problem confronting the visually impaired when accessing written information was. Eighty six percent of respondents indicated that considerable benefit would be derived from having readers converting written material onto tape. While such support reflects the fact that 16 of

the 21 survey respondents (76%) are visually impaired, it also reflects the knowledge that students with other impairments have of the obstacles confronting these students.

Students were also asked whether note-takers and readers should be a friend, a fellow class-mate, a bursary student, or an employee of Wits. In light of the criticism made against students regarding their shoddy work, it was expected that most would support hiring staff. Indeed this option received the most support, followed at a distance by the suggestion that bursary students be used to undertake these functions. That students wanted readers and note-takers to be paid for their work is clear from their support of bursary students over a friend or classmate assuming these tasks. In this way students are attempting to overcome the perception that they are a "burden" (Partially Sighted Informant 12), maintaining that these tasks should be rewarded.

As above, this section has also shown that while students with impairments are disabled by the environment, such a structuralist understanding of disability allows these barriers to be overcome. Not only does this involve altering the physical environment, the crucial role played by assistive technology and personnel needs to be recognised when attempting to integrate disabled students academically.

Responsibility

Bearing in mind that the theoretical framework within which this research is located is an adapted IL paradigm, an assumption made was that disabled students would locate the solution to barriers within themselves. That this was not the case, has been alluded to where applicable, so supporting the observation made by Morgan (1997), "most of the (disabled) students (at Wits) are in the mindset of blaming, they are not in a position to take responsibility for themselves...We are still dealing with the aftermath of the welfare model, and Wits students still see themselves as the victims".

The truth of this statement, which points to the structuralist paradigm within which disabled students view their disability, was reflected in the survey. Instead of assuming responsibility for themselves, disabled students identified the Government and Wits as playing a crucial role in their integration. Before discussing this, and the role that disabled students envisage for themselves, two observations need to be noted that problematise disabled students' identification of the Government and Wits as involved in their integration.

Firstly, these were perceived in both the focus groups and survey as monolithic institutions that exist 'out there'. As a result, there was little understanding by many of the students that these institutions have their own agendas, procedures, and are themselves structurally constraine Secondly, and linked to the first observation, was that many disabled students did not comprehend that implementing changes requires a sequence of events involving consultation and co-ordination. Instead, they felt that if Wits wanted to make itself more accessible to them, it would go ahead and make the changes needed. So there was little questioning of where resources would come from, and who would actually implement changes. This point has been suggested already, by referring firstly, to the closure of Yale Road. As shown, focus group respondents expressed great anger that more was not done to control traffic, and they blamed Wits Administration for this failure, not realising that this decision was beyond Wits, resting instead within Government. Secondly, the anger expressed by wheelchair users

towards the DSP over the physical inaccessibility of Wits was shown as unjustified as it failed to consider bureaucratic and financial constraints. These two examples point firstly, to the need for greater communication between students and those in management positions Secondly, they urge disabled students to assume responsibility, even if this involves empowering themselves with knowledge, and becoming aware that Wits and the Government are not independent institutions.

Focus group discussions indicated that disabled students perceived the government as a funder, providing the money for changes to be implemented. In keeping with the observation that disabled students are not aware of the constraints on Government, this view sidelines the reality of competing demands, especially in a post-apartheid society in which a democratic Government is expected to redress the inequalities of the past. Disabled students' failure to comprehend this is revealed in their identification of the Government as being primarily responsible for two options that they are currently expected to finance.

Eighty one percent of respondents maintained that the Government should pay for their studies. Currently disabled students have to obtain loans, bursaries and scholarships to pay their fees, and where these cannot be accessed the student is either forced to end her/his education, or pay for her/his studies, as two disabled students are currently doing. It was felt by a number of informants that as part of redressing the inequalities of the past, the government should focus on those who have been historically marginalised, like the disabled, when providing loans, bursaries and scholarships. For example, one informant (Blind Respondent 6) said that "when the ANC (African National Congress) came into power it promised the disadvantaged it would assist us". This quote highlights the tendency for disabled students to ignore that the Government has many pressing demands made on it, not least are those pertaining to life-threatening conditions, for instance infant mortality. Nevertheless, governmental assistance for disabled people was justified by students because education and training provide the disabled with "freedom and humanity"(Deaf Informant 16).

