

Are We Helping Them to Pass or Setting Them up for Failure? Assessment Related Experiences of Partially Sighted Students

Lawrence Meda

*Teaching and Learning Coordinator, Faculty of Education, Cape Peninsula University of
Technology, Mowbray Campus, P.O.Box 652, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa
E-mail: medal@cput.ac.za*

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ABSTRACT The needs of visually impaired students are often neglected in South African universities. Partially sighted students are left to provide for themselves because of the invisibility of their barrier to learning. This paper is a presentation of assessment-related experiences of partially sighted students at a university of technology in South Africa. The study was guided by two critical questions: What are partially sighted students' assessment-related experiences, and why? A qualitative case study within an interpretivist paradigm was used. Four partially sighted students were purposively selected to participate in semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. Data was analysed using content analysis. It was found that partially sighted students' needs are neglected. Pre-requisites such as providing large font size and extra-time are taken for granted, yet they are consequential to every partially sighted student. Guided by a theoretical framework of the social model, the study concludes that an individualistic approach to supporting partially sighted students does not only make them feel included, but also enables them to realise their full potential.