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Disability Through My Lens:
A Photovoice Project on the Experiences of Inclusion and Belonging
of Students with Disabilities at SFU

By

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B.A., Criminology, Simon Fraser University, 2014

A Master's Project Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

in the School of Public Administration

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Acknowledgements

I acknowledge that Simon Fraser University is on the unceded Traditional Coast Salish Lands including the Tsleil-Waututh (səlilwətaʔ), Kwikwetlem (kʷikwəʔləm), Squamish (Sḵw̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw) and Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) Nations.

This research was also conducted on the unceded traditional territories including Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem (kʷikwəʔləm), Kwantlen, Qayqayt and Tsawwassen First Nations.

I believe that students' voices should be centered in issues and decisions affecting their lives. Thank you to all the students with disabilities who participated in this photovoice project. Without your participation and insights, this project would not be possible to develop student-centered, evidence-based changes in policy, programming and practices at SFU. I am forever grateful to you for your courage, resilience and insights.

Enhancing the student experience is integral to student success at Simon Fraser University (SFU). I am deeply grateful to my client, Dr. Mitchell Stoddard and his team at the SFU Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) for his trust, collaborative spirit and guidance throughout the project.

To my Graduate Supervisor, Dr. Helga Kristín Hallgrímsdóttir, thank you for your leadership and feedback from the inception to the close out of this research project. To my (MACD) cohort, faculty and instructors, particularly Roya Rouzbehani, Monique Lacerte and Ellie Langford Parks – thank you for standing by me and being part of my growing community of Community Developers.

Thank you to my colleagues, friends, mentors and the Ile family - my family who encouraged me to achieve my goals, to strive for excellence and contribute to the community. Your love, kindness and prayers are deeply appreciated. I anchor my work in my faith in God, my enduring source of strength and courage.

Accessibility Statement

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Disability Through My Lens project arose from the need to further explore findings from a recent SFU EDI survey that revealed that students with disabilities were among the student communities that felt the least sense of belonging at SFU. Disability Through My Lens is a photovoice research project that involves Simon Fraser University (SFU) students with disabilities in telling their stories of feeling included or barriers to not being included using photos, storytelling and dialogue. Participants developed specific recommendations for addressing identified barriers and making the SFU campus more welcoming and inclusive of students with disabilities.

This research is grounded in participatory action research (PAR) methodology and uses ableism and intersectionality as theoretical frameworks to guide the analysis and recommendations. This report describes the literature review, methods and methodology, findings, a discussion of findings, recommendations and a proposed implementation strategy with leverage points for addressing barriers and upholding enablers for an inclusive and equitable campus community where students with disabilities thrive in and beyond SFU.

Background

SFU is spread across three major metropolitan areas and has a 90% commuter student population. Among several member universities, SFU launched the Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiative in early 2018. The [Student Experience Initiative \(SEI\)](#) was also launched in 2017/2018 to improve the student experience and further the university's commitment and goals to the EDI. In 2018, SFU released the final EDI consultation report by Kim Hart, Special Advisor to the Provost on EDI to understand the SFU community's perspectives on issues of EDI. The EDI report states that the Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Office administered a student survey on inclusion and belonging on behalf of the Office of the Associate Vice President, Students and International (VPSI). Survey results from 8,301 undergraduate and graduate students indicate that “non-binary students and disabled students report the least sense of belonging” at SFU (SFU EDI report, 2018, p.12).

As a result of the survey findings, the client, Dr. Mitchell Stoddard, SFU Director for the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) identified the need to dig deeper into this issue to better understand the unique experiences and needs of students with disabilities on belonging and inclusion and seek student-centered solutions to enhance their student experience. The voices of marginalized student groups including students with disabilities often go unheard in key issues and initiatives affecting their lives and student experience (personal communication with Client, 2019).

The literature review provides a synthesis of existing literature on the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities in post-secondary or higher education context specifically colleges and universities. The review draws on both Canadian and international literature. It includes definitions of key terms found in the literature and adopted for this research such as ‘disability’, ‘visible disabilities’, ‘invisible disabilities’, ‘inclusion’, ‘belonging’, ‘enabler’ and ‘barrier’. Since this research focuses on the experiences of students with disabilities or disabled students in a post-secondary context. Subsequently, the literature review does not discuss the experiences of students without disabilities or that

of staff and faculty. The identity, students with disabilities is used primarily for this research to emphasize person first language while acknowledging the impacts of academic and social environment on a person's experiences of disabilities.

A significant section of the literature review situates the experiences of students with disabilities within the broader historical context of Canadian disabilities legislation and policy. The final section of the literature review examines factors that contribute positively and negatively to a sense of inclusion and belonging for students with disabilities. These factors are discussed under two main-themes: enablers and barriers to inclusion and belonging experiences of students with disabilities in a post-secondary context.

Enablers to an inclusive post-secondary environment are discussed under social enablers such as positive attitudes from faculty and organizational enablers such as the availability of funding and understanding of disability. Literature review findings indicate that students with disabilities or disabled students face several barriers in the post-secondary context such as college or university (NEADS, Harbour & Greenberg, July 2017). These barriers range from social barriers such as negative attitudes from peers, staff and faculty to organizational/structural barriers such as the inadequate funding, staffing and lack of institutional culture and policy that supports disability inclusion (Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Hong, 2015). As students with disabilities are a heterogenous group, the literature indicates that students with disabilities experienced these enablers and barriers in nuanced ways depending on their lived/living experiences and campus contexts (NEADS, 2018).

Building on the literature review, this photovoice study was aimed at understanding the experiences of inclusion and belonging of students with disabilities at SFU. The objectives are to bring students with disabilities together to share what's working, what's not working and why, as well as how we can improve the sense of community and inclusion on campus. The researcher co-led the process with students to help define the specific issues for dialogue and develop recommendations that can be acted on by members of the SFU community.

Intended research outcomes are to:

- empower students with disabilities to share their stories, from a lived experience point of view.
- continue to raise awareness on the unique experiences and needs of students to disabilities
- encourage more peer to peer conversations and university-wide dialogue on inclusion and belonging.
- develop specific recommendations/calls to action that SFU can act on through the SEI, EDI and other university initiatives.

Methodology and Methods

The primary research questions are:

1. What are the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities at SFU?
2. How might we improve the sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU based on the lived experiences of students with disabilities?

Based on these primary research questions and using a participatory action research (PAR) methodology, participants were SFU students with disabilities who were recruited to participate in this photovoice project

by sharing photos and narratives of their experiences of inclusion and belonging over 3 – 4 session of approximately 1.5 – 2 hours long. These situations were held as individual or group sessions depending on the participant’s preference and availability. During these sessions, participants discussed the significance of their photos using the SHOWeD in expressing a sense of being included or not being included and improvements they would like to see in the SFU community. Each participant photo answered one or more of the photo-taking and reflection questions in the table above. The interviews were semi-structured using open-ended questions in the photovoice SHOWeD worksheet and follow up prompt questions to probe for further insights and clarification (Newman et. al., 2008, p. 141).

Participants had the option to attend an optional fourth session to help plan a community exhibit/dialogue or alternate approach to share the findings, where they will have the opportunity if they choose. The goal was to present their work and recommendations from previous sessions and raise awareness of disability inclusion among the broader SFU community. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the community exhibit/dialogue did not take place to adhere to social distancing measures. Alternate forms of dissemination are being explored. E.g. a suggestion by a participant to use social media to host an online exhibit and dialogue (personal communication, 2020).

The fourth session was used to strengthen the study rigour by triangulating the interpretations from the preliminary data analysis with co-researchers or participants. Participants engaged with authenticity and commented that the interactive and reflective nature of the photovoice project made their experiences meaningful and empowering (personal communication, 2020).

Data was analyzed using NVivo 12 and developed into themes and sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes were reviewed, at least three times and triangulated using multiple data sources including the photovoice interviews, photos and narratives for accurate reflection of what participants’ narratives and recommendations. The main findings identified by the photovoice project are detailed in the findings section and discussed further in the discussion section.

Key Findings

The findings of the research are presented with the number of occurrences by theme below. The three most common themes are: attitudes and beliefs (n = 133), physical or environmental barriers (n = 99) and inclusive and equitable spaces (n = 88). These themes were analyzed from twelve multiple photovoice sessions, over thirty-five photos and reflections submitted by four participants within a two to three month period.

| Main themes | Occurrences |
|--|-------------|
| Accidental Inclusivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unplanned inclusivity that benefits students with disabilities | 22 |
| Attitudes and Beliefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive and negative attitudes, beliefs and perspectives that impact students with disabilities’ sense of community and belonging | 133 |
| Definitions of Belonging and Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how students with disabilities define what belonging and inclusion means to them | 43 |
| Design with Students (People) with disabilities | 14 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving or collaborating with students with disabilities in the design or implementation of solutions: to design "with" and "by" students | |
| Disability Awareness and Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of education about disabilities and how to support students with disabilities. Suggestions on how to raise awareness and education | 49 |
| Feedback on Photovoice Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participant reflections and feedback on the photovoice process | 33 |
| Food and Financial Equity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accessing affordable and dietary-inclusive food at affordable prices in accessible locations. | 24 |
| Identity, Self-Advocacy and Activism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> concerns about labelling and navigating identity as a disabled student in university or post-secondary. reclaiming identity through self-advocacy and activism | 79 |
| Institutional Processes and Structural Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gaps in institutional structures, policies and processes that impact the experiences of students with disabilities | 37 |
| Physical or Environmental Barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the design of the physical or built environment on campus that impacts students with disabilities' sense of belonging and community | 99 |
| Resourcefulness and Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> need for resourcefulness and preparation by the university community to support students with disabilities. e.g. in planning, design and implementation of learning, programming and spaces | 14 |
| Rethinking Accommodations and Accessible Classrooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accommodations as essential for students with disabilities' success and sense of belonging. issues of equality and equity. Discussions on rethinking accessible seating design and need for improvement | 61 |
| Social/Community Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of social connections and networks for students with disabilities Suggestions for building social connections and disability support networks | 59 |
| Inclusive and Equitable Spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spaces for belonging and inclusion impact students with disabilities' sense of welcome need for more inclusive and accessible spaces for students with disabilities to live, work, study and rest/relax on campus. | 83 |
| The Duality of Inclusion and Exclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double-edged implications of inclusion and exclusion for students with disabilities such as when including specific students with disabilities may inadvertently exclude other students with disabilities | 5 |

These findings align with the recommendations which combines both participants' suggestions in response to the secondary primary research question and the researcher's analysis of findings.

Recommendations

The seventeen recommendations are grouped into short, medium and long-term recommendations based on estimated time to initiate or implement these complex change efforts:

Short-term (ST) (under 1 year):

- ST Recommendation 1: Undertake asset mapping, needs assessment and service gap analysis of existing academic and student supports, and services related to disability supports at SFU.
- ST Recommendation 2: Improve communications between campus groups such as Facilities and the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) specifically on construction projects and plan for accessible campus routes and maintenance of accessibility features.
- ST Recommendation 3: Build the capacity of networks of resilience and support with students with disabilities and of learning networks for staff and faculty through Communities of Practice (Preparedness).
- ST Recommendation 4: Partner with the SFU Library and faculties to highlight books and course readings by disabled authors in the library and classrooms respectively.
- ST Recommendation 5: Develop a Lived Experience Network (LEN) of student, staff and faculty with disabilities that would be part of redesigning the Access policy and developing further changes to foster a more inclusive campus community.
- ST Recommendation 6: Explore changes to redesigning existing campus food access programs with further research on the experiences of food insecurity among students with disabilities at SFU.

Medium-term (MT) (over 1 year and under 3 years):

- MT Recommendation 1: Gather and track institutional data on the experiences of students with disabilities and disability awareness.
- MT Recommendation 2: Establish a clear and compelling shared vision and goals for accessibility and equity for students with disabilities at SFU.
- MT Recommendation 3: Create students, staff and faculty disability awareness or education opportunities.
- MT Recommendation 4: Hire more staff and faculty with disabilities at SFU.
- MT Recommendation 5: Advocate for and implement priority on-campus residence and housing access for students with disabilities, as well as staff capacity building through training on supporting students with disabilities.
- MT Recommendation 6: Advocate for increased budget and staffing resources for the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) to expand its supports and services for students with disabilities and the university community.

- MT Recommendation 7: Investigate the design and set up of accessible seating options and provide guidelines on more detailed accessibility statements in classrooms that foster more accessible learning or classroom designs.

Long-term (LT) (over 3 years):

- LT Recommendation 1: Advocate for the design of social or community spaces such as a Disability Cultural Centre that fosters a sense of community for students, staff and faculty with disabilities
- LT Recommendation 2: Consider the revision of the SFU Accessibility Policy to shift from a medical model of disability to a psychosocial model of disability.
- LT Recommendation 3: Advocate for more inclusive and equitable study, learning, social and recreational spaces in the in-person and virtual campus environments.
- LT Recommendation 4: Increase Advocacy to the provincial government through the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Funding for scholarships and bursaries with costs with securing documentation for disability-related accommodations.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background and Defining the Problem

1.1.1 BACKGROUND

Simon Fraser University (SFU) opened its doors on September 9, 1965 to 2,500 students at Burnaby campus, British Columbia, Canada (SFU Archives, 2008/2009). Since 1965, SFU expanded to three campuses, including both the Surrey and Vancouver campuses with a total enrolment of over 30,000 students (SFU, 2019, Universities Canada, 2019). SFU's vision is to be "Canada's most engaged research university" (SFU, 2019). The SFU 2012 Strategic Vision includes underlying principles, including but not limited, to diversity – to foster a culture of inclusion and mutual respect, celebrating the diversity and multi-ethnic character of its students, staff, faculty and broader society (Strategic Vision, 2012).

In October 2017, Universities Canada, a consortium of 95 Canadian member universities adopted [Inclusive Excellence Principles](#) and [Action Plan](#) to advance equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and improve participation and success of underrepresented groups within the academic community and campuses across Canada. Historically, underrepresented groups in Canada include Indigenous peoples, women, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities, and diverse gender and sexual orientations (SFU Canada Research Chairs (CRC) EDI Action Plan, 2017, p.4). These principles were intended to guide member institutions in developing and implementing EDI action plans, strategies, measure progress and evidence-based practices (SFU CRC EDI Action Plan, 2017) within their contexts.

1.1.2 DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Among several member universities, SFU launched the Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiative in early 2018. The [Student Experience Initiative \(SEI\)](#) was also launched in 2017/2018 to improve the student experience and further the university's commitment and goals to the EDI. In 2018, SFU released the final EDI consultation report by Kim Hart, Special Advisor to the Provost on EDI to understand the SFU community's perspectives on issues of EDI. The EDI report states that the Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Office administered a student survey on inclusion and belonging on behalf of the Office of the Associate Vice President, Students and International (VPSI). Survey results from 8,301 undergraduate and graduate students indicate that "non-binary students and disabled students report the least sense of belonging" at SFU (SFU EDI report, 2018, p.12).

As a result of the survey findings, the client, Dr. Mitchell Stoddard, SFU Director for the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) identified the need to dig deeper into this issue to better understand the unique experiences and needs of students with disabilities on belonging and inclusion and seek student-centered solutions to enhance their student experience. The voices of marginalized student groups including students with disabilities often go unheard in key issues and initiatives affecting their lives and student experience (personal communication with Client, 2019).

Agarwal & Spohn (2017) states that students with disabilities are often the "forgotten minority in higher education" as the needs of this group remain separated and underemphasized on college campuses (n.d.). This research project aims to bridge this gap by centering the lived experiences of students with disabilities at SFU. The client and researcher are both members of the Building Community and Sense of Belonging

(BCSB) working group, one of seven focus areas within the university-wide Student Experience Initiative (SEI). Dr. Stoddard is also a member of the 2018 SFU's EDI Advisory Group.

1.1.3 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT SFU

SFU is spread across three major metropolitan areas and has a 90% commuter student population. The SFU Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) office conducts headcounts of its undergraduate and graduate student populations. There is no specific number on the total number of students with disabilities at SFU currently listed on the SFU IRP (2020) website.

The client, Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) provides direct services to about 1,500 students per year who are registered at the Centre (personal communication with client, 2020). The number of students served increases to approximately 1,900 students when one includes those students who approach the Centre for referrals and supports and are not registered for services (personal communication with client, 2020). The Centre estimates that the number of students served represents approximately 50% of the student population that may self-identify as disabled or some related identity at SFU. Furthermore, the Client (2020) noted that the number of individuals in the overall SFU student population who report some form of impairment on health surveys appears to be increasingly dramatically, considering if one uses descriptions like having experienced a period of depression or anxiety or having sought for treatment.

It may be challenging to estimate the exact number of students with disabilities at SFU for several reasons given that not all students are registered with the SFU Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL). Some students may have concerns with disclosing their disabilities. NEADS (2018) cautions that headcounts of persons with disabilities do not reflect or represent measures of inclusion (p.4). It recommends that EDI in Canadian post-secondary institutions and programs consider diversity and disability as learning styles, not demographic labels. Students with disabilities are a heterogeneous group with diverse lived experiences and individual circumstances. Therefore, it is not feasible to have a "typical" profile of a student with disability (NEADS, 2018, p.5).

1.1.4 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE CANADIAN POPULATION

Statistics Canada data over the last decade shows increases in the number of persons with disabilities. According to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), there were approximately 4.3 million, or 14.3% of Canadians have a disability (Mullins & Preyde, 2013; McColl et. al (2017). CSD estimates indicate that 6.2 million (22%) or 1 in 5 Canadians aged 15 years and over had one or more disabilities that limits them in their daily activities (CSD, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2018).