Secondly, 71% of respondents said that the government must provide the assistive devices needed for independent living, like wheel-chairs, canes, magnifying glasses and hearing aids. Currently, and congruent with the findings of a study done in KwaZulu Natal (DART, 1997), students are responsible for providing these. Their identification of the government as playing a funding role further affirms DART's findings, with subjects in that study justifying governmental involvement by referring to the high costs of assistive technology. However, state responsibility is complicated according to DART (1997) because of a lack of policies, procedures and funding. So despite insistence by the disabled of governmental input, it is likely that the disabled will have to continue providing independence promoting assistive technology themselves.

The above discussion indicates that disabled students want to absolve themselves of two of the functions they are currently accountable for. By identifying the government as responsible for paying their fees and providing independence promoting assistive devices, students are rejecting an adapted IL paradigm. As such, they are not assuming responsibility for making themselves more independent either through education or technology. In keeping with a structuralist paradigm, disabled students see the environment and structures within it as having to change in order to accommodate them. While these can be altered, there is a tendency for the disabled to be viewed as victims within such an understanding. That disabled students perceive themselves thus is clear from their justification for state assistance, that the government is obligated to helping them as they are a historically marginalised grouping within society.

That Wits has an obligation to provide for the students studying within it has been argued by a number of knowledgeable people (Bizos, 1996; McClain, 1996; Morgan, 1997). This is especially true because "a university, financed by public funds, has an obligation to apply the equality clause and non-discrimination doctrine to those who knock on its doors" (Bizos, 1996:4). Charlton (1997) also recognised that Wits has to strike a balance between disabled students' constitutional right to education, as well as their right to be fully accommodated within a learning environment. So although Wits

would never turn down an eligible disabled student, acceptance depends on whether s/he can be accommodated.

That disabled students feel they are not has been shown, although it is debatable whether all instances of discrimination are actual or felt. Irrespective, and in keeping with their structuralist understanding, disabled students identified Wits as playing a role in ensuring their full participation. As mentioned, disabled students maintained that Wits has a role to play as a trend setter within the community. As an agent of change it is responsible for ensuring that Wits is representative of a broader South African context (McClain, 1996). However, it also has other tasks to implement, dealing specifically with the academic integration of disabled students.

While the government was seen as responsible for providing the devices needed for independent living, Wits was identified by 76% of respondents as having to provide the technology needed for their academic integration. While the NCSNET/NCESS Discussion Document (1997b) argues that the Department of Education should fund such technology, disabled students do not question where Wits will obtain the money for this. Further supporting this observation of the way in which disabled students sideline structural constraints, 81% of respondents saw Wits as responsible for making the physical environment accessible, and 86% said that Wits should provide the personnel needed for greater integration. As can be seen, there is little comprehension on the part of most disabled students that Wits, like the government, is a bureaucracy with clearly differentiated roles and procedures which limit transformative efforts.

While the tasks identified for Wits by disabled students display an ignorance of such constraints, they are understandable. Providing staff and academically oriented assistive technology, as well as altering the environment are all concerned with making Wits, as an academic institution, more academically integrative. In addition, these options all require funding which is beyond disabled students' means. As such, their exemption of responsibility from these tasks was expected.

However, that 71% of respondents named Wits as responsible for changing staff attitudes towards disability is significant. Disabled students are effectively absolving themselves, the experts, from promoting awareness about disability. As such they are indirectly answering a question posed by Hurst (1996) in which he asks 'who should present disability awareness workshop ?' The answer is clearly that disabled students do not identify themselves as providers, an issue discussed more below.

Although an attempt was made in the survey to move away from a monolithic understanding of Wits by disaggregating it, the tendency within the survey was to identify the DSP as playing a central role. In all four of the areas that Wits must assume responsibility for, the DSP was identified as the Department through which to affect changes. Despite this, there was no indication of where the resources needed would come from. Although McClain (1996:7) warns against it becoming a "dumping ground for all matters pertaining to disability", this further confirms a 'cubby-hole' view of the DSP, into which disability issues are slotted. As shown, such a perception of the DSP is made within all levels of Wits, from upper management down to lecturers. Consequently, there is little comprehension by staff of the constraints limiting the DSP as a Department within Wits, itself a structurally constrained institution. That students also subscribe to this 'narrow' view of the DSP has been argued. Instead of assuming responsibility for themselves, they see the DSP as in a position of authority, facilitating their integration at Wits.

