

## Attitudinal And Physical Access To Tertiary Education In Hong Kong

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## Who Am I/Housekeeping

- Totally blind
- Please say my name, rather than raising your hand, when you have a question.
- P-3<sup>rd</sup> grade: self-contained class
- 3<sup>rd</sup>-12: included
- Baccalaureate: social work, Illinois State University
- Master's: social work, School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



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## Who Am I/Housekeeping

- Doctorate: special education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Two guide dogs and cane user
- Disability rights advocate
- Dedicated teacher
- Qualitative researcher
- World traveler/speaker



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## Introduction

### Who are you?

- Name
- Where from
- Profession
- What brought you to this session?

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## Fulbright

- [www.iie.org](http://www.iie.org)
- Application
- Agonizing waiting
- Acceptance
- Preparations/decisions
- Hitting the ground running: O&M, making friends, speaking with gatekeepers



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## Methodology

### Research Questions

- How is Disability in Tertiary Education Viewed in Hong Kong?
- How Have the Past and Present Educational Experiences of Students With Disabilities Impacted Their Lives as Tertiary Students With Disabilities in Hong Kong?
- What Barriers Have Tertiary Students With Disabilities in Hong Kong Experienced, and how Have These Barriers Impacted Them?



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## Methodology

### Research Questions

- What Supports Have Encouraged the Attendance and Participation of Students With Disabilities in Tertiary Education in Hong Kong, and how Have Those Supports Impacted Them?
- What Personal Characteristics of Students With Disabilities Studying in Hong Kong Have Enabled Them to Succeed in the Tertiary Education Environment?



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## Study Contexts

- Large, prestigious, urban university in Hong Kong
- Surrounded by the commercial and financial districts



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## Participants

- Contacted DSS at university to recruit student participants
- Five students with disabilities
- Berry
- Clint
- Kathleen
- Po Sing
- Tony



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## Instructors

- Nine referred to me by students

### Staff

Six:

- equal opportunity
- DSS
- student affairs
- physical plant
- student counseling
- library



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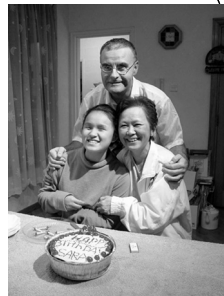
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## Data Collection

- Two forms:
- Participant observation
- Ten classes per student
- Observed student interaction with colleagues, instructor, material being presented
- Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews
- Four per student
- One per instructor
- One per staff



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## Data Analysis

- Member checks
- Transcribed all field notes and interviews
- Yielded 1,500 pages of data



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## Content Analysis

- Sorted data according to interview protocols
- Sorted according to categories
- Created codes from categories
- Asked advisor to look over codes
- Came to consensus about codes
- Themes emerged from the categories when looking across research questions



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## Findings

### Barriers

Lack of Architectural Access

- Entrances to vertical campus lack accessible path
- Some buildings have no accessible path to floors other than ground
- No power-assist doors
- Walking surfaces very slick, especially when it rains
- Hand rails for steps often cluttered up with posters
- Not much braille/large print signage
- Noisy classroom environments

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## Lack of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Students with LD's

- Rarely have the opportunity to attend tertiary education

### Assistive technology

- According to students interviewed, more AT was needed than was provided
- Grants available, but decisions made by administrators
- Students whose health insurance from family was cut off were sometimes left with out-of-pocket expenses for AT.

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### Lack of Services for Students with Disabilities

#### Communication access

- No SL interpreters
- No FM systems

#### Text conversion

- Volunteer scanning

#### Grade feedback

- Not accessible

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### Instructor Barriers

#### Communication barriers

- Quiet/rapid speech
- Neglecting to tell BVI students what pointing to on board
- Lack of electronic versions of handouts from instructors and fellow students

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### Attitudinal Barriers

- Hesitancy to admit SWD's
- Disability question on university application
- Refusal by student committee to be allowed to live in dormitory

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### SWD-Caused Barriers

- Not asking colleagues what instructor said when couldn't hear
- Not following up with classmates and instructors when no accessible handouts provided
- Not going to class when weather is poor
- Not reading difficult-to-scan books required for class
- Not learning braille
- Not wearing hearing aids out of shame

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### Lack of Accommodations Evaluation

- No formal system in place for instructors
- Existence of DSS not advertised with instructors as well as it could be
- Lack of campus-wide training for faculty or staff

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### Supports

#### Policy Supports

- Long history of welcoming SWD's: 1978 13 with mobility and visual impairments registered
- Disability Advisory Committee convened in the mid-1990s
- Disability Discrimination Ordinance passed in Hong Kong
- No smoking as of January, 2007
- Funding of access projects continued during economic recessions
- Equal Opportunity Office independent of other units since 2000
- Funding for AT
- Funding to increase inclusion

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### Architectural Supports

- Lifts providing access to various platforms of campus
- Lifts providing access within buildings
- Guide paths

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### Other Supports

- Library room with scanners, screen readers, braille displays, braille texts
- Volunteers for scanning recruited through listserv
- Application question about disability
- No medical documentation required for services
- Examination accommodations: alternate locations, alternate formats, extended time, headphones for HOH students
- Student counseling: no time limit as of data collection
- Attitudinal shifts in welcoming SWD's
- Open channels of communication for SWD's to air concerns

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### UDL Strategies in Classes

- Uploading class notes before class
- Asking students to describe pictures used in class
- Microphones used

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**Other Instructor Accommodations**

- ⦿ Directing students in group to read paper to blind student
- ⦿ Emailing students ahead of time to ask which teaching strategies and electronic formats work best
- ⦿ Verbalizing written materials used during class
- ⦿ Opening door for student with mobility impairment
- ⦿ Not penalizing student with mobility impairment when late to class

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**Other Instructor Accommodations**

- ⦿ Allowing student with mobility or visual impairment to turn in work electronically
- ⦿ Consciously speaking slower and louder
- ⦿ Remaining calm when student with Tourette's rambles
- ⦿ Isolated training events for faculty on SWD's

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**Natural Supports**

- ⦿ Friends offering to carry objects for student with mobility impairment
- ⦿ HOH student's friends repeating lecture
- ⦿ Blind student's friends reading class materials

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## Discussion

### Limitations

- Interviews conducted in students' second language
- Researcher came from different culture than participants
- No students with non-apparent disabilities interviewed

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## Implications

- Social justice/advocacy efforts very different in HK than the West; more investigation needed
- Disability awareness training appropriate to the culture
- How is disability constructed in HK, China's urban centers, and China's rural areas?
- How would disability studies courses and disability awareness training affect disability construction in HK's universities?
- As students with non-apparent disabilities begin matriculating at universities in HK in greater numbers, investigation of the effectiveness of accommodations provided will be critical.

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