The four common disability types include pain-related (15%), flexibility (10%), mobility (10%) and mental-health related (7%). The infographic from CSD 2017 findings summarizes key demographic characteristics:

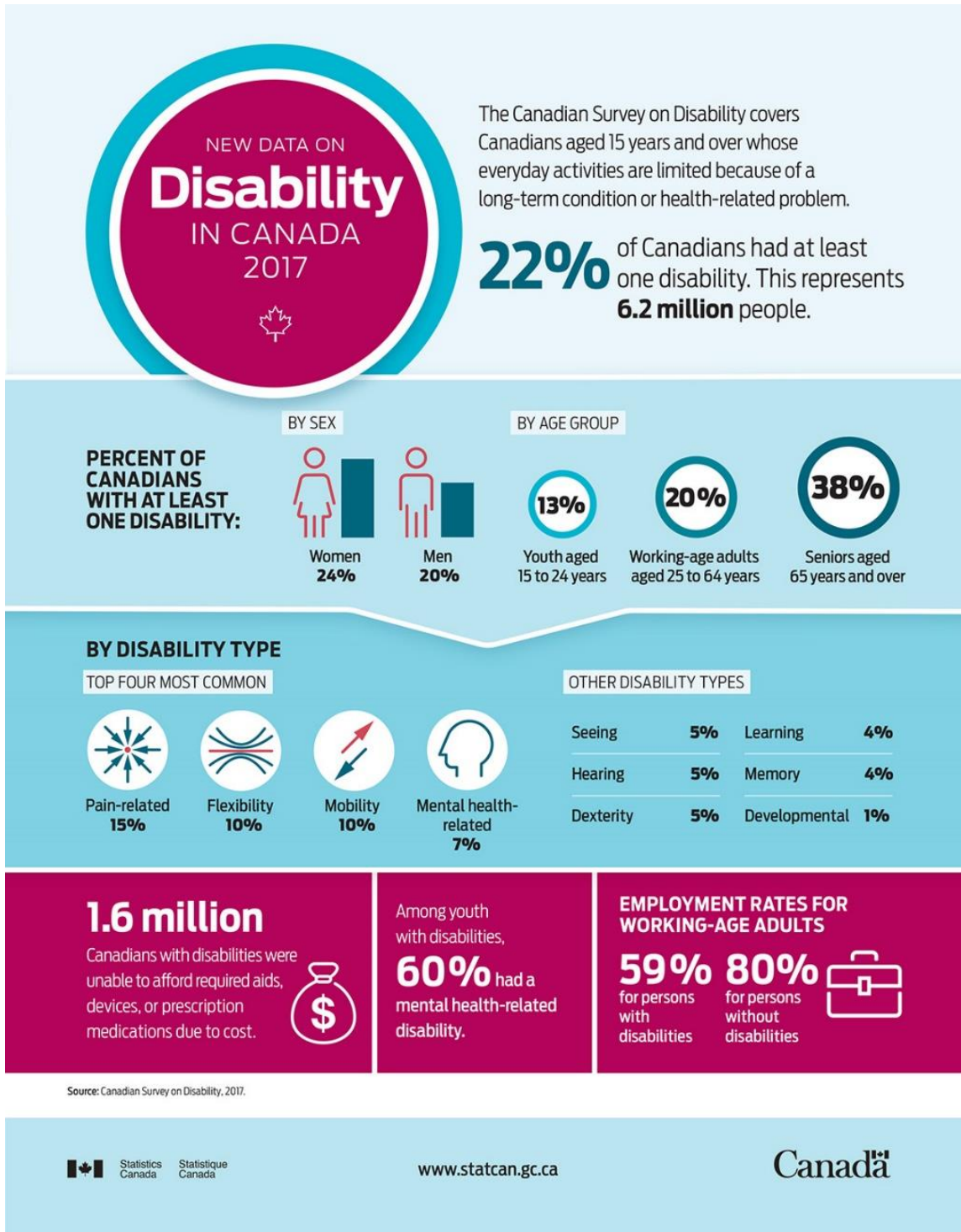


Figure 1: Canadian Survey on Disabilities

Source: Canadian Survey on Disability (2017)

1.1.5 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN CANADIAN POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS (PSIs) CONTEXT

In the broader Canadian context, colleges and universities witnessed a significant enrolment increase in the number of students with disabilities in the past three decades (NEADS, 2018). Further to this increase, several national and international changes have resulted in shifts in the post-secondary sector such as technological advancements, provincial and national disability legislation, Canada signing onto international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol (2008). These regional and global influences are ensuring post-secondary education is considered a basic human right for persons with disabilities in Canada (NEADS, 2018, p.19).

Given the heterogeneity of students with disabilities, Furrie (2017) conducted an analysis of the 2012 Canada Survey on Disability (CSD) on the experiences of post-secondary students with disabilities past and present. The report was prepared for the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS). Of 3,775,910 Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and older, 42% had some post-secondary education. Of the 42%, 38% (605,100) report having some post-secondary university education (Furrie, 2017).

Compared to non-university students with disabilities, university students with disabilities are:

- Younger
- Slightly more likely to be female
- Much less likely to identify as Indigenous
- More likely to be an immigrant and
- Slightly less likely to be a member of the visible minority population

| Demographics | Post-secondary non-university students with disabilities (n = 207,180) | Post-secondary university students with disabilities (n = 118,000) |
|------------------|---|--|
| Age | 58.5% aged 35 and older | 47.2% aged 35 and older |
| Gender | 54.4% female, 45.65% male | 58.9% (6 out of 10) are female, 41.0% male |
| Indigenous | 9.9% | 3.3% |
| Immigrant | 17.4% | 20.1% (just over 1 in 5). |
| Visible minority | South Asian and Chinese students account for 52.6% (just over half) of post-secondary non-university students with disabilities | South Asian and Chinese students account for 51.4% of post-secondary university students with disabilities |

Figure 2: Demographic comparison of post-secondary non-university and university students with disabilities

Source: Furrier (NEADS, 2017, p.6)

1.1.6 COMMON DISABILITY TYPES EXPERIENCED BY POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Furrier (2017) also notes differences in different types of disabilities between non-university and university students with disabilities. Types of disabilities include seeing, hearing, mobility, pain, learning, mental disabilities that range from mild, moderate, severe to very severe based on a global severity score. This score is determined by the frequency of activity limitations and intensity of difficulties (Statistics Canada, 2012). The most common disability type is pain for both non-university and university students with disabilities (p.8). Types of disabilities include seeing, hearing, and mobility. Mental health was the second

most reported disability type among university students with disabilities compared with flexibility disability as the second most reported type for non-university students with disabilities (Furrie, 2017).

The differences in disability type among both groups of students with disabilities may reflect the differences in the non-university and university educational environments. Universities are complex adaptive systems (Onyx & Leonard, 2011) with several transitions into, within and out to society and require individuals to navigate personal and social identity shifts, understanding of policies, processes, services and adopt new norms, expectations and standards.

From a holistic, systems theory perspective (Onyx & Leonard, 2011), an individual within a complex system experiences several complex changes in their community. For example, university students with disabilities learn to navigate the interactions between academic schedules, inclusive and accessible employment, accessible housing, transportation logistics, managing access to assistive technology or online learning platforms, and balancing health appointments (NEADS, 2018, p.20). In addition to these factors, university students with disabilities experience a cognitive overload with navigating their lived experience with a disability than their non-disabled university peers (Kreider, Bendixen, & Lutz (2015, p.427); NEADS, 2018, pp 20 - 21). As such, this research seeks to understand the unique experiences of inclusion and belonging of students with disabilities in SFU, a specific post-secondary university context.

1.2 Project Client

1.2.1 CLIENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT

The client, Dr. Mitchell Stoddard oversees the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL). CAL is a unit within the Student Affairs division of the Vice Provost, Students and International. The Centre provides a range of programs and services, including but not limited to, the note taking program, autism mentorship initiative, equity diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiative, accommodation services, advocacy for students with disabilities and other relevant services and supports.

CAL coordinates the process for disability-related accommodations between students and faculty. 99.9% of accommodation notices are acted upon when a student comes to the Centre to request for accommodations (personal communication with Client, 2019). The Centre works with students to understand accommodations they are entitled to within the Access policy. It also provides directives to departments and faculties on accommodation processes. The researcher worked closely with the Centre's staff and students with disabilities to refine the project scope and adapt the research process to ensure that it is accessible and inclusive for student involvement and participation.

1.2.2 PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

The project also includes stakeholders comprising of students, staff and faculty at SFU who may be interested in learning about and acting on the projects' findings.

The table below illustrates current and potential project stakeholders ranging from the client, students, staff and faculty:

| Photovoice Project Stakeholders | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Students/Groups:</p> <p>Students with disabilities</p> <p>Disabilities clubs on SFU campus (e.g. SFU Neurodiversity and Disability Coalition, SFU Autistics United)</p> <p>Students without disabilities</p> <p>Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS)</p> <p>Graduate Student Society (GSS)</p> <p>The Peak News (Student Print/e=News)</p> <p>General Student Population</p> | <p>Staff/Administration:</p> <p>Project Client - Dr. Mitchell Stoddard, Director, SFU Centre for Accessible Learning and Team in Student Services</p> <p>Working Group members for SEI Building Community and a Sense of Belonging; Other SEI Working Groups</p> <p>Office of the Vice President Research and EDI Leadership Structure (e.g. Executive Sub-Committee, Administrative Group and Advisory Council)</p> <p>Student Services Staff and other campus units and departments</p> | <p>Faculty:</p> <p>Faculty members and staff in:</p> <p>Applied Sciences</p> <p>Arts and Social Sciences</p> <p>Beedie</p> <p>Communication, Art and Technology</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Environment</p> <p>Health Sciences</p> <p>Science</p> |

Figure 3: Photovoice Project Stakeholders

1.3 Project Objectives and Research Questions

This project is grounded in the belief that students with disabilities are the experts in their own lives, the “nothing about you, without you” philosophy. Student participation and involvement is a core principle of the SEI and key to advancing EDI at SFU. Using photo/audio narratives and critical reflection, this research project seeks to understand the experiences of belonging and inclusion of students with disabilities at SFU. It also seeks to gather students’ recommendations, grounded in their experience, for creating an enhanced sense of belonging to their campus community.

The objectives are to bring students with disabilities together to share what's working, what's not working and why, as well as how we can improve the sense of community and inclusion on campus. The researcher co-led the process with students to help define the specific issues for dialogue and develop recommendations that can be acted on by members of the SFU community.

The intended research outcomes are to:

- empower students with disabilities to share their stories, from a lived experience point of view.
- continue to raise awareness on the unique experiences and needs of students to disabilities
- encourage more peer to peer conversations and university-wide dialogue on inclusion and belonging.
- develop specific recommendations/calls to action that SFU can act on through the SEI, EDI and other university initiatives.

The primary research questions are:

1. What are the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities at SFU?
2. How might we improve the sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU based on the lived experiences of students with disabilities?

1.4 Significance of the Project

Answering the research question is important to the client as it will help generate student-centered solutions that reflect the strengths, needs and experiences of students with disabilities and identify solutions that could be implemented through the SEI. It will build on policy and advocacy work done through the Centre for Accessible Learning with direct evidence from students with disabilities.

This project is of strategic importance to the client and the broader SFU community as it overlaps between two university-wide initiatives led by the Office of the Vice-President Academic (VPA), a three-year Student Experience Initiative (SEI) and the ongoing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiative.

Understanding the unique experiences of SFU's underserved student populations will help the community identify gaps, opportunities and solutions from an evidence-informed and student-centered perspective. The EDI working group hosted conversations with the university community to provide a platform for students, staff and faculty to discuss topics on ableism and navigating higher education as a student with a disability. Using a grass roots approach, the project seeks to build on these conversations using participatory action research to empower students as agents of change through their lived experience expertise.

1.5 Project Scope and Deliverables

The initial project scope includes 8 -10 current SFU students who self-identify as having one or more disabilities. The main deliverable for this project is this final report with recommendations. As this is a qualitative project, the sample size is small to allow for in-depth dialogue, reflection and action. All students with disabilities were welcomed and accommodations were made to meet participants' needs. Students with disabilities or disabled students are a heterogenous group with unique strengths, needs and interests.

The researcher also aimed to recruit students that reflect SFU's diverse student population including undergraduates and graduates and identities beyond disability as a primary criterion. Disability also

intersects with multiple layers of identity that student co-researchers possess e.g. gender, socio-cultural, faith and economic identities. Challenges with recruitment including the impacts of COVID-19 resulted in four participants completing the project.

The project phases and deliverables are outlined below:



Figure 4: Project Phases and Deliverables

1.6 Organization of the Report

Chapter 1 of this report begins with a description of the project client, stakeholders, research objectives, scope, delimitations and overall organization of this document. Chapter 2 discusses the literature review which includes literature on the use of photovoice in various contexts, specifically adaptations in the working with people with disabilities or disabled persons. This proposal uses person first language and disability first language interchangeably to honour the rights of students to identify with their preferred language. The review will also explore prior research on the experiences of inclusion and belonging related to students with disabilities, particularly in higher education or post-secondary institutions such as colleges and universities. This section also includes the conceptual framework.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology used in this project including methods, sampling, data collection procedures and tools, theoretical framework, analytical procedure, and ethics. Chapter 4 describes the project findings and Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the findings. Chapter 6 consists of the recommendations and implementation strategy. The report concludes with Chapter 7, the conclusion and future research directions. Subsequent sections include the references and appendices such as the ethics documents including the photovoice curriculum, consent forms and data collection instruments.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction and Literature Review Scope

This literature review provides a synthesis of existing literature on the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities in post-secondary or higher education context specifically colleges and universities. The review draws on both Canadian and international literature. The first section includes definitions of key terms found in the literature and adopted for this research such as ‘disability’, ‘visible disabilities’, ‘invisible disabilities’, ‘inclusion’, ‘belonging’, ‘enabler’ and ‘barrier’. Since this research focuses on the experiences of students with disabilities or disabled students in a post-secondary context. Subsequently, the literature review does not discuss the experiences of students without disabilities or that of staff and faculty.

For this literature review, the words post-secondary and higher education are used interchangeably to include colleges and universities. McColl et. al. (2017) conducted a policy scan of disability policy across Canadian provinces, territories. The authors stated that disabled students or students with disabilities are used interchangeably (McColl et. al., 2017, p.3). Conversations with research participants suggest that either of these terms could be used depending on the context and personal preferences (personal communication, 2020).

Hutcheon & Wolbring (2012) uses the traditional language of disabled student to emphasize disablement by socio-structural or environmental factors (p.39). However, students with disabilities is used primarily for this research to emphasize person first language while acknowledging the impacts of the academic and social environments on a person’s experiences of disabilities. The second section situates the experiences of students with disabilities within the broader historical context of Canadian disabilities legislation and policy. The third section examines factors that contribute positively and negatively to a sense of inclusion and belonging for students with disabilities.

These factors are discussed under two main-themes: enablers and barriers to inclusion and belonging experiences of students with disabilities in a post-secondary context. Enablers to an inclusive post-secondary environment are discussed under social enablers such as positive attitudes from faculty and organizational enablers such as the availability of funding and understanding of disability. Literature review findings indicate that students with disabilities or disabled students face several barriers in the post-secondary context such as college or university (NEADS, Harbour & Greenberg, July 2017). These barriers range from social barriers such as negative attitudes from peers, staff and faculty to organizational/structural barriers such as the inadequate funding, staffing and lack of institutional culture and policy that supports disability inclusion (Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Hong, 2015).

As students with disabilities are a heterogenous group, the literature indicates that students with disabilities experienced these enablers and barriers in nuanced ways depending on their lived/living experiences and campus contexts (NEADS, 2018).

This chapter concludes with a summary of core themes found in the literature.

The summary of key sections in the literature review include:

- Section 1: Definitions of key terms
 - Disabilities, Visible and Invisible Disabilities
 - Enablers and Barriers
 - Inclusion and Belonging
- Section 2: Historical context of Canadian disabilities legislation and policy

- Section 3: Inclusion and belonging in a post-secondary context
 - Main theme: Enablers to inclusion and belonging
 - Sub-theme: social enablers
 - Sub-theme: organizational/structural enablers
 - Main theme: Barriers to inclusion and belonging
 - Sub-theme: social barriers
 - Sub-theme: organizational/structural barriers

The literature review chart below illustrates the focus areas discussed: the main themes, sub-themes and sub-sets or categories:

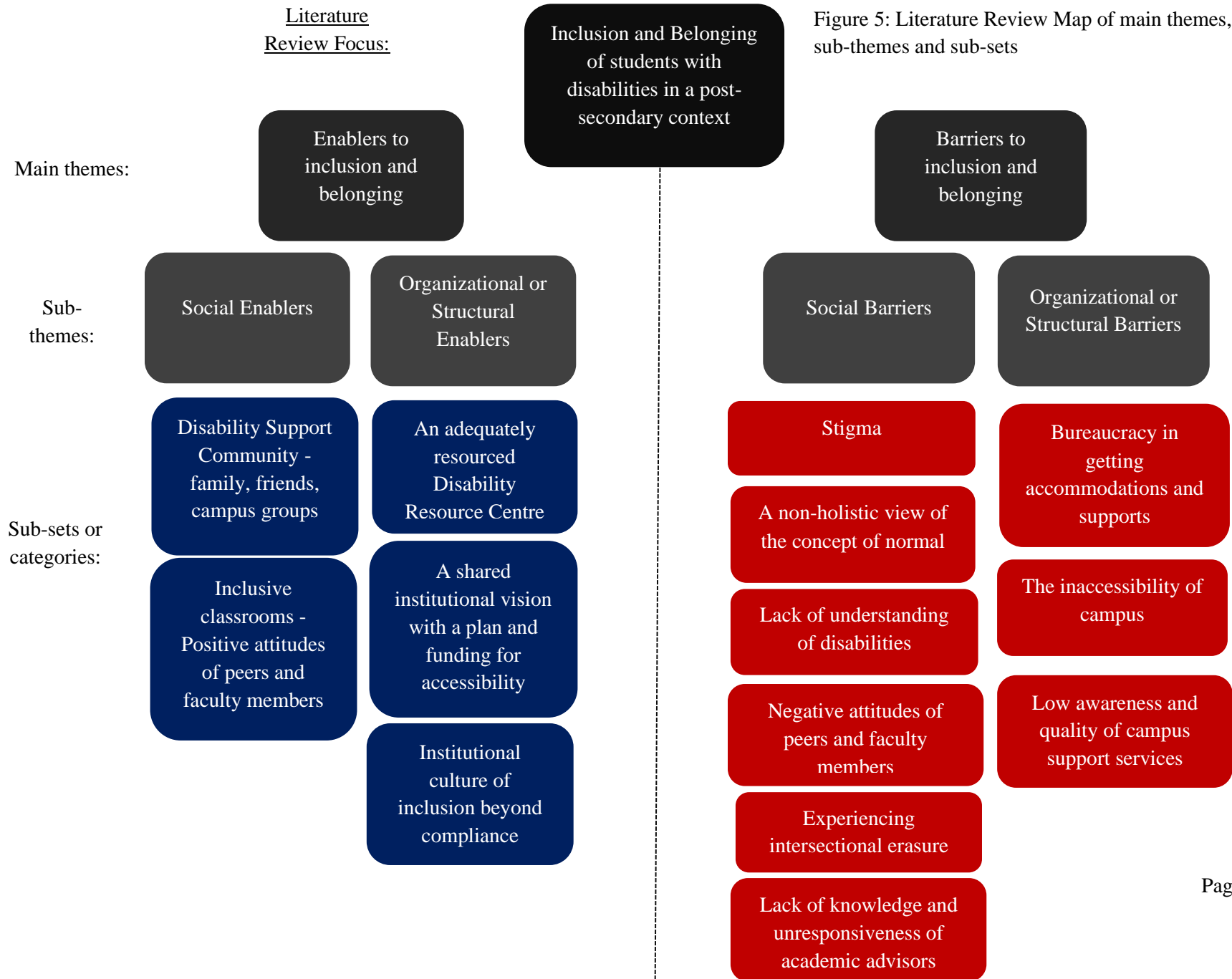


Figure 5: Literature Review Map of main themes, sub-themes and sub-sets

2.1.1 LITERATURE SEARCH STRATEGY

The review includes findings from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and grey literature from the following databases: Disability and Society, Disability and Rehabilitation, The Canadian Journal of Higher Education, Equity & Excellence in Education, Journal on Postsecondary Education and Disability, Journal of Learning Disabilities, Journal of College Student Development (United States), and Journal of Higher Education.

The review also contains findings from research briefs, reports and presentations from national and international disability research and advocacy organizations such as National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) and Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). The literature review also includes sources from various continents including North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia to provide differences in political and geographical contexts. Sources from various Canadian provinces are specified and grounded in a historical and sociopolitical context of Canadian disabilities legislation and policy.

The researcher used search words that are relevant to the research question: enablers or facilitators, barriers or challenges, accessibility, disability, disabilities, disabled, student with disabilities, college students, campus, higher education or post-secondary, Canada, inclusion or inclusive and belonging and experience.

2.2 Definition of Terms

2.2.1 DEFINING DISABILITIES

There is no one encompassing and agreed-upon definition for disability in the literature. The language on disability reflects the dominant understanding and dialogue (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012, p.40) and has shifted over time. Bogart, Lund and Rottenstein (2018) define disability as “the intersection of an impairment and individual’s contextual, personal, and environmental factors (p.156) based on International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), the World Health Organization (WHO) framework for health and disability (WHO, 2001).