This structurally based conception by students is confirmed when considering the role disabled students envisage they should play in facilitating their own integration. According to the survey, they are responsible only for changing student attitudes towards disability. So while every survey respondent urged that disabled students be involved in awareness campaigns, it seems that such involvement refers only to students and not staff, with the DSP identified as the Department through which to affect changes in staff attitudes. Thus, it seems that staff members are located outside of disabled students' perceived sphere of influence, providing an explanation for the low attendance by disabled students at awareness workshops for staff. If students feel

helpless in affecting the attitudes of those with more power, they will not attend workshops aimed at such people.

Disabled students focus on fellow learners in no way upsets the status quo, as these students are in a similar position to the disabled with regards to power within the Wits hierarchy. While a blind student in the focus group questioned "would we be listened to" (Blind Informant 2) when attempting to promote the rights of disabled people, findings indicate that disabled students feel their voices will be heard by fellow students, but not by those higher up in power.

Having seen that the majority of disabled students identify only a small role for themselves within integrative attempts, one needs to question why this is so. Part of an explanation is definitely located within a history of institutionalisation and isolation, leading one informant to say that when he is at Wits, "the only people who can make me feel comfortable are the people that I share the same disability with" (Blind Informant 5). That confidence and assertiveness are needed to change attitudes and promote awareness has been made consistently throughout this report. The absence of these by learners has been traced to inferior special schooling in which adequate life skills are not taught.

Another factor is that disabled students are not unified in their efforts. Naturally each student is a unique individual with his or her own history, but what is striking are the divisions within this group along lines of impairment, also attributed to special schooling (Roberts, 1993). So while disabled students recognised that promoting mixed integration and participation require unity on their part, they felt this was unlikely as "there is no way that we being separated can be united" (Blind Informant 2). To illustrate, it became apparent in the focus group for braille users that there was a division between this group of students and those with partial sight, with one braille user (Blind Informant 3) arguing that "these partially sighteds, really, I don't see any use for them to call themselves disabled people, if this department (the DSP) was managed by me, I would have chased all of them out". Highlighting his point he tells how Christmas Nyikila, a braille user, stood for the Student Representative Council in

an effort t. ush for the rights of disabled students, but that "the only people that were there to support him were the totally blind students" (Blind Informant 3). Antagonism between wheel-chair users and the visually impaired have also been discussed, further affirming that the disabled student population at Wits is divided.

These divisions are not only a consequence of the separation of learners in special schools. Instead, sub-groupings can also be attributed to competition between students. In a situation of budgetary constraints, it is likely that impairment defined divisions between students will increase as they compete for scarce resources. That fina k e being reduced could mean that needs with 'cheap' solutions are prioritised, so alienating wheel-chair users in particular, as the solutions to the obstacles inhibiting them are costly.

Divisions within the student population is also a consequence of the fact that each impairment involves separate issues and experiences. While there is a tendency to see disabled students as a unified group who agree on things, "it does not happen, in fact we have a lot of fights...there are groups, the partially sighted students, they are a group, and the totally blind students, they are a group, and us, we are a group", (Wheel-chair Using Informant 19).

One of these fights involved the provision of transport, an incident evoking great anger for wheel-chair users. As mentioned, the DSP offered to co-ordinate the provision of transport for disabled students, particularly the blind and mobility impaired, but that the DSM rejected this proposal. The reason for wheel-chair users' anger was not so much a consequence of their needs being over-ridden, but that they were not even consulted, and so had no say in this decision, made instead by the visually impaired as they dominate the DSM.

This example also highlights the fact that some disabled students are more politically motivated and actively involved in promoting their rights than others. Even if the DSM represents the rights of the visually impaired, wheel-chair using students could still have been informed of this suggestion if they had been in contact with the DSP,

finding out what initiatives are being suggested, and making their needs known. Such differences in political activity were recognised by an informant (Wheel-chair user 19), "I'll be straightforward, once somebody stands up and does something, the rest sit down...we all think that disabled students have reached a consensus, we don't, if you stand up and start doing things, everybody sits down and the university thinks you're nuts, I mean you (are seen as being) the only one with a problem, others are satisfied. That's the truth, we don't come together as one group".