WHO (2011) released the first World Report on Disability that acknowledged that disability is an evolving, multidimensional and complex concept (p.3). It defines disability as difficulties experienced in any or all three interconnected areas of functioning (WHO, 2011, p.4) below:

- *i. impairments are problems in body function or alterations in body structure – for example, paralysis or blindness;*
- *ii. activity limitations are difficulties in executing activities – for example, walking or eating;*
- *iii. participation restrictions are problems with involvement in any area of life – for example, facing discrimination in employment or transportation.*

WHO further defines disability as stemming from the interaction of health conditions with contextual factors such as environmental (e.g. attitudes, the natural and built environment, systems, policies) and personal factors (e.g. motivations, self-esteem, capacity, support network). WHO’s current definition of disability indicates a shift in language and perspective from its labelling of disability in the WHO (1980) International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps. It defines disability as a handicap (Aquino, 2016, p. 319) –

a “disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal for that individual, depending on age, gender and cultural factors.”

This difference in language is due to a shift in theoretical models from the medical model of disability rooted in the premise that disability is caused by biological impairments (Aquino, 2016) to a biopsychosocial model. The latter combines the medical model and social model to account for impairments, social and environmental constructions of disability, placing the onus on disabling environments and reduces stigma around disability (p. 319).

In the Canadian context, the WHO definition overlaps with the operational definition of disabilities used in the 2017 Canadian Survey of Disabilities (CSD). The CSD defines disability as “challenges and obstacles in an individual’s day-to-day lives may limit one’s full participation in society.” (CSD, 2017). As such, the CSD definitions includes anyone who indicated being “sometimes”, “often” or “always” limited in their daily activities due to a long-term condition or health problem and anyone who reported being “rarely” limited in their ability to do certain tasks or could only do them with a lot of difficulty.

The CSD definition is based on the social model of disability that is grounded in the principle that disability is the result of interactions between a person’s functional limitations and environmental, social and physical barriers that make it difficult to function day-to-day (Statistics Canada, November 2018). This interaction is visually represented below:

Representation of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health

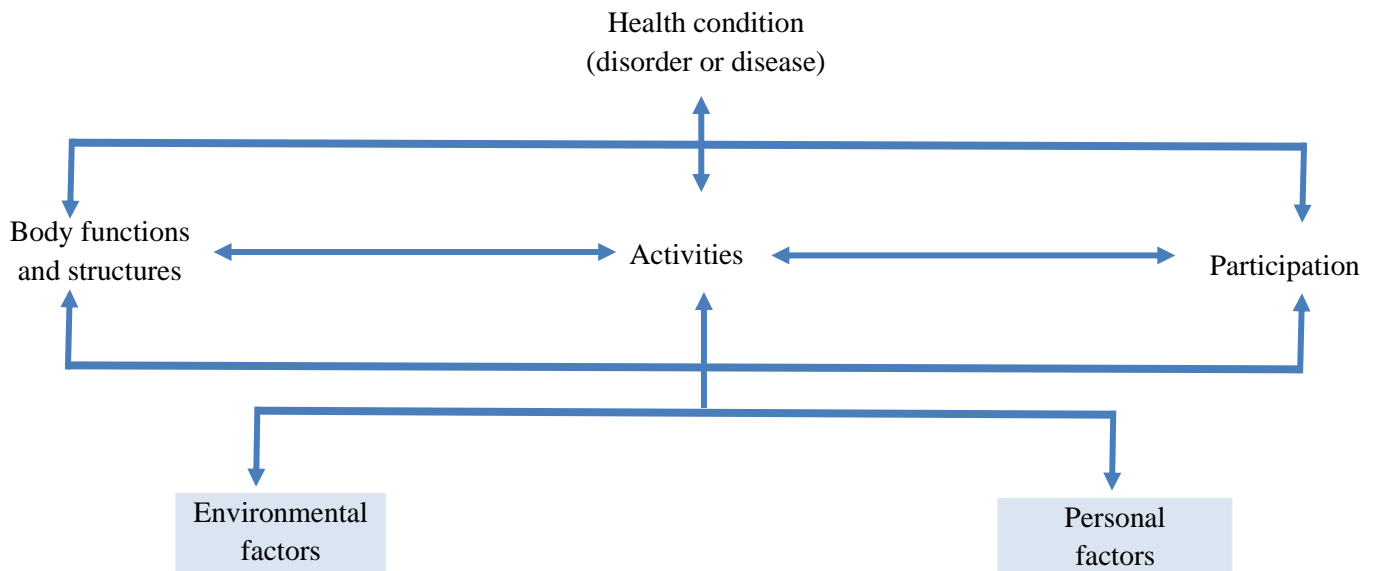


Figure 6: Who Representation of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
Figure Source: WHO, 2001

It is important to note that the ICF conceptualizes disability as a continuum, not a yes or no categorization and recommends that organizations set minimum thresholds for the three interconnected areas above (WHO, 2011, p.5). Within Canada, the Accessible Canada Act, C-81 (2019) defines disability as any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory

impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society. (handicap).”

The current research uses the definition of a person with disabilities provided in SFU’s Access Policy given the research focuses on SFU students with disabilities. SFU defines students with disabilities in the [SFU Access Policy for Students with Disabilities](#) (SFU, September 2003). According to this policy, “a student with a disability is a person who:

- *Has been diagnosed by an appropriate professional as having: a mental health impairment; physical impairment; neurological impairment; learning disorder; or sensory impairment, any/all of which may be permanent or temporary and is likely to continue and may significantly interfere with educational pursuits; AND*
- *Experiences functional restrictions or limitations in their ability to perform the range of life's activities; AND*
- *May experience attitudinal and/or environmental barriers that hamper their full and self-directed participation in life.”*

The SFU Access Policy (September 2003) defines an academic accommodation as “a modification or extension of University resources, or of teaching or evaluation procedures, which mitigates the effect of a student's disability on learning.”

Based on the above statement, SFU’s Access Policy could be summarized as including three burdens of proof:

- *Diagnosis* by an appropriate professional
- Experience of *functional restrictions or limitations*
- Experience of *attitudinal and/or environmental barriers*

Summarily, all definitions including SFU, nationally and internationally include 3 key elements: impairment, functional limitations and barriers that impact participation.

2.2.2 DEFINING VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE DISABILITIES

Although WHO does not distinguish between types and cause of disability, such as between physical or mental health, the 2017 CSD used by Statistics Canada (November 2018) identifies ten disability types, including an 11th “unknown” disability type for other health conditions that has lasted or is expected to last six months or more:

1. Seeing
2. Hearing
3. Mobility
4. Flexibility
5. Dexterity
6. Pain-related
7. Learning
8. Developmental
9. Mental health-related
10. Memory

Some researchers distinguish these types of disabilities as visible or invisible disabilities (Matthews & Harrington, 2000; Abes & Wallace, 2018, p. 549). Visible disabilities are defined as both physical and

mental conditions that are immediately noticeable by an observer (Matthews & Harrington, 2000; Tam, Chan, Lam & Lam, 2003, p.364). Some examples of visible disabilities include cerebral palsy, different levels of spinal cord injury, etc. (Tam et. al, 2003, p. 366).

Invisible disabilities are described as disabilities that are not observed readily or disabilities that interfere with day-to-day functioning, but do not have a physical manifestation (Matthew & Harrington (2000); Mullins & Preyde, (2013, p.148); Kreider, Bendixen & Lutz, (2015, p. 427)). Some examples of invisible disabilities include chronic pain, learning disabilities, dyslexia, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, psychosocial disabilities or mental illness (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p.147; Harbour & Greenberg, 2017, p.10).

Students with disabilities could decide whether they disclose their disabilities depending on their circumstances, particularly to obtain accommodations for accessibility needs (Cesarei, 2015, pp. 667 – 668). The implications for having visible or invisible disabilities differ by individual and social circumstances. Mullins & Preyde (2013) conducted a study on the lived experiences of students with invisible disabilities in a university in south-central Ontario. They state that college students with invisible disabilities may likely be treated like a person without disabilities. However, this invisibility raises concerns that others may question the validity of the individual's disability and not fully understand the full extent of their limitations.

The implications for having visible or invisible disabilities differ by individual and social circumstances. Mullins & Preyde (2013) conducted a study on the lived experiences of students with invisible disabilities in a university in south-central Ontario. They state that college students with invisible disabilities may likely be treated like a person without disabilities. However, this invisibility raises concerns that others may question the validity of the individual's disabilities and not fully understand the full extent of their limitations. Students with invisible disabilities also raise concerns such as having to provide extensive documentation to prove their disabilities, the emotional burden of being asked to explain their disabilities and concerns with being viewed as less legitimate (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, pp 149 – 154

2.2.3 DEFINING ENABLERS AND BARRIERS

Bjornsdottir (2017) studies belonging and inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities in Iceland. The researcher highlights that the interaction between enablers and barriers is key in defining a person's sense of belonging (p. 130). Several researchers define enablers and barriers in terms of how they positively or negatively impact one's sense of being part of the community.

Enablers

Researchers use various terms such as facilitators (Duquette, 2000; (Newman, Maurer, Jackson, Saxon, Jones & Reese, 2008), supports (Harbour & Greenberg, 2017; Scott, 2019), or enablers (Bjornsdottir, 2017) interchangeably to describe factors that foster an inclusive campus environment where students with disabilities integrate into the academic and social life at their university (Duquette, 2000, p.14). Examples of enablers include positive attitudes of faculty and peers, adequate disability supports and services that are discussed in subsequent sections (Harbour & Greenberg, 2017). Enablers are contrasted with barriers, factors that limit the inclusion and belonging of students with disabilities.

Barriers

A barrier is a frequently used term in the literature (Newman et. al, 2008; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Cesarei, 2015; Cunnah, 2015; Hong et. al, 2015; Harbour & Greenberg, 2017). The term, barrier is grounded in the social model of disability that asserts that everyone is equal and society erects barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating, restricts their opportunities and access to societal resources (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p.193; Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p. 148). The social model calls for society to remove these barriers to access using a systems lens than focus on curing individual impairments (Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC), 2011). Therefore, the social model is considered more empowering for people with disabilities.

The social model contrasts with the medical model of disability that views disability as a medical condition (NEADS, 2018, p. 45) and focuses on creating accommodations for access. Critics suggest that this model ignores the environmental factors or disabling conditions that limit the participation of people with disabilities (NEADS, 2018). Other researchers raise opposing concerns that a focus on the social model of inclusion overemphasizes the environmental or attitudinal barriers and may lead to not acknowledging that disabilities exists (Cunnah, 2015, p. 216).

Strnadova, Johnson & Walmsley (2018) conducted a study of barriers to belonging among 24 participants with intellectual disabilities in Australia. Strnadova et. al. (2018). The authors suggest that barriers are factors such as discrimination and bullying that hinder a sense of belonging and day-to-day life, work and study for persons with disabilities (p. 1099).

For this literature review, a barrier is defined according to Chapter 10 Sections 2 - 5 of the Accessible Canada Act, C-81 (2019, p. 2):

- *“barrier means anything — including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice — that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. (obstacle).”*

Mullins & Preyde (2013) and Harbour & Greenberg (2017) discuss barriers within higher education, highlighting physical, social/attitudinal barriers or institutional barriers that make the campus environment less welcoming and inclusive for students with disabilities (pp. 4 – 5). Social barriers may include behaviours or attitudes of a group towards an individual or group such as stigma, faculty perceptions, lack of understanding of disabilities (Hong, 2015; Bjornsdottir, 2017, p. 130). These social or attitudinal barriers prevents students with disabilities from getting accommodations in a post-secondary environment which has consequences for their academic, health and employment success and well-being (NEADS, 2018, p. 44).

Institutional barriers are structural issues that arise from the design and organization of processes, protocols or systems that pose challenges for students to be included and accommodated in all aspects of academic and student life (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 194; Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p. 147). Some structural or institutional barriers include gaps in campus access and support and experiences, experiences with the Disability Resource Office and campus climate Scott & Harbour, 2018). Both social and structural barriers are further discussed in subsequent sections.

2.2.4 DEFINING BELONGING

2.2.4.1 MODELS OF BELONGING FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

There are varied definitions of sense of belonging in the literature. Scholars such as Hurdato & Carter (1997) state that a sense of belonging consists of mental and emotional factors that influence how an individual perceives their role in relation to a group based on various forms of academic and social interactions (p.328). Contrary to Tinto (1993), they posit that bridging one's prior communities with one's new post-secondary context is an important aspect of students' sense of social and academic integration in their campus (p.329).

Booker (2016) propose that a sense of belonging is a feeling of connectedness to others, being accepted, respected, included and valued by others. They suggest that faculty and peers are key players that encourage or discourage a sense of belonging in the classroom context. Research shows that when students feel like they are part of the class such as a sense of membership with peers and positive interactions with a faculty member, they are more likely to challenge themselves, take risks to achieve their goals and gain increased connections to their campus community (Booker, 2016, p. 219).

Several factors influence students' belonging on campuses. Zimmer (2012) hypothesizes the identification-participation model of school engagement. The model includes three aspects: *identification* with the school, a *feeling of belonging* to the school and a *belief* that the students feels welcome, respected and included. Zimmer (2012) argues that the students' sense of identification with the school is an antecedent to feeling that they belong. While this may apply in some cases, it is likely that a student may feel like they belong to a small network such as student club without necessarily identifying with the school collectively.

Strayhorn (2012) also developed a model of college students' sense of belonging from research on diverse student populations in the United States (U.S.). The model has three key elements of belonging: mattering, a students' social identities and their specific context (Strayhorn, 2012; Duran, 2019, p.154). This model suggests that the feeling of belonging varies by one's social identities (e.g. racial or gender identities) and context such as in a classroom, club, department, or the campus at large. This suggests that students' sense of belonging is influenced by the unique context of their post-secondary institution.

Students are likely to feel a greater sense of belonging when their colleges and universities make intentional efforts to show that all students are valued and matter in the community. Strayhorn (2012) and Zimmer (2012) both argue that belonging is connected to students' identities and the feeling that one matters in a specific school. Although Strayhorn's model takes a multidimensional perspective on belonging, it is not based on studies of students with disabilities (Vaccaro, Daly-Cano, Newman, 2015, p. 682).

Belonging is also influenced by students' intersecting identities of race, gender and disability. Duran (2019) draws from Strayhorn (2012) in a study of sense of belonging among queer students of colour in a large, predominantly White - Midwestern State University in the U.S (p.155). The findings indicate that belonging for queer students of colour results from having their marginalized identities validated, based on their personal interests and exist in smaller networks, not campus-wide (Duran, 2019, pp. 158, 162).

Duran's (2019) research reveals that institutional environments, particularly predominantly White and heterosexual could adversely impact students with marginalized identities (Strayhorn, 2012, p.17) in feeling like they belong in their campus community (Duran, 2019, p. 164) if their intersecting identities are not represented in the broader campus community. It suggests that experiences of belonging are more nuanced and complex for students with disabilities depending on their intersecting gender and racial differences. It also implies that faculty and student affairs practitioners need to re-evaluate their teaching, programming, policies and supports by providing unique experiences that reflect the interest, diverse identities of marginalized students (p.165).

2.2.4.2 MODELS OF BELONGING FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

There is limited literature on research on belonging specific to students with disabilities in post-secondary institutions (Vaccaro, Daly-Cano, Newman, 2015, p. 672). Strange (2000) argue that physically accessible spaces with psychological features influence sense of belonging for students with disabilities. Shepler & Woosley (2012) found that students with disabilities in a U.S. Midwest public university did not have significantly different experiences than their non-disabled peers on transitions issues such as academic or social integration, institutional attachment or home sickness (p.47). One caveat to Shepler & Woosley (2012) is that their study was limited to only students with disabilities who were registered with the office for students with disabilities. As such, their study does not include students with disabilities who were not registered.

Conversely, Vaccaro, Daly-Cano & Newman (2015) explored the experiences of students with disabilities at a midsize public research university in the U.S. (p.674). They developed an emergent theoretical model of a sense of belonging among first-year college students with disabilities.

For this photovoice research project, I operationalize sense of belonging among students with disabilities using the Vaccaro et. al. (2015) model: the multidirectional interaction between belonging, self-advocacy, social relationships and mastery of the student role (p. 683).

Students with disabilities' belonging increases when their social relationships increase or deepen on campus. Students with disabilities also noted that their social relationships with faculty and peers also strengthened their self-advocacy skills and mastery of their student role academically and socially (p. 681). Accordingly, developing social relationships with peers, staff or faculty is essential to developing a sense of belonging. They also reported increased sense of belonging contributed to their self-confidence and self-advocacy. For instance, when a professor spends time to get to know their students, it increased their confidence and likelihood of academic mastery in improved grades and understanding of course material (p. 682). These elements combined influence students' sense of belonging in a post-secondary context.

The Vaccaro et. al (2015) model is illustrated below:

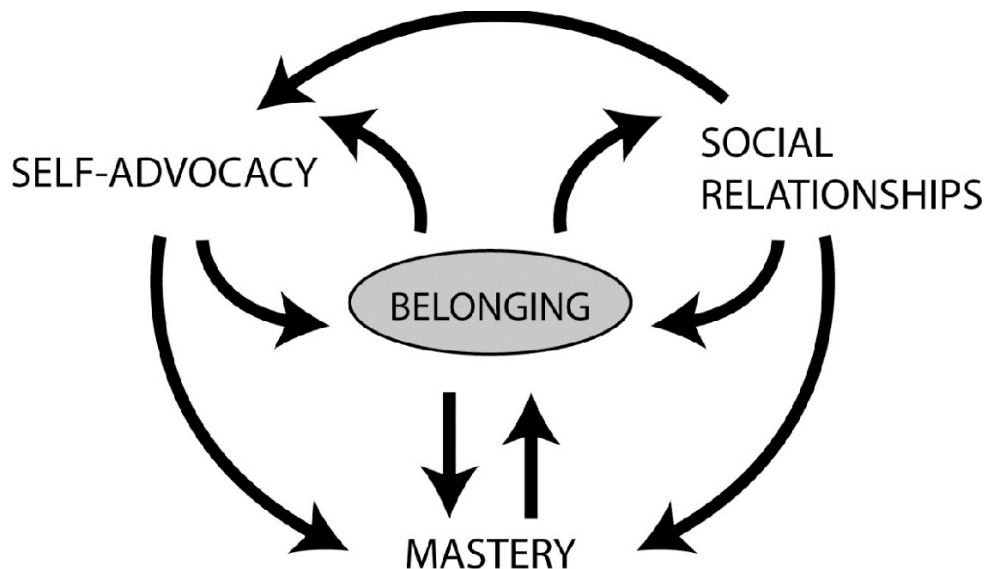


Figure 7: Theoretical Model of Belonging for College Students with Disabilities (Vaccaro et. al. (2015)).

A strength of the Vaccaro et. al. (2015) model is that it emphasizes a multidimensional approach in the interaction between each element. A limitation of this model is that it derives from research focused on

first-year students with disabilities. There are likely more factors not accounted for that influence the experiences of belonging of students with disabilities as they progress through their undergraduate and graduate programs. These factors may include their persistence in more senior years (Shepler & Woosley, 2012, p.39), academic, social or career factors as they transition out of college or university.

A sense of belonging also differs for students with visible or invisible disabilities. Mullins & Preyde (2013) noted that students with invisible disabilities at a Canadian university in south-central Ontario were less likely than their peers with a visible disability to feel like they belonged or were understood (p.154). The participants report that because their disabilities were not seen physically, it was more challenging for them to disclose their disability and that other people including peers or faculty questioned the validity of their invisible disabilities (Mulling & Preyde, 2013, p. 154; Hong, 2015, p.210).

These misconceptions suggest the need for more discussions about both visible and invisible disabilities to normalize understanding of disability and foster a more welcoming campus culture. Strange (2000) recommends that educators and researchers redesign campus learning environments, programs, policies and practices that include and involve all student, regardless of their individual differences (p. 28). In summary, belonging for students with disabilities is to know and feel like one matter, is respected, accepted and valued for who they are within a specific group or context.

Research on post-secondary students with students' transitions is gaining more attention through advocacy organizations such as NEADS and by disability scholars. Further Canadian research is needed to understand the unique experiences of post-secondary student's experiences of belonging. More research is also needed on the role that Canadian universities can play to foster students with disabilities' sense of belonging in all facets of student life beyond academics to include athletics and recreation (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 195), social, health, spirituality and residence and housing. These facets are integral to fostering leadership skills, belonging, a sense of community (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 194).

2.2.5. DEFINING INCLUSION

Various scholars suggest that inclusion depends on context. Within a European context, Björnsdóttir (2017) studied the experiences of inclusion of student with disabilities in Iceland. For this photovoice research project, inclusion is defined as the process of including a person or group within processes, structures and everyday experiences (Björnsdóttir, 2017, p. 127). It raises questions on the kinds of experiences students with disabilities are included in. It highlights an underlying power dynamic between those who choose to include and those who are included.

The author also identifies meaningful participation as a critical element of inclusion for persons with disabilities (p. 129). Meaningful participation is subjective and depends on who is including and who is being included. Björnsdóttir (2017) argues that the voices of persons with disabilities are excluded from the dialogue on inclusion (p.129). As such, their perspectives are vital in understanding what constitutes meaningful inclusion and participation.

Like definitions of belonging, inclusion is also multidimensional in the context of Canadian disability policies and programs (Prince, 2004). Inclusion happens every day or episodically, in formal or informal settings, and on interpersonal, organizational or intersectoral levels (Prince, 2004, p.79). Inclusion is building considerations for disabilities into mainstream programs, policies and practices. Concurrently, inclusion is also co-developing complementary programs and services with people with disabilities that address additional disadvantages they face in society (p.79).

Inclusion and belonging are interconnected and contextual. Both belonging and inclusion suggest that an individual, regardless of their identities, is welcome and valued by their communities. A student may be included but may not feel a sense of belonging if they do not feel like they matter and are fully accepted for

who they are in a specific post-secondary context. However, a student who feels a sense of belonging feels included by their campus network or community.

Cunnah (2015) draws connections between disability inclusion and identity in a longitudinal cohort study of disabled students in higher education and employability contexts (p. 217). This study was conducted in the United Kingdom (U.K.). The researcher suggests that many disabled students are still excluded in university and in work settings. Disabled students often experience discrimination, negative labelling and stigma related to their disability (p. 221). Discrimination is systemic and structural. It is deeply rooted in attitudes, assumptions, the built environment and institutional systems (p. 223). Therefore, discrimination contributes to continuous disadvantages and exclusion that disabled students face compared to their non-disabled peers. As post-secondary institutions are both places of learning and employment, they need to consider an integrated approach to foster inclusive campus environments for students with disabilities.

Gillies & Dupuis (2013) developed a planning framework to support Canadian universities in creating an accessible and inclusive campus community (p. 196). The study included students with and without disabilities, alumni with disabilities, staff, faculty, and administrators at the University of Guelph, Canada. The framework is based on six guiding principles: access for all; valuing the diversity and uniqueness of all; valuing interdependence and social responsibility; value diverse knowledge bases; voices and perspectives; value the power of learning and education as tools for growth and change, and value the whole person (p.198). These principles indicate that all members of the university play a role in contributing to an inclusive campus culture. They also imply a shift from normative perceptions of ability as being able-bodied to celebrating diversity identities including the strengths of students with disabilities.

These principles are demonstrated in Inclusive Post-secondary Education (IPSE) programs in Canada (Aylward & Bruce, 2014). IPSEs are based on the principles of access and participation for all (p.42). Aylward & Bruce (2014) assert that an inclusive post-secondary education is one that focuses on creating a meaningful place for all, that promotes human development, not for a few but for all (p. 42). IPSE programs exist in 9 provinces and originated in Alberta for students to gain relevant employment experience and preparation (p.45). In British Columbia (BC), Canada, IPSE programs were developed by parents who aimed to create welcoming campus environments for students with developmental disabilities, regardless of the nature of the disability. IPSE programs across provinces vary and are adapted to meet students' learning and employment needs. Aylward & Bruce (2014) suggest that no one should be left behind, implying inclusion for all in the campus community.

2.3 Historical context of Canadian disabilities legislation and their impacts on post-secondary education

2.3.1 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol is the first comprehensive international human rights treaty of the 21st century among State Parties to 'promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities' (Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), 2018, United Nations, 2006, 2019).

Canada ratified the CRPD in 2010 (ESDC, 2019) among 181 ratifications and 163 signatures till date (UN, 2019). The CRPD establishes education as a basic human right for persons with disabilities (NEADS, 2018, p. 19). Recently, Canada also acceded to the Optional Protocol of the CRPD (ESDC, 2019). This ascension opens more recourse under the Convention for approximately 6.2 million individuals or 22% of Canadian population aged 15 years and over reported as living with a disability (Canadian Survey on Disabilities, 2017; ESDC, 2019).

In the United States (U.S.), the American Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990 and amended in 2008. The ADA is civil rights laws that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in all aspects of public life including education, transportation, employment, and public and private spaces that are open to the general public (National Network Information, Guidance and Training on the ADA (NNIGT), April 2020).

The ADA is within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Justice and exerts significant authority by prescribing how individuals and institutions must implement accessibility standards in compliance with the ADA (NNIGT, April 2020). Citizen complaints about violation of their rights are addressed as civil rights and the government investigates and enforces compliance measures (U.S. Department of Justice, February 21, 2019).

Many U.S. campuses have an ADA coordinator, working group and designated staff to ensure compliance with state and federal accessibility laws (Harbour & Greenberg, July 2017, p.15). However, the researchers state that many campuses are not still equipped to fully address the needs of students with disabilities even when compliant with the ADA (p.15). Harbour & Greenberg (2017) emphasizes that pressing issues are still unaddressed such as the lack of specific legislative calls for universities to mandate access and compliance for supportive campus structures, services and supports both academically and socially (p.9).

2.3.2 CANADIAN CONTEXT

Disability legislation and policy in Canada is complex and fragmented among many government departments and 13 provincial and territorial jurisdictions (Canadian Disability Policy Alliance, 2017; Stienstra, 2018). Jongbloed & Crichton (1990) and Prince (2004) provide a critical analysis of socio-political policy development and history of Canadian disability policies. In the 1980s till the early 2000s, they highlight the outstanding achievement of disability groups in advocating for themselves such as the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Sections 15(1) and (2) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* ((Jongbloed & Crichton, 1990, p.34; Jongbloed, 2003, p. 206; Prince, 2004, p.64).

In the past three decades, both provincial and federal governments have made attempts to adopt or amend legislations to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. In criticizing these legislations, Brown (1977) and Prince (2004) describe disability policies in Canada as a “hit or miss affair” given their fragmentation, incomplete information systems, inadequate follow up programs and insufficient linkages to social programs (p. 60).

A recurring theme among previous disability policies and governmental efforts is the lack of a “disability lens” or the understanding of the real impacts of these policies through the lived experiences of persons with disabilities (p.68). Jongbloed (2003) called for agreements across government jurisdictions to develop a comprehensive accessibility strategy to address the identified challenges (p. 207). Prince (2004) called for disability considerations in both mainstream policies and programs and specific complementary services and supports for persons with disabilities as needed (p. 79).

A discussion on Canadian disability policy is incomplete without discussing the impacts of Canada’s colonial history and present. Stienstra (2018) states these impacts include imposing the medical model of disability on diverse Indigenous peoples (p. 4). The ongoing legacy of residential schools in Canada still poses barriers to the adoption of Indigenous approaches such as community-based disability supports (p.4). Stienstra (2018) notes that there is room for improvements in decolonizing our understanding and approach to disability such as rethinking the use of language such as impairment and disability which were not part of many Indigenous languages (p. 7).

Reflections on labelling and the use of language hold implications for how Indigenous students with disabilities are supported in higher education through culturally appropriate ways. It also suggests the need to appropriately label and develop campus supports and services in ways that encourage students to access them, while considering the intergenerational impacts of colonization. The researcher advocates for investment in reconciliatory efforts to foster mutual learning between and across Indigenous and Western knowledge systems in shaping disability policies in Canada (p.9).

2.3.3 IMPACTS ON LEGISLATION ON DISABLED STUDENT EXPERIENCES WITHIN CANADIAN POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Canada's legal obligation to the CRPD poses a legal obligation for its provinces to develop or consider creating accessibility legislation. Provincial and national legislations serve as guiding frameworks for Canadian colleges and universities to establish or improve mechanisms (NEADS, 2018, p. 19) for providing disability-related accommodations, services and supports.

Several provincial and federal legislation exist to eliminate barriers and prohibit discrimination against specific groups including persons with disabilities. These laws include the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Canadian Human Rights Act, *Canada Elections Act*, Employment Equity Act (Government of Canada, 2018; Essential Accessibility, June 2019). Their adoption resulted in increased attendance of students with disabilities (SWDs) in Canadian universities (Duquette, 2000; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). Although there are more students with disabilities in universities, they are still marginalized due to disabling campus cultures and environments, and the lack of a framework for inclusion (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013).

Most Canadian universities have an Office or Disability Resource Centre to provide supports and services to SWDs on campus. However, the over-reliance of universities on these support services is problematic for students to be adequately supported and included within the broader university community (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p.194). This traditional services framework places inclusion and accommodation as an afterthought, instead of as an integral aspect of student experience, campus life and structure (p. 194).

As a legislative effort to make Canada more barrier-free and accessible, the Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81) received royal assent in June 2019 with approximately \$290 million pledged over six years to further the legislation's objectives (ESDC, 2019). The law is yet to come into force. The Accessible Canada Act (2019) does not yet provide a mandate or direct reference to how universities or educational institutions must strive to achieve compliance to accessibility standards such as a mandate to provide services, supports, policies and structures that foster an inclusive campus environment. The unintended consequence of a non-prescriptive legal approach is that organizations including universities may still wait to seek guidance from the provincial and federal governments, thus fostering a culture of inaction towards a barrier-free society.

2.3.4 ACCESSIBILITY LEGISLATION IN CANADIAN PROVINCES

Four Canadian provinces till date have a provincial disability legislation (Canadian Disability Policy Alliance (CDPA), 2017; Essential Accessibility, June 2019). These legislations include the:

- Quebec's Act ***Respecting Equal Access to Employment in Public Bodies*** prevents public sector employers from discriminating against potential or current employees with disabilities. It aimed to achieve social, school and workplace integration. It was the first province to pass an accessibility law, created in 1978 and revised in 2004.
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) that became law in 2005. It is the oldest of its kind in Canada as it mandates public and private sectors to adhere to established accessibility standards in relating with the public. These standards are grouped into 5 categories:

information and communication, employment, customer service, transportation and design of public spaces.

- The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) which became law in 2013. Similar in structure and accessibility groupings to the AODA, it provides mandatory accessibility standards that apply to both public and private sectors. Both the AODA and AMA include an Accessible Information and Communications Standard to ensure accessibility of information, specifically online accessibility.
- And the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act passed in 2017 with the development of five accessibility standards (Accessibility Services Canada, 2019).

Flaherty & Roussy (2014) examines the strengths and failures of the AODA in Ontarian post-secondary institutions (PSIs). They acknowledge that the AODA standards creates a legal obligation for PSIs to be more proactive in improving accessibility. Colleges and universities as designated public sector organizations are required to use reasonable efforts to ensure integrated and accessible services for persons with disabilities (p.12). For example, universities are compelled to provide appropriate training to everyone who interacts with members of the public including how to interact with persons with disabilities. As such, all teaching faculty and many employees participate in some of disability awareness training (p.13).

Nonetheless, the AODA's impact on fostering more accessible educational environments is limited. Flaherty & Roussy (2014) argue that students with disabilities still face many barriers, particularly attitudinal barriers and that a single legislation is insufficient for addressing the complex issues surrounding disability in post-secondary education (p. 2). Other AODA critics cite limitations such as the lack of reporting and deterrence measures for non-compliant organizations (Flaherty & Roussy, 2014, p. 17; Vancouver Sun, January 2019). The need for accountability, implementation of compliance protocols and reporting were raised as critical elements needed for the proposed BC accessibility legislation to fulfil its intended goal of making BC a truly inclusive province by 2024 (Government of BC, 2017).

2.3.5 BC HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Nearly 25% of British Columbians (or over 926,000 individuals) aged 15 and over has a disability (Government of BC, 2019). BC does not currently have its accessibility legislation. Recent provincial consultations were conducted from September to November 2019 to gather feedback from British Columbians for the development of accessibility laws, standards and policies (Government of BC, 2019). Community input will guide the adoption of the proposed British Columbia (BC) Accessibility Act Bill M 219, for improving accessibility and inclusion for and with persons with disabilities in BC. Disabled community members who participated in the BC consultations voiced concerns over the need for accountability structures to encourage compliance with provincial legislation and alignment with the federal Accessible Canada Act (Vancouver Sun, January 2019; Government of BC, September 2019).

Law and policy significantly influence individual, institutional and societal behaviours, structures and priorities. It is critical that the proposed BC legislation has an accountability process and organization that compels institutions including business, colleges or universities and government agencies to comply with the tenants of the legislation. In addition, the adoption of a BC accessibility legislation could catalyze government funding opportunities, systems of support and activate institutional will of academic leaders of BC colleges and universities to address structural issues towards improving accessibility in programming and policy areas in and beyond the institution.

Furthermore, a review of other Canadian provinces with disability legislation suggests that the existence or absence of provincial disability legislation creates varied experiences of inclusion among students with

disabilities across Canadian post-secondary institutions. For example, colleges and universities in Ontario are currently held to a higher standard of accessibility because of the existence of the AODA than in BC where accessibility legislation is yet to come into force to mandate inclusive post-secondary practices.

The lack of provincial legislation creates gaps in compliance and accountability as there is limited legal obligation for colleges and universities to improve accessibility of their services and supports. This gap in legislative compliance further creates inequitable and inconsistent student experiences within and across post-secondary institutions, particularly when campus services or groups act discretionally without a guiding, prescriptive legal framework. Further implications are that students with disabilities may be unclear on how to effectively report cases when their rights are infringed, and institutions and university members may not always follow through with corrective or preventive action. Acknowledging the current realities of the BC educational system and legislative landscape can help shape solutions to adequately support students with disabilities at SFU.

2.4 Main themes - Enablers for an inclusive campus environment

Canadian research by Duquette (2000), Gillies & Dupuis (2013) and U.S. research by Scott (2019) discuss social and structural enabling factors that contribute to an inclusive campus environment for students with disabilities. Findings from their research identify several key enablers (Sally, 2019, p.4):

- the disability community:
 - supportive family, friends and campus groups foster a sense of community and belonging. These supportive relationships promote the sense that students with disabilities are valued and can thrive in their post-secondary institutions
- an inclusive classroom:
 - informed instructors and positive interactions with peers and faculty contribute to increasing a welcoming and accessible learning environment for students with disabilities
- self-advocacy skills:
 - students' confidence in claiming their disability identity and advocating for their rights increases their feelings of belonging and access to participate in the classroom and campus activities.
- adequate staffing and supports at the Disability Resource Office:
 - The Disability Office plays an important supportive and advocacy role for students with disabilities e.g. providing effective accommodations, centralizing procedures for accommodations, advocating for institutions to address accessibility concerns impacting the student experience. A well-resourced Disability Resource Office is better positioned to respond proactively to the needs of students with disabilities
- a campus wide accessibility plan with funding:
 - An institutional strategy backed with consistent funding ensures that accessibility is planned for and not an afterthought in campus planning and policy development. A campus-wide accessibility plan supported by senior administrators demonstrates an institutional commitment to supporting people with disabilities to fully participate in all aspects of university life.
- an institutional culture of inclusion beyond compliance:
 - Moving beyond compliance aligns with an institutional commitment with accountability structures to ensure that all students with disabilities thrive and realize their full potential.

Each enabler is discussed in detail in subsequent sub-sections.

2.4.1 SOCIAL ENABLERS

2.4.1.1 THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY - SUPPORT OF FAMILY, FRIENDS AND CAMPUS GROUPS

Duquette (2000) studied the perceptions of students with disabilities on their experiences at a Canadian university. The author found that supportive family and friends played a significant role in students' motivation to persist through their degrees and sense of connectedness, particularly in moments when they were discouraged about their academics. The moral support was often helpful when their test or assignment scores were below their expectations or when their requests for accommodations such as additional time from professors to get through schoolwork were declined (Duquette, 2000, p.15).

Putman (1993, 2000) discusses the value of social capital and having a network of people to rely on. He categorizes social capital into bonding and bridging social capital; the former describes connections within a group or community such as family members and close friends while the latter describes connections between social groups or networks such as in a campus environment (Social Capital Research and Training, 2018). As students bridge into the campus environment, campus groups such as clubs developed by and with students with disabilities contribute to creating an inclusive campus environment by building communities of care and support.

Most participants who were all students with disabilities in an Ontario based study by Scott (2019) noted that having a disability community on campus was helpful in promoting an increased sense of belonging. Students commented that it helped to know that there were other students with shared experiences of having a disability on their campus (p.17). Duquette (2000) emphasizes the importance of positive social relationships both at home and on campus in fostering a sense of connection for students with disabilities as they navigate and overcome barriers in higher education.

2.4.1.2 INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS - POSITIVE ATTITUDES OF PEERS AND FACULTY MEMBERS

Positive relationships with peers and faculty members within the post-secondary context are also important bridging social capital that fosters an inclusive campus environment where students with disabilities thrive and feel welcome. Hong (2015) and Scott (219) noted that positive interactions with peers and faculty members also contribute to a supportive learning as students are more likely to feel that their faculty members care about them and their academic success.

Some participants noted that their academic performance improved when faculty members were understanding of their disability and made accommodations to support them to thrive in their courses (Scott, 2019, p. 17). Participants also felt included when their peers were also accepting of the students' disabilities without judgment. Participants noted that positive comments from peers and faculty that indicated a willingness and openness to understanding the students' disabilities and saw them as capable made students feel included and that they mattered.

2.4.2 ORGANIZATIONAL/STRUCTURAL ENABLERS:

2.4.2.1 AN EFFECTIVE DISABILITY RESOURCE OFFICE

Most colleges and universities have a Disability Resource Office or a Centre for students to access disability services and resources. Students with disabilities in Scott (2019) focus groups echoed the importance of having a supportive disability resource office that encourages an inclusive and welcoming campus environment. A supportive office was described as fostering positive interactions with staff and advisors who were welcoming and understanding (Corby et.al, 2018, p. 10), easy and streamlined campus procedures and effective accommodations as well as clear and consistent referrals and communications across campus units and departments (Scott, 2019, p. 16).

For instance, students cited providing faculty accommodation letters as being convenient, useful and efficient as it decreased the number of back and forth between faculty and the disability resource office (Scott, 2019, p.16). Students also noted that it reduced the amount of paperwork that often comes with securing disability documentation for accommodations. In addition, the disability resource office, when adequately resourced with funding and staffing, could also be effective at advocating a campus-wide level for improved accessibility of the campus.