Another reason for not uniting in efforts is that disabled students have bowed to their marginalisation. In illustrating this, informant 20 was referred to, and her passivity in the face of oppression is clear as she explains why she does not challenge her isolated status, "I don't like it, but there is nothing I can do". Thus, the more excluded disabled students are from the physical, social and academic environments at Wits, the more acceptable this position becomes. In effect, isolation implies acceptance, which results in further exclusion.

Challenging these perceptions of helplessness has been identified as one of the major tasks confronting disability movements. This is clearly needed at Wits, but will not be undertaken by the DSM unless it recognises that the disabled have the power to challenge their oppression. The tendency for disabled students to expect Wits, via the DSP, to accommodate them is reflected in the DSM, for instance in its apathy in raising the funds needed for transport. However, that it has the potential to promote the rights of the disabled is illustrated by the establishment of the DSP common room being initiated by the DSM.

This discussion of responsibility shows that disabled students do not conform to an adapted IL paradigm which sees them as responsible for challenging their oppression. For the most part, they view their disability from a structural point of view, blaming the environment for their disadvantages. This is significant as the students who contributed to this research are assumed to be the most mobilised considering their involvement. This implies that even the most conscientised students at Wits still do not see themselves as responsible for challenging their disablement, arguing that the

environment must alter instead. While there are a number of reasons for this, a recognition on their part that the environment will not change without their mobilisation is crucial for them to challenge their oppression. Although a minority, a few students involved in the focus groups and survey recognised this. As such, the continued marginalisation of the disabled at Wits could increasingly be challenged if these students can convince others to not "hide behind your disability, but take responsibility for your own life" (Deaf Informant 16).

The interactive nature of disability has been constantly referred to in exploring disabled students' experience of disability. Located within a reformed IL paradigm, such a conceptualisation facilitated an exploration of the ways in which the impaired are disabled within the physical, social and academic environments of South Africa, Wits and the DSP. It also provides the disabled with the autonomy to promote or inhibit their integration within these environments. Such independence proved central in assessing the needs of disabled students at Wits, allowing them to be the experts in deciding what changes are needed. A reformed IL paradigm also formed the backdrop for evaluating students' perceptions of who should assume responsibility for making Wits more accommodating.

As shown, the marginalised status of the disabled is the result of both environmental barriers and apathy on their part. The physical, social and academic environments do inhibit those with impairments, although it is debatable if this is actual or perceived. However, by failing to assume responsibility for challenging environmental barriers, insisting that the environment change to accommodate them, the disabled are colluding in their own oppression.

Conclusion

Exploring the interactive experience of disability at Wits required the inclusion of three sociological traditions, essentialism, structuralism and peculiarism. These were synthesised in an adapted IL paradigm in which disablement was seen as the consequence of both environmental barriers and individual choice. Essentialist approaches facilitated an exploration of how disabled students are expected to adapt to the physical, social and academic environments of Wits. Including this tradition also facilitated an examination of the effects of institutionalisation, particularly special schooling. The ways in which disabled students are impeded by environmental barriers could be studied by embracing structuralism. Structuralist understandings also allowed an exploration of disabled students' perceptions of disability. Finally, Postmodernity was included to transcend the one-sided view of disability implied within structuralism. By including this tradition, disabled students were provided with the autonomy to challenge their marginalisation, or to accept this oppression.

The view that disability is a dialogue between the disabled individual and a broader social context formed the foundation of this research, and was included in a two dimensional model of analysis. As shown in figure 1, this facilitated an exploration of the interaction between the physical, social and academic environments of South Africa, Wits and the DSP as perceived by disabled students.

Exploring this interaction entailed locating Wits and disabled students within a democratic South Africa. While a new legal framework and policies protect the disabled, these have not been practically realised. As a consequence of incomplete legislation and increasing demands made on the Government, coinciding with budgetary constraints, disabled South Africans are still marginalised physically, socially and academically. While an interactive view of disability includes challenges to marginalising barriers, the efficacy of such attempts are undermined by a legacy of apartheid and institutionalisation, particularly specialisation. These divided society into Black and White, disabled and non-disabled, as well as separated the latter along impairment lines. Consequently, impaired South Africans are not united in efforts challenging their disablement.