2.4.2.2 A SHARED VISION WITH A PLAN AND FUNDING FOR ACCESSIBILITY

Six conditions for sustaining an inclusive campus culture were identified by Gillies & Dupuis (2013). Of these conditions, a shared vision, a plan for achieving the vision and funding to integrate physical and social accessibility enhancements into annual budgets are key for sustainability (p. 207). A consistent and proactive accessibility plan empowers post-secondary institutions to respond more effectively to emerging students' needs and address concerns. It also ensures that students with and without disabilities do not fall through the cracks when there is no plan or inadequate funding to remove barriers to access to supports and resources.

When students are aware that the institution has a plan in place to ensure they succeed, it signals that they are welcome and valued at the institution. Accessibility structures such as a shared vision and funding open opportunities for students with disabilities to become more involved in the curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular aspects of post-secondary institutions (p. 207).

2.4.2.3 AN INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE OF INCLUSION BEYOND COMPLIANCE

Post-secondary institutions (PSIs) that reach beyond accessibility compliance (Scott, 2019) contribute to creating an inclusive campus environment for students with disabilities to thrive and succeed. It is vital that PSIs adhere to legislation on accessibility standards and to develop structures that allow for its community members to be treated equitably and fairly. Staff participants in the Gillies and Dupuis (2013) study at the University of Guelph underscored the importance of having senior leaders at the institution who communicated and embodied the values of inclusion and accessibility by sending key messages to their staff that all students matter and there is a collective responsibility to build a warm and welcoming culture grounded in compassion and inclusion (p. 207).

When students, staff and faculty in PSIs internalize the value of accessibility, it suggests that inclusion is not just a check box to satisfy legislative requirements, rather an integral aspect of campus life and student success. It also suggests that community members are willing to go the extra mile to ensure that no student feels left behind and that students can participate fully in all aspects of campus life including academically, socially, spiritually and physically.

Kaufman (2003) in Gillies & Dupuis (2013) asserts that institutions can better serve the needs of its members when its community members transform the structures within which it operates to stop systems of oppression (p. 209) such as ableism from being reproduced. Gillies & Dupuis (2008) recommends that developing meaningful connections with one another increases our awareness of our interconnectedness and interdependence, thus we are less likely to exclude and inadvertently cause harm to those within our networks. Consequently, building cross-departmental relationships across organizational siloes are key for fostering a campus culture and shared vision that supports disability inclusion and equity (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 207).

2.5 Main themes - Barriers to an inclusive campus environment

Hill (1992) undertook the first comprehensive evaluation of accessibility of Canadian universities. Based on an analysis of reports from service providers, Hill (1992) found that amidst the availability of accommodation services, multiple barriers exist to accessing services and feeling included on campus for students with disabilities. Hong (2015) conducted a qualitative analysis of the barriers of the college students with disabilities experience in higher education in the U.S. Mullins & Preyde (2013) also analyzed the lived experiences of students with disabilities in a Canadian university. They identified several social and organizational barriers.

The barriers identified include (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p. 148; Hong, 2015, p. 213):

- stigma:
 - Stigma and negative labelling negatively impact the sense of belonging and inclusion of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are less likely to disclose their disabilities or feel that they belong on campus due to negative stereotypes about persons with disabilities.
- negative perceptions and attitudes of students, staff and faculty:
 - faculty perceptions and lower expectation of academic skills were frequently cited barriers by students with disabilities (Hong, 2015, p. 214). Many students reported past experiences where faculty or peers disbelieved their disability or need for accommodations, thus feeling excluded and unwelcome in the campus community (p.215).
- the unresponsiveness and lack of knowledge of academic advisors
 - Students with disabilities who experienced negative encounters with their academic advisors were less likely to seek out support with their course planning. Consequently, these students were had a hard time assessing the impacts of their disability on their course load (Hong, 2015, p. 217). A few students who report positive experiences felt respected and not judged.
- lack of financial and human resources capital:
 - The lack of financial and human resources creates challenges in adequately responding to the needs of students with disabilities at a campus-wide level.
- accessibility of the physical campus:
 - The physical accessibility of the campus impacts the sense of belonging and inclusion of students with disabilities. Inaccessible campus spaces pose difficulties for students to navigate the physical space and access classrooms and campus resources.
- mental and emotional stressors:
 - Students with disabilities face additional challenges than their disabled peers such as the mental and emotional burden of self-advocacy. Students also face additional psychological stresses to disprove negative stereotypes and expectations, thus impacting their self-image, self-worth and feelings of belonging (Hong, 2015, p. 218).

These barriers are discussed below under two sub-themes: social barriers and organizational/structural barriers.

2.5.1 SOCIAL BARRIERS

2.5.1.1 STIGMA

Goffman (1963) describes stigma as an “attribute that is deeply discrediting” reducing the bearer “from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one” (p. 3). Goffman (1963) claims that when one is

stigmatized as a result of how others perceive them in a negative manner, the individual behaves in a manner to ‘cover’ one’s identity to manage others’ perception of their identity. Stigmatization results in an “in-group and out-group” (Goffman, 1963; Weinstein, 1965), which makes the person who is stigmatized feel excluded or part of the out-group. Stigma has been cited by students with disabilities as a major barrier in seeking supports from the disability resource centre due to concerns about being identified and how their peers might perceive them if they learn that they have a disability (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p. 153).

Zola (1993) notes that the labels used to describe a person’s circumstance or identity impacts how they perceive themselves and define what society with its values and biases, views as acceptable and normal in each context (p.167). In a study of stigma and its impact on persons with intellectual disabilities (IDs), Werner, Corrigan, Ditchman, & Sokol (2011) found that discriminatory behaviours such as teasing and staring often leads to devalued roles, lack of inclusion and acceptance of persons with IDs within communities.

This fear of disclosure relates to the stigma of being different (Goffman, 1968) and a narrow view of what is deemed ‘normal’ in society that creates an exclusive environment where student with disabilities may not feel included or welcomed. Therefore, the pressure and expectations to blend in with society’s oppressive definition of ‘normal’ poses unique challenges in the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities in higher education context (Cunnah, 2015, p. 216).

This issue of disclosure and stigma points to societal misunderstanding of disability, or the need to normalize dialogue on disability in everyday conversations. As stigma often results in feeling shame and othered, it suggests that stigma negatively impacts an individual’s sense of belonging and being included within the community. The lived experiences of students with disabilities described in Mullins & Preyde (2013) highlights the need for members of a university community including students, staff, faculty and campus groups to actively breakdown stereotypes and challenge negative perceptions. Campus leaders could promote positive stories of students with disabilities to counter these stereotypes and encourage an inclusive campus community.

2.5.1.2 A NON-HOLISTIC VIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF “NORMAL”

The research on stigma further relates to the dialogue on what is considered “normal” in societies. As post-secondary institutions (PSIs) are a microcosm of the broader society, PSIs are formative spaces where perceptions and worldviews of what is normal is shaped and reinforced. The traditional view that disabilities is primarily physical or seen is still evasive in campus cultures such as using the wheelchair sign as the main marker of all kinds of disabilities. However, such views are limiting to persons with diverse invisible and physical disabilities as it negatively reinforces the stereotype that disabilities without physical markers are not as legitimate and an “us” versus “them” or a “normal” versus “other” perception.

Participants in Mullins & Preyde (2013) study affirm the tensions of normalcy by stating that it was often easier to act normal because of their invisible disabilities so that people do not treat them differently (p.155). While what is deemed normal or not varies by context, these lived experiences of students with disabilities underscore a negative view that to be normal in a post-secondary context includes being without a physical marker of disability or that those with physical disabilities do not fit within the social construct of “normal” in an educational context (p.156). Such perspectives perpetuate an erasure and exclusion of their lived experiences (Abes & Wallace, 2018) which is detrimental to students with disabilities feeling safe, included and accepted for who they are in the campus community.

2.5.1.3 AN INTERSECTIONAL ERASURE OF STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES

Furthermore, the exclusion of one aspect of a person’s identity and experience perpetuates a non-holistic view of an individual and takes away from one’s agency to express themselves freely in their campus environment. The notion that normal means being able-bodied is a privileged perspective that is pervasive

in society. This view of normalcy should be challenged to redefine normal as being both able-bodied or disabled, as well as to include the diversity and intersectionality of an individual's experience.

Abes & Wallace (2018) also conducted a qualitative analysis of the experiences of thirteen college students with physical disabilities, accounting for diversity of participants through race, sexuality and gender. Their discussion and findings centered on the various forms of erasure of identities that students with disabilities experienced in campus and community spaces that did not account for the intersections of their disabilities with race, sexuality and gender.

Participants noted that they felt their identity as a disabled person was excluded in spaces where disability was treated as an accommodation, not an identity, or their identity as a disabled person was sidelined with a focus on just their race or gender rather than from an intersectional lens that considers the whole person (pp. 551 – 552). The exclusion of one aspect of their identity made students with disabilities feel invisible (Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Abes & Wallace, 2018), thus not included in their campus communities.

2.5.1.4 GENERAL LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities stated that they faced social barriers including negative social attitudes which were evident in negative comments and perceptions about disabilities. Participants in the Mullins & Preyde (2013) study conveyed that these negative comments may be attributed to the lack of understanding that disabilities are not only visible, but also invisible with a psychological element (p.153).

These perceptions indicate a social bias and false attribution towards disabilities that are visible as being more “easily understood” because it is seen or often talked about, whereas disability that is invisible is perceived as less easily understood because it is not seen. This misconception of invisible disabilities underscores an underlying dynamic of power and privilege that perpetuates the status quo and traditional view of disability as being physical, instead of extending to the mental and psychological aspects of life.

2.5.1.5 NEGATIVE ATTITUDES OF PEERS AND FACULTY MEMBERS TOWARDS STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In addition to the general lack of understanding of disability, several studies cite negative perceptions and attitudes of faculty members as a barrier that significantly impacts whether a student receives the accommodation they need or not in class (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p.153; Scott, 2019). Various researchers including Hong (2015) indicate that faculty members who lacked an understanding of disability were less likely to understand the unique needs of the student, and thus more likely to think that students with disabilities were getting an unfair advantage instead of creating a level-playing field.

Some faculty members were concerned that being fair meant that students should be treated the same, not according to their unique circumstances (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p.154). Students desired to feel accepted in the classroom by their faculty members and peers (Hong, 2015, p.222) when they reveal that they had a disability and needed accommodations. Beyond these negative attitudes, students with disabilities grapple with the power imbalance in the faculty-student interaction, as they advocate for their needs.

For instance, students with disabilities in a lived experience study by Duquette (2000) noted that it was not always a pleasant task to ask their professor for more time to complete their assignment or write an exam, although they felt comfortable making specific requests for what they required to the Centre for Special Services (p.14). In some cases, requests for accommodations were approved by faculty members and in other cases, they were not. The discretionary power of faculty members in approving accommodations made it difficult for students to predict if they would receive supports. It also created inconsistencies and inequities in students' experiences as their sense of welcome and inclusion varied by classes and professor interactions.

2.5.1.6 LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNRESPONSIVENESS OF ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Hong (2015) described barriers that students with disabilities experience on campus including negative staff perceptions. Ten out of the sixteen participants interviewed cited the lack of knowledge of their advisors as a second most common barrier to inclusion at their institution. Most participants reported that the lack of support from their advisors in guiding them through course scheduling such as lack of empathy for their situation made them less likely to seek further advising supports (p. 217). Only one participant reported a positive experience with their advisor because she felt respected, cared for and accepted despite not doing well in their courses that term (p.218).

As advisors are often one of the first point of contact for students, it is likely that students' perception of a welcoming and inclusive campus culture could be negatively impacted if advisors do not model an inclusive and caring community. Conversely, when advisors make students with disabilities feel welcome, it could encourage students to continue to seek out supports and services.

2.5.1.7 MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL BURDEN OF SELF-ADVOCACY

When faced with academic and campus life stressors, students also struggled to advocate for themselves such as explaining how their disability had an impact on their academics to staff and faculty. Many students indicated that they were unsure about what and how to advocate for disability support services on campus. Although Waterfield et. al. (2018)'s research focus on disabled academics in higher education (HE) institutions, they found that their participants reported feeling disabled by the institution because the emotional and financial burden of seeking accommodations and supports was placed on the individual, not the institution. The emotional burden faced by academics further emphasizes a similar burden faced by disabled students in an HE context.

This reactive model reinforced by HE institutions further entrenches deeply held systems of power and oppression as well as normative standards that disabled students are forced to conform to (Waterfield, 2018, p. 337). The literature suggests a need for a more proactive approach in HE institutions to develop structures for advocacy and supports that foster an inclusive and accessible campus environment both for disabled academics and disabled students.

2.5.2 ORGANIZATIONAL OR STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

2.5.2.1 BUREAUCRACY IN GETTING ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Mullins & Preyde (2013) and Hong (2015) also cite bureaucracy as a barrier to an inclusive campus environment. Participants emphasized the burden and frustration of completing additional paperwork that are often complex, registering with the CSD each term and the complexity of meetings and administration required to secure accommodations, services and supports (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p. 153). My personal communication (2019) with several students with disabilities confirms that the bureaucracy poses a barrier to accessing the support they need to succeed, and is often compounded by the financial, time and emotional cost required to go through the process of assessments and registration.

Some students stated that they often rely on their intuition when they feel confused about the procedures and paperwork involved in obtaining services (Hong, 2015, p.221) until they reach a critical point in the semester, which is sometimes too late. It is also likely that the complexity of the registration process may discourage students from registering with the Centre in the first place (Mullins & Preyde, p. 153; Waterfield, Beagan & Weinberg, 2018, p. 334). These concerns point to the need for more low-barrier and streamlined administrative processes to allow for an improved student experience. Ennals, Fosey & Howie (2015) argue that institutional processes that place enormous burden of time and energy to secure documentation may leave disabled students feeling isolated and excluded by their campus culture and environment.

2.5.2.2 THE (IN)ACCESSIBILITY OF CAMPUS

Participants with invisible disabilities noted how classes are designed for specific types of learners (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p.156). Some participants also added that the (in)accessibility of campus ranged from the structure of the classrooms such as the large class sizes to the types of assessment types and modes of assessments used in universities. They suggested that their academic institution was organized as a one size fits all approach that does not factor in the diversity of learning styles and strengths.

Participants reported facing more barriers like feeling discriminated against by how the educational system assesses student success and performance, in addition to the stress and challenges of university life (p.156). These negative experiences made students feel increasingly disabled by the campus environment (p.157). Recommendations offered by Mullins & Preyde (2013) indicate the need for flexible learning environments that reflect students' diverse learning preferences and needs.

Gilles & Dupuis (2013) conducted a study examining issues on accessibility and inclusion of students with disabilities on campus life to develop a planning framework to create a more accessible and inclusive campus community at the University of Guelph. Findings from the 23 interviews echoed that while physical accessibility is an important factor for inclusion, accessibility has varied meaning to different people and should extend beyond physical inclusion to social inclusion.

For students with physical disabilities, physically inaccessible campus spaces pose a barrier to accessing supports and services. One participant in Gillies & Dupuis, 2013 noted that it was not just enough to physically get into the front door with a wheelchair; having welcoming spaces made them feel more welcome (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 204). They noted that a physically accessible space is a critical need, yet a broader view of accessibility includes having persons in positions of power who are sensitive, aware and open-minded to fostering a welcoming and inclusive campus community (pp. 204 – 205). These concerns emphasize that addressing structural barriers, as well as attitudinal barriers are key to improving a sense of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities.

2.5.2.3 LOW AWARENESS AND QUALITY OF CAMPUS SUPPORT SERVICES

Students with disabilities face barriers to inclusion particularly when they are unaware that services exist and when existing services and supports do not meet their expectations of accessibility. The lack of awareness may be related to the lack of streamlined channels for communicating with students about existing disability supports and services. In a recent study by Harbour & Greenberg (2017) on the experiences of post-secondary students with disabilities, they found that the lack of knowledge and awareness of available services and supports and how to access them resulted in the underused disability resources. Even when students became aware that the services exist, students were concerned about disclosing their disability for fear of being treated differently based on previous negative experiences such as negative interactions with a peer or staff member.

Hong (2015) also found that some students with disabilities associated feelings of welcome and inclusion when the support services used more inclusive and neutral language and naming that did not have a connotation of disability such as "Health and Wellness Centre (HWC)". For some students who used the services, the quality of the service was related to whether the staff member was kind, patient and open to guiding them through the needed supports. When staff members were impatient and cold, students felt intimidated and unwelcome (p. 220) and rated their service experiences as poor.

Students who experienced repeated negative interactions with staff members at the Centre felt excluded and unlikely to go back for support. Staff in these centres sometimes work with limited resources as they are stretched thin and underfunded, which in turn impacts the quality of services. The literature highlights

that negative attitudes and interaction with staff pose significant barriers to access, inclusion and belonging for students with disabilities.

2.6 Literature Review Summary

The literature review indicates that there is no encompassing definition of belonging and inclusion in a post-secondary context. The review reveals multiple barriers to inclusion and belonging that students with disabilities face in a post-secondary context. These barriers could be reduced or eliminated when enablers such as positive attitudes from campus community members including peers, staff and faculty and an institutional culture of inclusion and accessibility. Building an inclusive campus culture is an ongoing process and requires a commitment to accessibility by design, rather than accessibility as an afterthought.

The literature review lays a foundation to situate this SFU research project within existing research. Furthermore, the historical context of Canadian disabilities legislation provides a legal and policy background to understand how disability supports, programs and policies are structured within Canadian post-secondary institutions. The current absence of accessibility legislation in BC also influences the campus culture on disability inclusion and its impacts on the experiences of inclusion and belonging of students with disabilities.

The table below summarizes key themes and ideas that emerged from the literature review based on the primary research questions:

1. What are the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities at SFU?
2. How might we improve the sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU based on the lived experiences of students with disabilities?

| Main Sections | Core Ideas |
|---|--|
| Defining Disabilities, Visible and Invisible Disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabilities: is the interaction of physical or mental impairments, permanent or temporary that restricts one’s ability to perform a range of activities and interacts with attitudinal and environmental barriers that impact full participation in life. • Visible Disabilities: disabilities that have a physical manifestation. (e.g. cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, loss of limbs, visual impairments, etc.) • Invisible Disabilities: disabilities that are not observed or have physical manifestation (e.g. chronic pain, sensory disabilities, intellectual disabilities, etc.) |
| Defining Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion: is the process of including a person or group within processes, structures and everyday experiences in a manner that invites meaningful participation |
| Defining Belonging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging: for students with disabilities is to know and feel like one matter, is respected, accepted and valued for who they are within a specific group or context. • It is defined by the interaction of belonging with a students’ social relationships, self-advocacy and mastery of their student role (Vaccaro et. al. (2015). |
| Defining Enablers and Barriers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enablers: factors that foster students’ sense of belonging and inclusion |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Historical and legislative context</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers: factors that negatively impact students’ sense of belonging • International context of accessibility or disability legislation: including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) • Canadian context of disabilities legislation: including Canada’s international obligation to the CRPD, the Accessible Canada Act C-81 that will soon come into force and disabilities legislation in various provinces. • British Columbia (B.C.) context of disabilities legislation: the proposed BC Accessibility Act, Bill M 219 to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. |
| <p>Enablers for an inclusive campus environment</p> | <p>Social Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Disability Community - Support of family, friends and campus groups • Inclusive classroom - Positive attitudes of peers and faculty members <p>Structural/Organizational Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Effective Disability Resource Office • A shared vision with a plan and funding for accessibility • Institutional culture of inclusion beyond compliance |
| <p>Enablers to inclusive campus environment</p> | <p>Social Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma • A non-holistic view of the concept of “normal” • General lack of understanding about disabilities • Negative attitudes of peers and faculty members • Experiencing intersectional erasure • Lack of knowledge and unresponsiveness of academic advisors • Mental and emotional burden of self-advocacy <p>Structural/Organizational Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucracy in getting accommodations and supports • The (in) accessibility of campus • Low awareness and quality of campus support services |

Figure 8: Literature Review Summary Table

These key ideas are summarized in the conceptual framework.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The literature review provides a foundation for understanding enablers and barriers to an inclusive campus environment that impact the experiences of students with disabilities. The main and sub-themes identified in the literature review address the primary and secondary research questions:

1. What are the experiences of inclusion and belonging of students with disabilities at SFU?
2. How might we foster a sense of belonging and inclusion for students with disabilities at SFU?