This finding was reiterated at Wits, and partly explains why disabled students are marginalised at this level. However, to fully understand this exclusion of disabled learners requires the inclusion of an interactive view of disability. This facilitates an understanding that both the physical, social and academic environments of Wits, as well as disabled students are to blame.

Subscribing to an essentialist view, Wits expects the disabled to adapt to its environments. This observation is reflected within Wits' policy documents which reveal that while disability is mentioned, the emphasis is more on race and gender issues. The physical inaccessibility of Wits can be traced to an essentialist understanding of disability in which those with impairments are expected to adapt to this environment. Such a conception exempts Wits from assuming responsibility for accommodating its disabled learners as it implies that they are at fault for not adapting to the environment. The essentialism of institutionalisation is also observed in the social environment of Wits, manifest in the attitude that disability belongs with disability. As a consequence, the DSP is perceived as the Department dealing with disability issues. This attitude means that the DSP plays a 'mothering' role in facilitating the academic integration of disabled students. In this way, the disabled are denied autonomy within Wits, so while they are expected to adjust to the environment, this adaptation is facilitated by the DSP.

As mentioned, an interactive view of disability identifies disabled students as colluding in their marginalisation. Yet they fail to acknowledge this in their structurally aligned understanding of disability. Consequently, they view themselves as the victims of structural barriers, and criticise Wits for accepting, but not accommodating them. As such, they insist that Wits change to ensure their integration within its physical, social and academic environments. This transformation is perceived by students as taking place under DSP supervision. Thus, disabled students also identify the DSP as an authority on disability, and a link between themselves and Wits.

As shown above, while Wits and disabled students differ in their understandings of disability, both identify the DSP as an authoritative and protective mediator between them. This means that the DSP is attempting to intervene between the essentialist understandings embraced by Wits, as well as the structuralist views held by disabled students. As such, it help students adapt to the physical, social and academic environments of Wits, while at the same time challenging barriers within them.

This 'mothering' role by the DSP has meant that it is a cubby-hole within which to slot disability issues. Neither Wits or students assume responsibility for integrating the disabled, although both have a part to play. That Wits and disabled students recognise this role is urged by the researcher.

Wits, by accepting disabled students, is obliged to accommodate them. Thus, it must recognise that while disabled students are adapting, they are isolated from its physical, social and academic environments. Undertaking a formal assessment to identify the needs of disabled students would allow Wits to prioritise what changes to make. As only a third of DSP registered students involved themselves in this project, the findings in no way represent the views of all disabled students at Wits. While this study highlights points of interest, it should be seen as indicating areas requiring further investigation.

The researcher also recommends that disabled students recognise that they are autonomous agents, capable of challenging their marginalisation. This entails transcending the effects of apartheid, institutionalisation and specialisation, and uniting in efforts to promote their integration. So although there are many reasons for why the disabled at Wits are separated, they need to identify reasons justifying their unification. A significant reason is that unity will strengthen their voice as they challenges their oppression.

In short, disabled students have to assume responsibility, and recognise that their failure to see themselves as accountable for their marginalised status is the greatest obstacle to their integration within Wits. Unless they assume responsibility for

challenging their oppression, they will continue to be marginalised. Accountability on their part involves promoting an appreciation of their experiences and needs, by communicating with Wits staff and students. Not only will this transcend ignorance-based discrimination. Students will also realise that their accommodation within Wits is structurally constrained, and not a consequence of prejudicial attitudes.

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Appendix A

"Assistive Technology Catering for Visual, Aural and Mobility Impairments" (Source: Lazzaro, 1993).

For People with Visual Impairments

- **Speech synthesisers**
  Allow computers to speak out loud
- **Magnification systems**
  Enlarge the text displayed on computer screens and printed text. A software programme already in use at Wits is zoom text, an "MS-DOS- and Windows- based screen magnification software program" (Lazzaro, 1993:68)
- **Braille printers and displays**
  Translate printed material into Braille. Each Braille character is called a cell, and consists of a variation of 6 dots, a combination of which write letters, maths symbols and music symbols. While the Perkins Brailler is still in use at Wits, it has become outdated with the development of the personal computer

For people with Hearing Impairments

Assistive technology can offer much for the deaf, but devices that are pertinent to Wits include:

- **Text Telephones, or Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf and relay services**
  Allow the deaf to communicate with others over the telephone. Payphone Text telephones are available, and can be easily installed on any payphone. Relay services allow for the transcendence of the text telephone flaw, which is that both people communicating have to have a text telephone system. Relay services involve translating text into spoken word, and vice versa, thus a hearing person acts as a translator. Fax machines can also be used, although they do limit rapid two way communication.
- **Baudot/ ASCII modems**
  Linked to personal computers these facilitate communication between both text telephones and other personal computers
- **Computer aided transcription**
  Provides a real time hard copy printout of meetings, for example a tutorial and lecture situation, however requires a typist, personal computer and large display monitor
- **Signalling systems**
  Monitor the environment for important sound sources, for example the doorbell, or alarm clock, converting these sounds into visual or tactile output
- **Captioning systems**
  Make television more accessible by translating spoken words into text.

For Persons with Motor Impairments:

- **Adapted keyboards**
  Adaptions vary to suit different motor impairments, but is an important technological advance as two of the wheelchair users interviewed at Wits did not have the use of one of their arms either
- **Voice recognition systems**
  Translate the spoken word into text or computer commands
- **The 'Online World.**
  Consisting of Electronic Mail, Live Chatting and the Internet is also a vast area to be tapped by disabled students, especially when attempting to access information, this is because it can be accessible to all students with impairments with the aid of computer linked assistive technology.

Appendix B

"Profile of Disabled Students who attended Focus Group Discussions"

Braille Users (Focus Group discussion on the 22 August 1997)

Blind Informant 1.	Male with a mobility disability in addition to Blindness
Blind Informant 2.	Male
Blind Informant 3.	Male, although classified as a Braille user, is able to see as the eye disease he has is degenerative
Blind Informant 4.	Male, running for the Student Representative Council
Blind Informant 5.	Male
Blind Informant 6.	Male

Partially Sighted (Focus Group Discussion on the 18 August 1997)

Partially Sighted Informant 7.	Albino male
Partially Sighted Informant 8.	Male
Partially Sighted Informant 9.	Albino female
Partially Sighted Informant 10.	Albino female
Partially Sighted Informant 11.	Male
Partially Sighted Informant 12.	Albino male
Partially Sighted Informant 13.	Female
Partially Sighted Informant 14.	Albino female

Deaf Students: D (Focus Group Discussion on the 20 August 1997)

Deaf Informant 15.	Male
Deaf Informant 16.	Male, an ex Wits student currently studying through UNISA

Wheel-chair Users (Focus Group Discussion on the 20 August 1997)

Wheel-chair Using Informant 17.	Male
Wheel-chair Using Informant 18.	Male
Wheel-chair Using Informant 19.	Male
Wheel-chair Using Informant 20.	Female

Appendix C

"Profile of Disabled Student Survey Respondents"

Braille Users

Blind Respondent 1.	Male BA Education Student
Blind Respondent 2.	Male BA Student
Blind Respondent 3.	Male BA Student
Blind Respondent 4.	Male BA Student
Blind Respondent 5.	Male B Comm Student
Blind Respondent 6.	Male BA Student
Blind Respondent 7.	Male BA Student
Blind Respondent 8.	Male B Comm
Blind Respondent 9.	Male BA Student

Partially Sighted Students

Partially Sighted Respondent 10.	Female BA Student
Partially Sighted Respondent 11.	Female BA Student
Partially Sighted Respondent 12.	Female BA Student
Partially Sighted Respondent 13.	Male BA Student
Partially Sighted Respondent 14.	Male B Comm Student
Partially Sighted Respondent 15.	Male BA Student
Partially Sighted Respondent 16.	Male ex BA Student

Deaf: D

Deaf Respondent 17.	Male B Comm Student
Deaf Respondent 18.	Ex Wits Student Male Student at UNISA

Wheel-Chair Users: W

Wheel-chair Using Respondent 19.	Female BA Student
Wheel-chair Using Respondent 20.	Male BA Fine Arts Student
Wheel-chair Using Respondent 21.	Male BA Student

Appendix D

"Questionnaire used in Survey as part of the Needs Analysis of Disabled Students at Wits"

Personal Details of Respondent

Where applicable, circle the option that is relevant to you:

1. **Gender** (1) Female
   (2) Male
2. **Age** _____ (years)
3. **Type of Disability** (1) Braille User
   (2) Deaf
   (3) Partially Sighted
   (4) Wheel-Chair User
4. **Age of Disability Onset** (1) Birth
   _____ Months
   _____ Years