The conceptual framework below illustrates how emerging themes from the existing literature inform the current photovoice research:

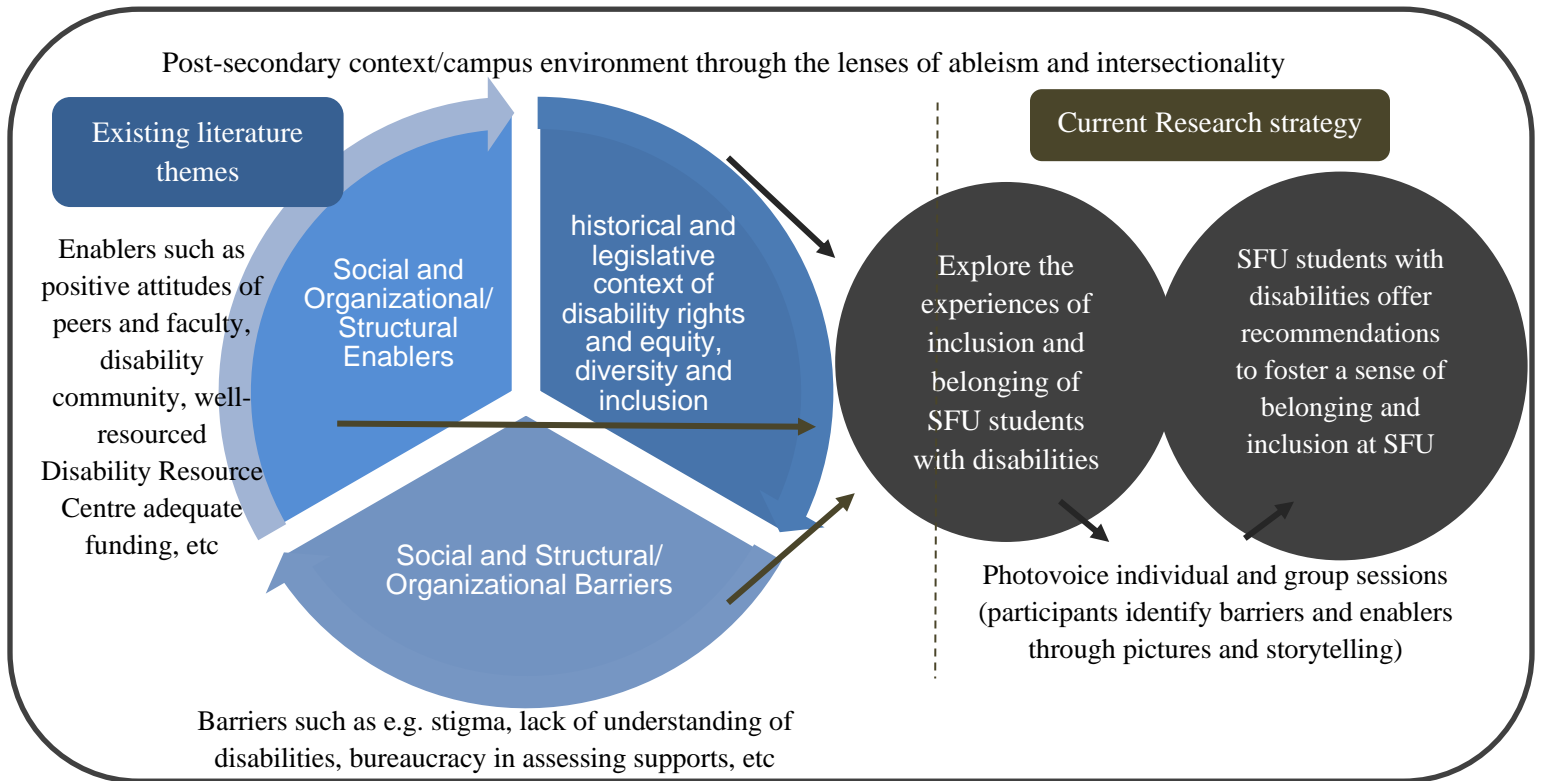


Figure 9: Conceptual Framework

The next section discusses the methodology, methods, recruitment, data analysis, ethical procedures, the analytical approach, the limitations and delimitations. The subsequent sections include the findings, and an analysis of the findings in context of the literature review and project recommendations.

3.0 Methodology and Methods

3.1 Researcher's Positionality Statement

Inspired by the researchers' positionality described in Abes & Wallace (2018, p. 548), I reflect on how my identities influenced my research approach, choice of methodology and methods for this research project. I identify as a Nigerian woman who is able-bodied, from a middle-class background and working in the unceded Coast Salish territories. My research interests stem from my belief that systems of oppression such as racism, ableism and sexism influence students' experiences of disabilities, sense of inclusion and belonging in a post-secondary environment.

As an able-bodied person, I chose to conduct this research inquiry about the experiences of students with disabilities for several reasons. First, I sought to challenge my own privilege within an ableist system of oppression. Secondly, I am committed to doing the work of educating myself about intersecting identities of persons with disabilities. Thirdly, my goal is to work alongside diverse communities of persons with disabilities to identify opportunities for change within social systems.

From my lived experiences and professional background in community engagement, my analysis of power structures in society and how our use of language is a function of the power and privilege in society also ignited this research inquiry. I recognize that able-bodied people, despite being well-intentioned, may have limited understandings of the barriers and solutions needed to foster more inclusive communities for and with students with disabilities. This research is an opportunity to center the voices of students with disabilities in fostering change through recommendations developed by students with disabilities.

I identified the increased need for ongoing dialogue and actions that support disability inclusion. I undertook this research because I was interested in better understanding the diverse experiences of students with disabilities. My personal conversations with students with disabilities, colleagues who work with persons with disabilities and my research client, Dr. Mitchell Stoddard challenged my worldview of disabilities (personal communication, 2019). For instance, I became more aware of environmental barriers due to ableist structures that reinforce a narrow view of ability. As a community developer, I value asset-based approaches. I learned to reframe disabilities as diverse abilities. These conversations created a new awareness of the world of disabilities in my everyday work and life.

Conducting research on students' lived experiences was a logical step. My choices of participatory action research (Stack & Wang, 2018) and photovoice method (Wang & Burris, 1997) were intended to center the perspectives of students with disabilities who are often underrepresented in student affairs. I value participatory and empowerment models of research as they shift one's view of participants from passive respondents to active co-researchers. My reflections from my research include leaning into the discomfort that seemingly well-intentioned efforts to disability inclusion may directly and indirectly perpetuate inequities. I am on a research journey of (un)learning about disabilities both personally and professionally.

My goal is to contribute to the academic dialogue on disability in Canadian higher education or post-secondary institutions through this research project. Furthermore, I aim to encourage programmatic and policy changes that reflect the lived/living experiences of students with disabilities. I invite members of post-secondary institutions to listen and act in a manner that reflects the unique strengths, needs and interests of students with disabilities. Subsequent sections include descriptions of the methodology, the

photovoice method, the study population, sampling and recruitment procedures, data collection and analysis, limitations and delimitations and ethics.

3.2 Methodology – Participatory Action Research

The theoretical framework of participatory action research (PAR) seeks to understand the world by changing it (Agarwal & Spohn, 2017). The PAR methodology empowers people and communities with increased control and autonomy over their lives. Liebenberg (2018) provides a critical analysis of PAR and photovoice in achieving empowerment and social change. The author states that PAR democratizes knowledge by involving community members throughout the research process to produce meaningful data that informs social change (Liebenberg, 2018, p.1). PAR has five main characteristics (Agarwal & Spohn, 2017, p. 2):

- The research must be participatory
- Defined by a need for action within the community
- Useful and meaningful for the participants
- Reflective by both participants and researchers
- Flexible

These five characteristics align with four essential elements to PAR: participation, action, research and social change for social justice (Liebenberg, 2018, p. 2). PAR is effective when the interaction of research and participation produces action leading to social change. The visual below illustrates the components of participatory action research (PAR):

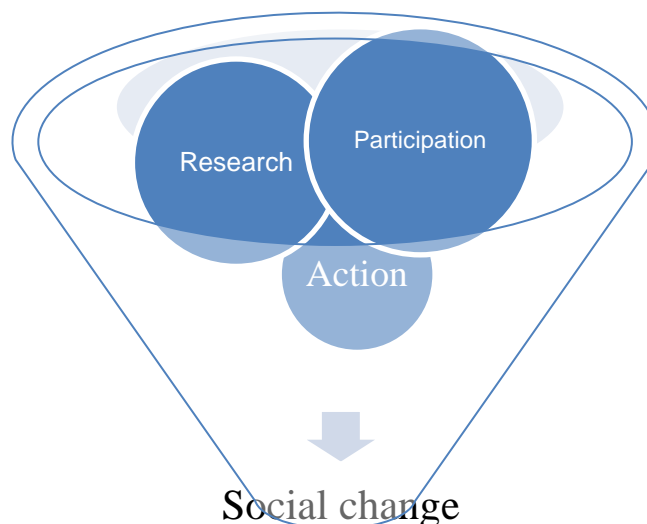


Figure 10 - Four components of Participatory Action Research (PAR). (Liebenberg, 2018, p. 2)

The PAR framework is appropriate for addressing the project's research objectives and questions because it fosters the empowerment of participants (Agarwal & Spohn, 2017, p. 3). PAR supports people with disabilities to identify, collect and analyze information from their own perspectives (Dassah, Aldersey & Norman, 2017, p. 1412). In this context, SFU students with disabilities reflected on their lived experiences and identified actions that the SFU community could implement to promote a disability-inclusive campus community.

PAR requires a critical reflection in sharing power between researchers and communities e.g. communities should be involved in determining the research question, areas of focus, collecting data, making meaning of the process and findings and dissemination of results (Liebenberg, 2018, p. 2). PAR also requires rigour in intentional collaboration, ongoing dialogue and reflection in a manner that positions individual experiences within the larger social, historical, political and geographical contexts (Liebenberg, 2018, p. 7). It invites both participants and communities to empathize with the students' diverse lived experiences through self-advocacy and calls to action. The next session describes the use of photovoice as a PAR method.

3.3 Method – Photovoice

This research project uses photovoice as the data collection method. Photovoice is a participatory action research (PAR) method used to photograph the everyday realities of individuals based on seminal works of (Wang & Burris, 1997; 1999). It is rooted in feminist ideologies and the work of Paulo Freire on critical consciousness and liberation of the oppressed (Dassah, Aldersey, & Norman, 2017, p.1413; Agarwal & Spohn, 2017, p. 3; Stack & Wang, 2018; Liebenberg, 2018, p.2). Freire's work argues that the critical reflection of the oppressed leads to action (Agarwal & Spohn, 2017, p.3). It is also rooted in the assumption that people are the experts in their own lives (Dassah et. al, 2017, p. 1413).

Photovoice is traditionally used with marginalized or underrepresented groups in their communities or in the political arena (Stack & Wang, 2018, p. 50). Argawal & Spohn (2017) used photovoice to discuss the experiences of students with disabilities at the University of Texas, U.S. to promote positive change for the university to become more inclusive (p. 3). Photovoice breaks down barriers between the "researched" and the "researcher" (Argawal & Spohn, 2017, p.3) because participants are involved not just in giving data, but in producing knowledge for social action (Dassah et. al, 2017, p. 1412).

Shumba & Moodley (2018) conducted a review of literature on using photovoice as a disability research method. Their review found that photovoice was an effective method of eliciting the experiences of persons with disabilities including both persons with visible and invisible disabilities (Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Agarwal & Spohn, 2017). Although photovoice relies heavily on visual perception, some studies included persons with visual impairments (Agarwal et al., 2015; Cordova et al., 2015). These studies highlight that photovoice is an appropriate method for this research.

Why photovoice for this research?

The study uses photovoice, which involves using photos and storytelling to critically reflect on experiences of belonging and inclusion that are important to students with disabilities at SFU. The researcher chose photovoice for its participatory, reflective and action-focused approach. The photovoice method was approved by the project client, the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) at SFU to offer a creative approach for students with disabilities to share their experiences

Photovoice is suitable for this research given that an intended outcome of the research is to empower students to share their stories from their lived experiences and identify strengths and concerns in the SFU community using photos. Photovoice also offers an interactive and multi-session format that allows co-researchers opportunities to build connections through repeated interactions while raising awareness on issues that matter to them.

3.4 Participants

SFU students with disabilities were chosen because they are the focus of the study to answer the research question. Furthermore, their perspectives are often missed and excluded in the broader university-wide conversations in student affairs (personal communication with client, 2019). The participants were called “Research Ambassadors” for this project because they were involved in a collaborative process in identifying focus areas to answer the research question, gathering, documenting and analyzing the data by developing preliminary categories (Argawal & Spohn, 2017, p.3). Participants were chosen based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria below:

Inclusion Criteria

Participants who:

- are current SFU students
- self-identify as a person with disabilities
- students with diverse experiences and backgrounds
- are aged 18 or older
- are willing to take photos about their student experiences and participate in individual interview or group discussions (no photography skills required)
- open to sharing about their student experiences
- share pictures with the public (optional)
- will commit to attending 4 sessions (3 sessions with an optional 4th session, at SFU Burnaby or via video conference)
- Will commit to ethical guidelines and other project requirements

Exclusion Criteria

- anyone who is not a current SFU student and
- students who do not self-identify as having a disability
- students with disabilities who are under age 18

3.5 Sampling and Recruitment Procedures

Following ethics approval, The SFU Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) staff or Disability Officer sent invitation and reminder emails directly to students registered with the Centre to participate in the study using the promotional flyer and invitation blurb. Participants were not required to provide documentation for their disability to participate in the photovoice project by Jaiswal. et. al, 2016). Participants in Jaiswal et. al. (2016) reported registering with the Centre for Students with Disabilities (CSD) which requires documentation to support their disability. Similarly, participants in this study were not asked to provide documentation. They were all registered with the SFU Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL).

A purposive sampling and criterion sampling approaches were used for this study to select a small number of participants (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012, p. 41). Hutcheon & Wolbring (2012) used this sampling approach to examine how eight self-identified disabled post-secondary students made meaning of their experiences at the University of Calgary, Alberta. Students who met the criteria outlined in the study invitation were asked to directly contact the researcher to express their interest and apply to participate in the study (Appendix A – Invitation and application to participate). The final five participants were selected based on their interests and availabilities to participate in the research. Due to the COVID19 pandemic, one participant returned to their home country and was unable to complete the project.

Snowball sampling using word of mouth promotions was also used to ask potential participants to promote the project to colleagues who might be interested. For students with disabilities who were not registered with CAL, the researcher sent targeted emails, recruitment posters and social media invitations to:

- student groups such as Disability and Neurodiversity Coalition (DNA) Club
- student leaders that represents students with disabilities
- campus groups such as the Women's Centre, Out on Campus that serve diverse student groups including students with disabilities
- and a few faculty members in the researcher's network.

The steps below outline the recruitment process:

- Step 1: Sent email invitation with recruitment flyer and application form via recruitment channels. The application form is used to screen applicants who did not meet the inclusion criteria.
- Step 2: Fielded inquiries on the project from potential participants.
- Step 3: Applications were submitted via email. Application closes within 3 - 4 weeks of posting.
- Step 4: Reviewed all applications and responded to applicants within 3 - 4 days to confirm receipt.
- Step 5: Shortlisted confirmed participants based on match with the inclusion criteria, the quality of their responses and availability for the project.
- Step 6: Emailed participants with a congratulatory acceptance email, participant informed consent form and details about upcoming photovoice sessions.
- Step 7: Participants confirmed their offer of acceptance by email within 3 - 4 days and return signed consent form. Photovoice sessions were scheduled based on their availabilities.

3.6 Data Collection

The proposed number of participants was 8 – 10 students. 7 students with disabilities completed the application to participate in the project. The researcher contacted each applicant to set up dates/times for the sessions. 2 students were no longer available to participate due to personal and logistical concerns. 5 students participated and 4 completed the photovoice project in the end. Participants were provided with basic ethics and photography skills training during the first photovoice session (Newman, Maurer, Jackson, Saxon, Jones & Reese, 2008, p. 142). Although the researcher intended to speak to more students, the researcher chose not to recruit further into the study due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts in disrupting academic and life activities in Canada and globally. It was also a challenging time for students as they adjusted to these disruptions. As such, it was not appropriate timing to continue recruitment efforts.

Newman et. al. (2008) conducted a photovoice project in South Carolina in the United States (U.S.) involving persons with disabilities to identify barriers and enablers to community participation. Like the research procedures used in Newman et. al. (2008), participants received photo taking assignments to take 5 - 10 pictures that reflect their experience of feeling included or not feeling included and to write a short blurb/story.

The research questions were broken down into 3 photo taking questions and reflection questions:

| Research Questions | Photo taking and reflection questions |
|---|---|
| 1. What are the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities at SFU? | 1. In your experience as an SFU student with disabilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does being included look like? • What does belong mean to/look like to you? 2. In your day-to-day life as an SFU student with disabilities, what does your experience of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When/Where do you feel included at SFU? • When/Where do you feel excluded at SFU? I recognize the intersections of race, gender, ability, sexuality in capturing your experiences, so you are welcome to share how your identities intersect. |
| 2. How might we improve the sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU based on the lived experiences of students with disabilities? | 3. To support you in feeling more included and welcome at SFU: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific changes or improvements do you suggest we implement? • How might we implement these changes? I recognize the intersections of race, gender, ability, sexuality in capturing your experiences, so you are welcome to share how your identities intersect. |

Figure 11: Photo Reflection Questions

Participants were also emailed a photo reflection worksheet to complete a guided reflection of 3 – 4 of the photos taken using the SHOWeD method popularized by Wang & Burris (1999):

- S – What do you See here? (literal description of image)
- H – What is really Happening here? (the unseen story behind the picture?)
- O – How does this relate to Our lives in the SFU community?
- W – Why does this problem, concern or strength Exist? (why are things this way?)
- e – How could this photo Educate people?
- D – What can we Do about it? (provide opportunities to improve)

The photovoice interview sessions with the five participants started mid-February. One participant was unable to complete the project due to COVID-19, so interviews were completed with four participants by the first week of April. Participants had at least a week in between sessions to take pictures and record their observations in the SHOWED worksheets used in photovoice research (Agarwal & Spohn, 2017, p. 3; Liebenberg, 2018, p. 5). In some cases, the sessions were rescheduled to accommodate campus closures due to heavy snowfall, schedule changes and the shift to remote classes and work due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The individual and group photovoice sessions were conducted in a private meeting room at the university or remotely via video conferencing. These sessions were recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Written consent was gathered prior to these sessions and verbal consent was obtained at the start of each session.

Participants attended in 3 – 4 photovoice sessions of 1.5 – 2 hours long, held as individual or group sessions depending on the participant’s preference and availability. During these sessions, participants discussed the significance of their photos using the SHOWeD in expressing a sense of being included or not being included and improvements they would like to see in the SFU community. Each participant photo answered one or more of the photo-taking and reflection questions in the table above. The interviews were semi-structured using open-ended questions in Appendix - SHOWeD worksheet and follow up prompt questions to probe for further insights and clarification (Newman et. al., 2008, p. 141).

Participants had the option to attend an optional fourth session to help plan a community exhibit/dialogue or alternate approach to share the findings, where they will have the opportunity if they choose. The goal was to present their work and recommendations from previous sessions and raise awareness of disability inclusion among the broader SFU community. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the community exhibit/dialogue did not take place to adhere to social distancing measures. Alternate forms of dissemination are being explored. E.g. a suggestion by a participant to use social media to host an online exhibit and dialogue (personal communication, 2020).

The fourth session was then used to strengthen the study rigour by triangulating the interpretations from the preliminary data analysis with co-researchers or participants. Participants were engaged throughout the process and commented that the interactive and reflective nature of the photovoice project made their experiences meaningful and empowering (personal communication, 2020).

Accessibility Considerations

Accessible forms of participation were designed to meet the needs of participants such as in person or video conference meetings, flexible dates and times, and providing an honorarium of \$100 and light snacks. These accessibility considerations were designed to minimize the inconvenience to participant (Newman et. al., 2008, p. 140). These accommodations were intended to compensate participants for the significant time commitment and inconveniences during and in between sessions to capture photos and record their observations. The sessions were modified to allow for audio or video completion of the SHOWeD worksheet to reflect participants’ learning preferences and needs.

3.7 Theoretical Perspectives - Ableism and Intersectionality

Ableism and intersectionality provide a multi-frame approach for answering the research questions and analyzing participants’ narratives of inclusion and belonging in the university. Hutcheon & Wolbring (2012) states that ableism is rooted in the disability rights movement. It is the individual and group perceptions of specific abilities as essential, a system of power and oppression which promotes an ability preference and an analytical approach to understand these preferences and their impact” (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012, p.40). Ableism allows one to understand how ability preferences are chosen and those viewed with differences are oppressed by being categorized as lacking certain abilities or not conforming to normative abilities (p.40).

Ableism provides a framework for understanding how attitudinal, structural and environmental factors reinforce power structures in campus environments that are not inclusive and welcoming for students with disabilities and vice versa. It also provides a systems lens to understand how students with disabilities may reflect on and interpret their lived experiences of belonging, inclusion or exclusion at SFU. However,

ableism is inadequate to explain how racial or gender differences intersect with lived experiences of disabilities. Intersectionality offers a multidimensional theoretical framework with roots in Black Feminism (Sojourner Truth, 1851; Crenshaw, 1989; Goethals, Schauwer, & Hove, 2015).

An intersectional approach seeks to illuminate how specific groups of students with disabilities may be marginalized within race and gender hierarchies. For example, a Black heterosexual female student with disabilities may experience barriers to feeling included such as stigma differently than a White heterosexual female student with disabilities in a predominantly White student population. This multidimensional analysis recognizes that students with disabilities have diverse, nuanced identities and experiences depending on the context. It illuminates the limitations of racism or sexism as unidimensional lens (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 152) in explaining differences. Furthermore, students who may have similar disabilities may encounter “double” discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989, p.149) at the different intersections of racism, sexism, ableism and other forms of oppression (Goethals, Schauwer, & Hove, 2015, p. 78).

Ableism and intersectionality frameworks hold implications for the experiences of students with disabilities in post-secondary institutions. Generic campus programming and policies for students with disabilities often do not account for these complexities. These students may experience these programs differently if they do not perceive themselves to be represented in the course readings, programming, staff, faculty or the university. These intersections suggest that campus groups and administrators examine how well-intentioned programming and policies may support or fail some students with disabilities. Ableism combined with intersectionality are useful theoretical and analytical tools to better understand (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012, p 47) differences in the experiences of students with disabilities at the intersections of race, sex, gender, ability or age (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 151).

3.8 Data Analysis and Quality Assurance

Researchers use various methods to analyze narratives and photos of photovoice participants. Dassah et. al. (2017) conducted a scoping review of 20 photovoice studies involving persons with physical disabilities including their approaches to data collection, analysis and dissemination (p. 1412). Some studies used a descriptive or interpretive phenomenological analysis (Dassah, et. al. 2017, p. 1417) to describe common meanings and realities across participants’ lived experiences of a phenomenon (Adu, 2019). Some photovoice researchers use content analysis or thematic analysis to code and theme findings (p. 1417).

I used an interpretive phenomenological approach and thematic coding (Dassah, et. al., 2017) because they were appropriate to my research questions. The interpretive phenomenological approach allowed me to gain insights (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p. 150) into participants’ narratives of lived experiences of belonging and inclusion. Thematic analysis was valuable to examine similarities and relationships between participants’ narratives.

There were five stages used in this data analysis. These stages were iterative and emergent, despite being described in a linear progression. Subsequent paragraphs outline five stages of the data analysis:

- Stage 1: Credibility and Triangulation – check for accuracy using multiple data sources
- Stage 2: Preliminary Review and Coding – identify initial codes
- Stage 3: Detailed Sorting and Theming – refine codes and generate themes
- Stage 4: Final Categorization and Quality Assurance – regroup into main and sub-themes

- Stage 5: Reflexivity – reflection on the process

Stage 1: Credibility and Triangulation

- Prior to data analysis, I conducted a final photovoice session with the participants to review SHOWeD worksheets and notes from prior sessions to ask for clarification, review accuracy of notes and preliminary ideas emerging from the data (Duquette, 2000; Adu, 2019). This step was necessary to ensure credibility and triangulation of the data (Duquette, 2000, p. 5). I also reviewed multiple data sources for triangulation including interview recordings, SHOWeD worksheets, submitted photos, researcher interview notes and my reflective research journal. Furthermore, holding 3 - 4 photovoice sessions with participants allowed for multiple touchpoints to dig deeper for underlying meaning and for participants to repeat or clarify salient comments.
- Recordings from the photovoice interviews were transcribed after each session and reviewed for accuracy. The transcriptions were done at the end of all 3 – 4 photovoice sessions given the significant time requirement to review all photos and interview notes from the sessions.

Stage 2: Preliminary Review and Coding

- Data analysis was conducted by listening to the recordings while reading through each interview transcript (Hong, 2015, p. 212) to get the overall picture of the student's experience. During this initial review, I listened for participants' emotions, tone of voice and other non-verbal cues that were not evident from only reading the transcripts. Participants' SHOWeD worksheets and pictures were reviewed together and paired with comments from the transcripts that further described the pictures.

Stage 3: Detailed Sorting and Theming

- Thematic coding and in vivo coding methods (Adu, 2019) were used because both methods allowed for identification and grouping of ideas and emerging categories with both underlying meaning and coding using words or phrases used by participants. Using in vivo coding was necessary because it allowed the researcher accurately reflect themes in the participants' own words. This authentic voice is a key element of photovoice and participatory action research (PAR).
- Using thematic and in vivo coding, each transcript was reviewed and coded with into segments using key words, phrases or initial categories developed by participants during the photovoice sessions. The relevant segments to the research questions were reviewed and organized into categorical themes emerging from the detailed review (Hong, 2015, pp. 212 – 213). I used an anchor code (Adu, 2019) which are key words and phrases from the two research questions: “experiences of belonging”, “experiences of inclusion” and “recommendations” to group the segments and photos. This was important to ensure that I centered the analysis on answering the research questions.

Stage 4: Final Categorization and Quality Assurance

- Using NVivo 12 Plus, categories were examined for similarities and differences (Duquette, 2000, p.5). The categories were then grouped into summary table to develop themes. These themes were regrouped into main and sub-themes under the anchor codes. During the second stage of the

analysis, initial categories were either relabeled, regrouped or combined into themes that had similar meanings or key messages. After the second stage of the analysis, the themes and sub-themes were recategorized or relabeled at the third stage of analysis to reduce further repetition of themes or accurately reflect the key ideas presented by the participants within each grouping.

- I also kept a memo, a researcher's journal of my critical reflections and observations (Adu, 2019) from my communications with participants and coding decisions during the data analysis. This was helpful to reduce biases and separate my interpretation of what I thought participants said from what they said.
- The final themes were developed by comparing and combining final groupings across participant interview transcripts and photos. These themes were then compared with themes from the literature review (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p. 150; Hong, 2015, p. 213) on enablers and barriers to a sense of belonging and inclusion for students with disabilities.
- For each theme and sub-theme discussed in Chapter 4, the findings are represented using participants' direct quotes to centre students' authentic voice. As such, grammatical adjustments were not made to participants' quotes as these changes would not accurately reflect how participants shared their experiences. As a community-based researcher, I am committed to centering the perspectives of community members with accuracy, credibility and authenticity.

Stage 5: Reflexivity

- Efforts were made to embrace reflexivity by journaling and using emergent theming process to develop main- and sub-themes that reflect the participants' lived experiences of inclusion and belonging at SFU. I kept a research memo of the coding process and how the codes and themes were aligned.

3.9 Limitations and Delimitations

3.9.1 Limitations

Journaling is a reflective tool for researchers with strengths and limitations (Hong, 2015). It provides an insider view to the researchers' analytical and decision-making processes depending on the level of detail and the extent of expressiveness at the time of recording (Hong, 2015, p. 214). However, journaling has its own biases because it depends on the researchers' worldview, perceptions of and meaning making of what happened throughout the data collection and analytical process.

Participants identified as female or non-binary. There were no male participants. Different genders may experience and articulate their experiences of inclusion and belonging differently depending on their individual circumstances and context. Almost all participants live on campus except on participant who was a commuter student. Results are skewed towards non-commuter students with disabilities.

Subsequently, the results are not generalizable to the broader population given SFU's 90% commuter population, the small sample size and the diversity of lived experiences of students with disabilities, even for individuals with similar disabilities. The results are also not generalizable to students with disabilities in another post-secondary or higher education context. Differences in Canadian education context also limits generalizability to other countries.

Despite these limitations, the small participant size allowed for more in-depth dialogue and reflection. The participants provided rich, in-depth narratives (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p. 150) and photo evidences of specific issues on belonging and inclusion. These narratives could be further explored in future research involving a larger group of SFU students with disabilities.

One participant even suggested conducting annual SFU accessibility surveys to compare responses between students with disabilities and non-disabled peers. The participant stated that the surveys could provide a larger platform to learn more about ongoing issues impacting students with disabilities. Furthermore, it could also serve as an assessment tool to find out what their non-disabled peers know or would like to learn about accessibility and increase understanding of disabilities at SFU (personal communication with participant, 2020).

3.9.2 Delimitations

Out of scope for this project includes SFU students who do not have a disability, alumni or the general student population that is not part of the target population. Given the qualitative nature of the project, the data collection process will focus on a small sample size of 8 – 10 students to keep the project scope manageable within the estimated time frame and available resources. The perspectives of participants may not be generalizable to a broader population of SFU students with disabilities as they are a heterogenous group. However, the critical dialogue, reflection and storytelling could open future opportunities to involve a broader group of students.

The current project is focused on the SFU context and may not be directly transferrable to other institutions of higher education and learning. We aim to document aspects of the projects that may be applicable to other groups, interested in replicating the process in their own educational contexts. Areas for future direction and ways to close the research loop with participants will be identified.

3.10 Ethics

A detailed ethics application was submitted to and approved by the harmonized Ethics Review Board, involving SFU and UVic Ethics Committees in the review process. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, there were potential benefits and risks to participants who participated in the research. Issues of privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, safety and emotional well-being of participants were addressed at the onset and reassessed on an ongoing basis throughout the project.

As photo voice projects are typically time and resource intensive, the researcher consulted with the client, the Centre for Accessible Learning to provide honoraria and modify the project to minimize any perceived burden and risks to participants who were involved throughout the project. e.g. providing snacks and breaks during sessions, video conferencing options and referrals to the mental health app and SFU Health and Counselling (HCS) unit. The next section provides detailed descriptions of the photovoice findings.

4.0 Findings - Photovoice

4.1 Introduction

This section includes a report on findings from the photovoice process. Based on the research questions, four participants who completed the project were asked to take pictures and discuss their experiences focused on their experiences of belonging and inclusion and suggestions for improving their experiences at SFU. Although the sample size was small, participants provided in depth and extensive responses over three to four photovoice sessions across five to six weeks.

The report findings are presented based on three key data sources. These sources include twelve (12) photovoice interviews, thirty-eight (38) photos and corresponding reflection worksheets that describe the photos and their significance to participants' experiences of belonging and inclusion at SFU. All data sources overlap given the interviews were intended to dig deeper on the photos and photo worksheets that the participants submitted prior to the individual or paired interview sessions.

All data sources were analyzed using NVivo 12 Plus, a qualitative data management and analysis software. Initial codes were developed, categorized into main and sub-themes and revised for accuracy and consistency to reflect participants' stories and photos. The main themes were also developed in collaboration with the participants. During the photovoice sessions, participants were either asked to group their photos into categories that best describe their experiences or to share the main issues or topics that were represented in their photos.

The categories developed by some participants include:

- Accidental Inclusivity
- Preparation
- Residence
- Recreation and Relaxation
- Social Connections
- Emotional burden of “overexplaining” one’s disability
- Construction
- Physical Accessibility
 - Getting around campus
 - Walkway – Snow removal

These categories were either grouped as a main theme or sub-theme upon analysis and review of all data sources across all participants.

The table and chart below provide a visual summary and frequency of the main themes. These themes are further discussed in sub-themes which will be discussed in subsequent sections. Some themes include both enablers (positives factors) and barriers (negative factors) to inclusion or belonging experiences of participants with disabilities. The researcher used most of the initial names or categories in the participants' own words to centre student voice in reporting the findings.

| Main themes | Occurrences |
|---|-------------|
| Accidental Inclusivity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• unplanned inclusivity that benefits students with disabilities | 22 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Attitudes and Beliefs | 133 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive and negative attitudes, beliefs and perspectives that impact students with disabilities' sense of community and belonging | |
| Definitions of Belonging and Inclusion | 43 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how students with disabilities define what belonging and inclusion means to them | |
| Design with Students (People) with disabilities | 14 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving or collaborating with students with disabilities in the design or implementation of solutions: to design "with" and "by" students | |
| Disability Awareness and Education | 49 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of education about disabilities and how to support students with disabilities. Suggestions on how to raise awareness and education | |
| Feedback on Photovoice Process | 33 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participant reflections and feedback on the photovoice process | |
| Food and Financial Equity | 24 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accessing affordable and dietary-inclusive food at affordable prices in accessible locations. | |
| Identity, Self-Advocacy and Activism | 79 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> concerns about labelling and navigating identity as a disabled student in university or post-secondary. reclaiming identity through self-advocacy and activism | |
| Institutional Processes and Structural Gaps | 37 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gaps in institutional structures, policies and processes that impact the experiences of students with disabilities | |
| Physical or Environmental Barriers | 99 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the design of the physical or built environment on campus that impacts students with disabilities' sense of belonging and community | |
| Resourcefulness and Preparation | 14 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> need for resourcefulness and preparation by the university community to support students with disabilities. e.g. in planning, design and implementation of learning, programming and spaces | |
| Rethinking Accommodations and Accessible Classrooms | 61 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accommodations as essential for students with disabilities' success and sense of belonging. issues of equality and equity. Discussions on rethinking accessible seating design and need for improvement | |
| Social/Community Connections | 59 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of social connections and networks for students with disabilities Suggestions for building social connections and disability support networks | |
| Inclusive and Equitable Spaces | 83 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spaces for belonging and inclusion impact students with disabilities' sense of welcome need for more inclusive and accessible spaces for students with disabilities to live, work, study and rest/relax on campus. | |
| The Duality of Inclusion and Exclusion | 5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double-edged implications of inclusion and exclusion for students with disabilities such as when including specific students with disabilities may inadvertently exclude other students with disabilities | |

Figure 12: Findings - Main Themes Summary Table

The three themes – Attitudes and beliefs, physical or environmental barriers and inclusive and equitable spaces - with the highest frequency of comments are highlighted:

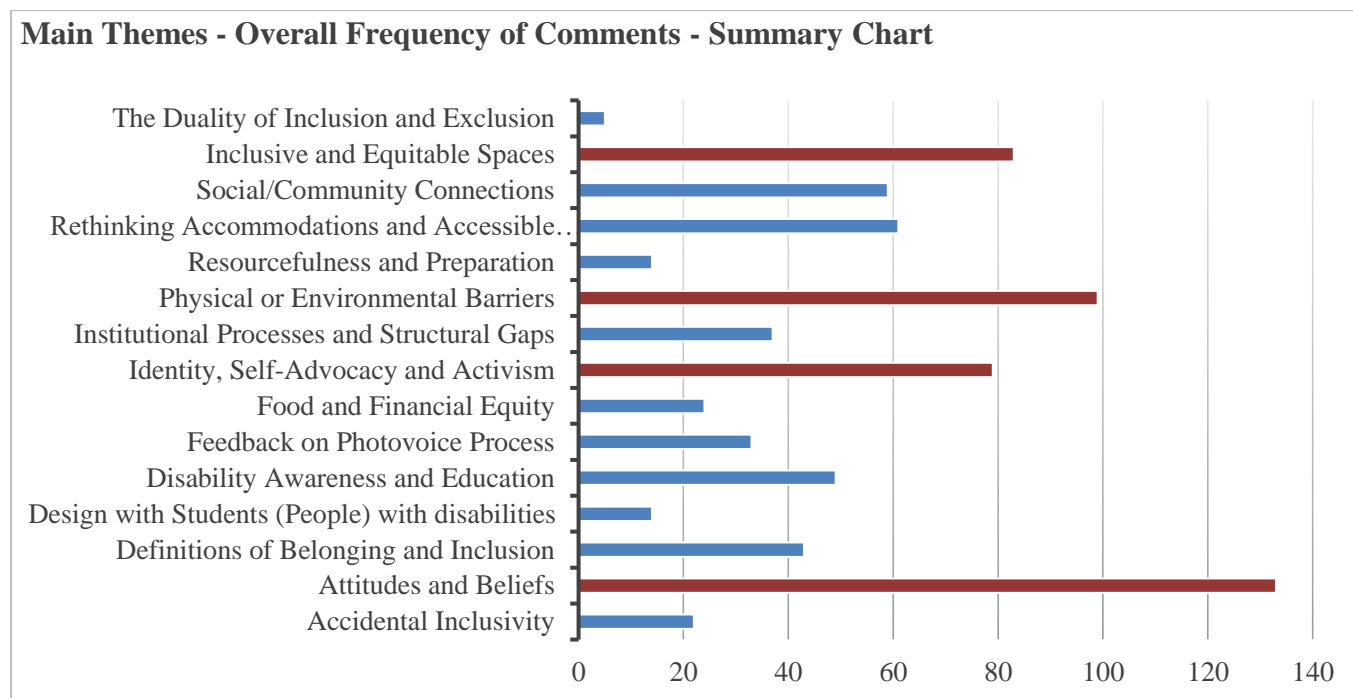


Figure 13: Findings - Main Themes - Overall Frequency of Comments Summary Chart

The next section describes in detail, the themes above and where applicable, sub-themes within these themes. The findings are grouped based on **the primary research questions:**

1. What are the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities at SFU?
2. How might we improve the sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU based on the lived experiences of students with disabilities?