5a. **Was the school you matriculated from a:**
   (1) Special School
   (2) Non-Special or Mainstream School

5b. **Please name the school you matriculated from:**
   _____

6. **Did this school cater for your disability with regards to:**
   (a) Facilities
   (b) Programmes
   (c) Trained Personnel

7. **What Degree are you studying for at Wits ?**
   _____

8. **What year did you start studying at Wits ?**
   _____

9 **re your studies being financed ?**
   e circle all those that are relevant to the payment of your studies:
   (1) Parents/ Family
   (2) Self
   (3) University Student Loan
   (4) University Bursary

(5) University Scholarship
(6) Other Loan
(7) Other Bursary
(8) Other Scholarship
(9) Other (Specify):

---

10. **Do you stay in residence ?** (1) Yes
(2) No

11. **If yes, which residence ?**

---

(0) Not Applicable

12. **Does this residence cater for your disability with regards to:**
(a) Facilities
(b) Programmes
(c) Trained Personnel
(0) Not Applicable

Needs Identification and Evaluation

Where applicable, please indicate what would allow you to more fully participate at Wits, and how beneficial the suggestion is, grades are as follows:
(1) Would be of no benefit
(2) You would experience limited benefit
(3) Would be beneficial
(4) Would be very beneficial
(5) Is a necessity

I. Access to Facilities
A Access Routes around Campus

13. **Closing Yale Road to motor vehicles**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
14. **Erecting wheel-chair accessible ramps to ensure that the whole of Wits is accessible to wheel-chairs**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
15. **Establishing designated placement areas for dustbins, noticeboards and other 'mobile' obstacles so they do not obstruct pathways**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
16. **Installing sound synthesisers on traffic lights that border Wits**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
17. **Marking the edges of stairs with paint so the edges are easily seen**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
18. **Removing turnstiles from canteen and coffee shop entrances**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
19. **Removing spring-loaded doors**

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

B **Lecture/ Tutorial Venues**

20. **Brailling the numbers indicating lecture and tutorial venues**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

21. **Changing seating arrangements so that students with disabilities are more fully accommodated in such venues**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

22. **Enlarging the numbers indicating lecture and tutorial venues**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

23. **Reserving front row seats for students with disabilities**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

C **Lifts**

24. **Brailling lift buttons**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

25. **Enlarging lift button numbers**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

26. **Installing more lifts so that every building and floor is serviced by a lift**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

27. **Lowering lift button panels**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

D. **Toilets**

28. **Brailling 'Male' and 'Female' labels**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

29. **Ensuring that every building at Wits has a wheel-chair accessible toilet**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

30. **Writing 'Male' and 'Female' labels in large letters**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

II. **Access to Information**

A. **Administrative Information**

31. **Do you think that students with disabilities should have concessions when it comes to bureaucratic administrative procedures like obtaining student cards, paying fees and registering at Wits ?**
(1) Yes
(2) No

B. **Books, Journals and Other Readings**

32. **Having readers who read material onto tape**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

33. Should readers be:

(1) A friend in the class
(2) A fellow class-mate
(3) A bursary student undertaking this task as part of bursary requirements
(4) An employee of Wits hired in the capacity of reader
(0) Not Applicable

C. Computer Centres

34. Installing zoom text on computers in computer centres (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

35. Installing a voice synthesiser on one computer in each computer centre at Wits (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

36. Installing a voice recognition system on one computer in each computer centre at Wits (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

37. Making greater use of information technology, such as Internet and e-mail to access information (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

D. Lecture and Tutorial Content

38. Attending consultations with lectures and tutors that are in addition to the lectures and tutorials already attended (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

39. Having a sign language interpreter present in both lectures and tutorials (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

40. Having a note-taker present in both lectures and tutorials (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

41. Should this note-taker be:

(1) A friend in the class
(2) A fellow class-mate
(3) A bursary student undertaking this task as part of bursary requirements
(4) An employee of Wits hired in the capacity of note-taker
(0) Not Applicable

E. Libraries

42. Employing a librarian whose job description includes aiding students with disabilities (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

43. Enlarging shelf numbers in the libraries (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

44. Establishing a network system between Wits libraries and the South African National Library for the Blind so Brailled information can be more easily accessed (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

45. **Installing paper guides which clearly show the placement direction of materials being copied on photocopy machines**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

46. **Installing zoom text on one computer in each library at Wits**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

47. **Making use of bursary students to access information from libraries like books and journals, and to make photocopies**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

F. Noticeboards

48. **Designating noticeboards for students with disabilities**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

49. **Ensuring that notices placed on such designated noticeboards are placed at a lower level**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

50. **Ensuring that notices placed on such designated noticeboards are enlarged**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

51. **Ensuring that notices placed on such designated noticeboards are Brailled**
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

III. Attitudes

52. **From your experience, do staff members (for example lecturers, tutors, librarians, administrative personnel) at Wits accommodate/ accept you ?**
(1) Yes
(2) No

53. **Please explain your answer:**

_____
_____
_____
_____

54. **Do you see yourself as a fully integrated student within the student body at Wits ?**
(1) Yes
(2) No

55. **How do you think the student body at Wits sees you ?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

56. **Who should attend disability awareness workshops on a compulsory basis?**

(1) All staff members at Wits
(2) Only staff members who have contact with students with disabilities
(3) All students attending Wits
(4) Bursary students who deal with students with disabilities as part of their bursary contracts
(5) Attendance at such workshops should be voluntary for all

57. **Do you think a disability open day co-ordinated by the DSP would facilitate the social integration of students with and without disabilities?**
(1) Yes
(2) No

58. **Should students with disabilities participate in disability awareness campaigns at Wits ?** (1) Yes
(2) No

IV. **Integration**

59. **Do you think the DSP facilitates the academic integration of students with disabilities?** (1) Yes
(2) No

60. **Does the DSP facilitate your academic integration ?**
(1) Yes
(2) No

61. **Please explain your answer:**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

62. **Do you think the DSP facilitates the social integration of students with disabilities ?**
(1) Yes
(2) No

63. **Does the DSP facilitate your social integration ?**
(1) Yes
(2) No

64. **Please explain your answer:**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

65. **Do you think the DSP should play a role in socially integrating students with disabilities ?**
(1) Yes

(2) No

66. **Do you make use of any of the sports/ recreational facilities offered at Wits ?**

(1) Yes
(2) No

67. **If yes, which do you make use of ?**

_____
_____

(0) Not Applicable

68. **If no, why not ?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

(0) Not Applicable

V. Responsibility

In your opinion, who should assume responsibility for:

69. **Paying for your studies ?**

(1) The Government
(2) Wits via the affected Faculty (for example Arts)
(3) Wits via the affected academic Department (for example English)
(4) Wits via the DSP
(5) The individual student

70. **Providing assistive devices that contribute to independent living, such as wheel-chairs, canes, magnifying glasses and hearing aids**

(1) The Government
(2) Wits via th ffected Faculty (for example Arts)
(3) Wits via the affected academic Department (for example English)
(4) Wits via the DSP
(5) The individual student

71. **Providing assistive devices that facilitate academic integration, such as Perkins Braillers, zoom text and Teldem systems**

(1) The Government
(2) Wits via the affected Faculty (for example Arts)
(3) Wits via the affected academic Department (for example English)
(4) Wits via the DSP
(5) The individual student

72. **Providing personnel needed for greater integration, such as interpreters, note-takers and readers**

(1) The Government
(2) Wits via the affected Faculty (for example Arts)
(3) Wits via the affected academic Department (for example English)
(4) Wits via the DSP
(5) The individual student

73. **Changing staff attitudes towards disability**

(1) The Government
(2) Wits via the affected Faculty (for example Arts)
(3) Wits via the affected academic Department (for example English)
(4) Wits via the DSP
(5) The individual student

74. **Changing student attitudes towards disability**

(1) The Government
(2) Wits via the affected Faculty (for example Arts)
(3) Wits via the affected academic Department (for example English)
(4) Wits via the DSP
(5) The individual student

75. **Altering the environment so that students with disabilities are more fully integrated, for example Brailling and enlarging lift buttons, installing lifts and ramps and setting up Teldem systems on university telephones**

(1) The Government
(2) Wits via the affected Faculty (for example Arts)
(3) Wits via the affected academic Department (for example English)
(4) Wits via the DSP
(5) The individual student

76. **Any other comments or suggestions:**

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