For each theme and sub-theme discussed, the quotes of participants are represented verbatim to centre students' authentic voice. As such, grammatical adjustments were not made to the direct quotes as these changes would not accurately represent how participants shared their experiences. As a community-based researcher, I am committed to centering the perspectives of community members with accuracy and authenticity.

4.2 Defining Belonging and Inclusion

The Research Ambassadors or participants were prompted with the questions “what does belonging mean to you?” or “what does inclusion look like for you?” to understand how they interpreted belonging and inclusion. Findings reveal that these terms mean different things to various participants depending on their personal experiences and interactions at school, family, peers' social networks and broader society.

The participants' described belonging and inclusion as: fitting in with the larger community, playing one's role and working together in community and the community playing a proactive role in addressing barriers

to inclusion. Participants' comments suggest a common theme of finding one's place within the community and the community actively working to address challenges they face in being included:

Fitting in:

One participant describes their experience in fitting in and identifying with the larger community in these words:

I would define it as the feeling that I fit in...Belonging is feeling like you are able to identify with the larger group even though there are barriers against that. There are definitely different parts of SFU that you may not feel like I belong. So, in the context of a gym, you currently don't feel like I belong because I would have to modify the activities. In a classroom, where you get the accommodations you need, then you would feel like you belong.

Belonging looks different for everyone in different name. Even if you took someone with the exact same disability as me, they may not feel like the belong as me. E.g. it really just varies from person to person. (Participant 3, March 2020).

This participant also notes that belonging depends on the context and individual experiences even among students with the same disabilities. It suggests that belonging is personal, nuanced by several personal and institutional factors and different spaces in an institution may foster belonging differently if the space is designed to foster a sense of welcome.

Proactively addressing barriers:

Another participant describes inclusivity as being proactive in addressing barriers:

Yeah. So, I feel like inclusivity is not just like passively inviting you into the space, but it's also being proactive with you in the space. Like somebody is willing to come with you and to face the barriers that you're facing and still. Be there on your side without questioning you or making you question your reality (Participant 4, March 2020).

Participant 4 asserts that individuals should move beyond inclusion as an invitation to participate. Inclusion is a willingness and recognition that barriers exist and acceptance of a person's reality.

Interestingly, these two participants use the word "barriers" to highlight issues that impede their sense of inclusion and belonging. Both participants reveal that part of the barriers they face is when community members question that they have a disability which works against having the barriers they face removed. This finding is consistent with previous research findings in the literature review that suggest that students with disabilities face several barriers to participating in the academic and social aspects of the post-secondary institutions (cite).

Playing one's role and working together in the community:

Part of removing barriers to access also connects with playing one's role and working together in the community to support students with disabilities in feeling that they belong at SFU:



Another participant said:

so, uh, I used the picture of these because, um, like I, when I started learning about bees, I realized like, how much. They can like tell us about community and working together, because in order for a hive to survive, like each individual bee has to be playing its part.

And, um, I kind of thought about that as kind of, similar to like, um, like the SFU community. In order for us to have a healthy community, uh, everyone needs to be, um kind of playing a role to make it a good community. And like, part of that is kind of like recognizing that, um, there are students with disabilities that go to this school and that they deserve to be there too, and that there's things that we can do to like, help them feel part of the community. (Participant 1, March 2020)

Figure 14: Belonging -Photo of bees working together

This participant uses the image and metaphor of bees in a hive to represent the value of collaboration and mutual support. The bee metaphor also implies that fellow bees (community members) look out for one another to support individuals within the broader group. Furthermore, Participant 1 advocates that recognizing the presence of students with disabilities at SFU is essential to students feeling like they are seen, that they matter and are part of the community.

Several participants collectively express that belonging and inclusion means everyone plays their part and works together to reduce barriers to access to make SFU a welcoming place for and with students with disabilities.

4.3 Main and Sub-themes Themes

4.3.1 ACCIDENTAL INCLUSIVITY

A surprising theme that emerged from the participants' sorting of their photos was a category they named, "accidental inclusivity". Two participants described accidental inclusivity as accidental or unplanned



Figure 15: Photo of Chairs on the top level of West Mall

Centre, Shloperuby would show people that it's nice for disabled students to be included in everyday spaces, not only separated ones....Like with the photo of West Mall, I feel that these acts of unintentional

circumstances in the SFU community that made them feel included, although they may not have been designed with inclusivity as a core principle. The theme was surprising because the participants had experienced and captured several barriers through their photos that they were not expecting to find specific campus spaces that were inclusive of their needs. One participant highlights the finding in the picture and quote below:

evr

inclusivity could teach people about how easy it is to make spaces more accessible (Participant 3, March 2020).

The participant who took the picture emphasized the need for inclusion in everyday spaces, instead of separated spaces for students with disabilities that are designed for single person study spaces. This concern links to the participants' experience as a student with an invisible disability who enjoys studying and socializing with peers who do not have a disability. As such, the participant felt having a space like West Mall, a popular location at SFU's Burnaby campus where both learning and socializing occur contributes to their sense of inclusion.

Inclusivity could be achieved if community members are authentic and prioritize inclusivity in meeting the needs of fellow community members. Another participant said:

I wouldn't say it's accidental, but it's more of a like unplanned, what is could sometimes plan. It's more of a like, let me think of a good word. Because I have another one where it's planned. So, like for example, I have like a picture of drawer is where like there is like tampons and pads and plates involved and like other stuff. So, it's like somebody's, somebody made that into categories.

But for example, it's more about like. How places can make you feel included without people, specifically striving for inclusion.”

The quote above builds on earlier findings in the previous theme that inclusion is about playing one's role in making students with disabilities, all students, feel that they are part of the community. The same participant also recognized not only the need for institutional action, but also individual action in creating inclusivity:

So, it's not like EDI, equity, diversity, inclusion. Just coming up with a plan and just saying, we got to do this and everybody will like it. It's more about people doing things that they're already do authentically. And then everybody else appreciating it and finding the space is more comfortable because of it. So, it's not more accidents, but it's more about like following like,

I thought accidental inclusivity was like the funniest, the funnest part for me, because I feel like the one that was talking about it was like the funnest part because everything else is just horrible. Like, yeah, everything sucks. Here's the documentation of it.

The participant proposes that individuals could build inclusive and welcoming spaces because they choose to with or without an institutional mandate as a catalyst to strive for inclusion. Participants also had mixed perspectives on whether accidental inclusivity had positive or negative consequences. They concluded that it was both positive and negative. They said it was positive because they felt included in some campus spaces. It was negative because they were concerned that inclusivity may not have been considered as a core design element of these spaces.

Their insights suggest that they appreciated intentional or unplanned efforts in the SFU community that evoke a sense of inclusion. The participants suggested that SFU create more accessible spaces that are inclusive for students with disabilities, which is discussed further under the theme of inclusive and equitable spaces. The next theme attitudes and beliefs provides more insights on participant's experiences with peers,

faculty, teaching assistants, staff and community members that contribute to or undermine their sense of belonging and inclusion.

4.3.2 ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

Attitudes and beliefs were the most frequent theme that all participants raised across all photovoice sessions. Attitudes and beliefs refer to positive and negative attitudes, beliefs or perspectives that impact students with disabilities' sense of inclusion and belonging. This theme includes sub-themes illustrated in the chart below by percentage of occurrence and discussed in subsequent sub-headings:

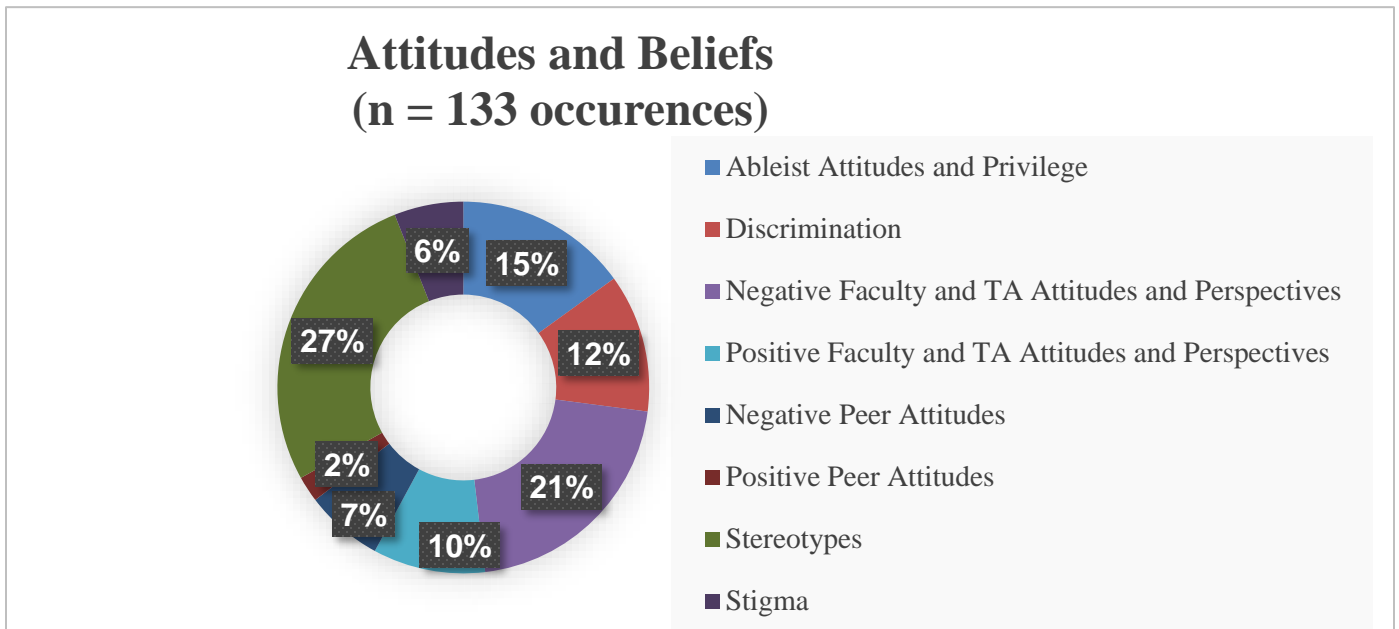


Figure 16: Finding – Summary Chart of Attitudes And Beliefs 1

Ableist Attitudes and Able-bodied Privilege

This theme refers to attitudes and questions from able-bodied people that highlight issues of power and privilege in interactions with students with disabilities. Participants noted that these interactions surfaced through well-intentioned comments that were inappropriate or over-burdening. One participant describes conversations that she has had with able-bodied people:

Some ways that able-bodied people might not realize, some way to get them to see that, because they are living in a different world.

Some things that I see as an issue might be difficult to capture e.g. how people talk about things e.g. “what happened to you? Oh, I was born. Nothing really happened to you. A lot of questions to people with disabilities that are not appropriate (Participant 1, April 2020)

Another participant called these interactions, “overstepping”:

The, overstepping thing is like, a big thing for me too...

Yeah. Mmm. Yeah. I think like the meeting, the criteria thing, it's because I think I have to over-explain. My disability to other people a lot more than some other disabled people would.

Because, you know, like if I just say, I can't walk that fast to someone with a cane, people will just be like, okay. And you know, for me, people have a lot of questions and they say, Oh, what's wrong with you? Or what is that? Oh, like, you know, there's so many follow up things. Um. Yeah. So even just like with telling friends, with telling people at work, like it usually turns into like a whole big thing.

Disabilities is a very personal thing. e.g. have you had surgery? Have you taken meds? It's not something I want to share with people I don't know very well. (Participant 3, April 2020).

Participants noted that these interactions are common at work and school. When asked about why the overstepping happens, the participant suggested that there was a lack of understanding in general about disabilities in society that results in inappropriate questioning.

Both participants also self-identified as having both visible and invisible disabilities. They often get more intrusive questions about their invisible disabilities and felt that able-bodied people or people without disabilities often considered them as ambassadors for all people with disabilities. The overstepping resulted in the emotional burden of over-explaining to justify their realities which made them feel excluded or that they did not belong. They suggested that there was need for able-bodied people to educate themselves about disabilities, conduct individual searches and be mindful to not ask these kinds of questions that were "really personal" for people with disabilities.

Discrimination

Participants also raised multiple instances of discrimination that they faced both at work and on campus. They spoke at length at how often they are treated differently because of their disability and the impact on their continued access to work or volunteer opportunities. One participant recounts her experience at SFU:

...when I told my Supervisor that I needed accommodation, she kicked me out of the [group]...It doesn't matter, like they don't have to tell you it's because of disability... so I think there is nothing that people can do. It's just the reality. (Participant 2, March 2020)

Accommodations can be harmful in social situations because it's like telling people that there is a problem with me and it's better that they don't know it. If people don't know that I have special needs, they may treat me the same as everyone. But if they know, then they may be unwilling to support me. sometimes they don't know how to support people with disabilities or knowledge of disabilities, so they don't know how to support us. That's a problem too (Participant 2, March 2020)

The participant's experience illustrates their dilemma with seeking accommodations given previous situations where they were discriminated against for asking for accommodations for disability related needs. Their comment also raises the concern that they felt unsupported and did not trust that anything could be done. As such, they felt that it is a reality that they should live with. When asked further about reporting the incident, the participant was concerned for their safety and well-being and the consequences of being denied of further access to resources.

Another participant recounts her experience at work outside of SFU:

yeah. And like at the time, Mmm. If I would talk to people about it, a lot of people were kind of like, since they don't really know. What it's like to regularly deal with things like that. When you have a disability, they kind of look at it more like, Oh, it's just a bad job. Like it's, it's

Just find a better one. Like, cause they're like, Oh, some work environments are just so negative. Like just find a new job. But it's like, it's not the same as that. Like it was negative because. They were trying to pressure me to leave because they couldn't say like, Oh, you're fired because you have a disability (Participant 1, March 2020).

Both participants' stories revealed that the experiences of discrimination they faced occurred because their volunteer or work supervisors did not know how to support people with people with disabilities. Participant 1 commented further that their work supervisor saw her as a liability and pressured her to leave. This same participant stated that the supervisors created unsafe and unrealistic work demands like working during her class time which forced her to choose between attending classes or taking more shifts during class time to pay her school fees. When asked if they would consider taking volunteer or work opportunities at SFU, the participant hesitated out of concern that similar circumstances might happen. This participant stated that that they do not feel like belong at SFU as there was still more that could be done to create a sense of belonging in her classes.

Negative Attitudes and Perspectives from Faculty and Teaching Assistant (TAs)

The previous sub-theme on discrimination connects with the sub-theme on negative attitudes towards accommodations for students with disabilities by faculty or teaching assistants (TAs) in classrooms or learning spaces. These negative attitudes showed up in terms of resistance to accommodations, inappropriate or insensitive comments about a student's disability, lack of empathy, inflexibility or penalizing a student with disability through grade reductions amidst health challenges.

This participant's story demonstrates how these attitudes and perspectives show up in explicit or covert forms:

I had a professor one time... my physical disability plus chronic health issues plus PTSD from all of my surgeries, so the separate exam classroom allows me to focus better. But the professor told CAL that I had to drop off my exam. Professor made a comment that because I was using crutches doesn't impact my writing my exam in a separate place without recognizing my invisible disabilities and laughed at me in front of other students.

Had another prof making similar comments...I had a flu and got a chest infection and caused a flair in my [invisible disabilities]– got behind in one of my classes – “he gave me a 3 day extension and gave me an alternate assignment which was harder than the rest of the class.” I finished it and he took it and he said “if you could have problems with your health, why are you even going to school? Still working with CAL to figure out what happened in the course. I had a B, but he did things that brought my marks down to a D (Participant 1, March 2020).

Both encounters with different professors illustrate how these negative attitudes impact the academic success of a student with disability. Comments such as questioning why a student with disability is going to school implies an underlying assumption that the student is not deserving to be in school. These negative perspectives and attitudes point to further concerns raised that there was an underlying assumption that students with disabilities should be able to do things that able-bodied people do. The same participant explained that:

The CAL advocates for people. Professors have this assumption that even when someone has a disability then they should be able to do things the exact same way as everyone. E.g. last term, I had a flu that caused a flair with my Crohn's disease and I was unable to work on my paper and I needed an extension.

So, they view like, a student missing in class or a student with a disability you're missing in class as the same as someone skipping a class. So, maybe a student missed a class because they were in the hospital, but another student missed a class because they just decided to skip it. So, sometimes I feel like professors are kind of talking to me like, oh yeah, okay, you missed like four classes this semester because you were sick.

Like, yeah, sure. You're just saying that, and you skipped classes and it's like, no, I was actually sick, or no, I couldn't get this assignment done on time because I was actually sick. I'm not just saying that, so they don't. Give additional support to students with disabilities because I think their view is also like, Oh, it has to be equal (Participant 1, March 2020).

Although a student with disabilities and another student without disabilities may request extensions, the reasons and circumstances of these requests differ given the additional barriers faced by the former such as being hospitalized because of their disability. The participant stated that some professors approached supports for student with disabilities through the lens of equality by treating every student the same, instead of through the lens of equity by providing a supportive environment with resources that allow students with disabilities to succeed.

Positive Attitudes and Perspectives from Faculty and Teaching Assistants (TAs)

Apart from the negative experiences with some professors, participants also recounted positive experiences with faculty members or teaching assistants (TAs) such as flexibility and understanding of the importance of academic accommodations that contributed to their sense of community and belonging. One participant described their sense of community and belonging fostered by a TA who was open about their identity as a neurodivergent person and thoughtful about respecting their accommodations:

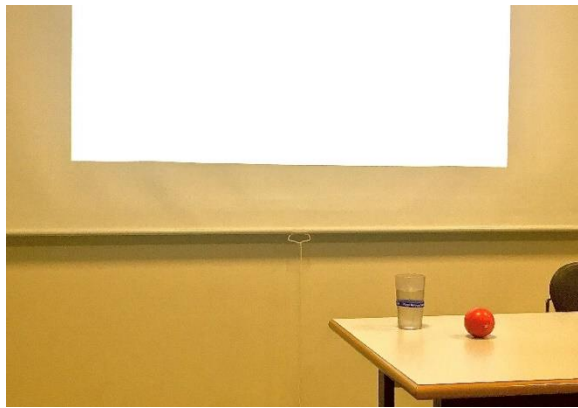


Figure 17: Photo illustrating the Portrait of a TA – a sense of inclusion and belonging

So, this TA is at, uh, openly-d neurodivergent. And that's like a big piece. And like, uh, one of my friends has spoken about this TA before and has notified me that this TA is neuro divergent and they're really good about accommodations. And so, I was hoping to get them from like, when I was taken to class.

And so, I knew about this TA even before the class started because. The TA-d like a class that was like one level up from the one that I'm taking right now. And so it was really interesting to meet them because I didn't really know much about them, but I knew that they will be like the good person, the nice person who will be able to talk about accommodations or to be able to hang out after class.

And so, it's, it's kinda like this notion of like the underground, like disability works is that, you know, some people as sometimes you just connected with them, so that was, we just build around certain people that you have in your community. And so, this TA was one of those people that was

like the people that you know about and the people that you want to get in your class to make sure that you're accommodated (Participant 4, April 2020).

This participant used the image “Portrait of a TA” to illustrate their sense of community created by this specific TA. They also noted that the TA’s openness about their neurodiversity do wdisawas important because of the rigidity of academia which they describe as “academia is not a place where you just say anything about yourself like one’s disability” as their consequences such as if you are viewed as credible. When asked if there were more instances where they felt welcome, the participant described the surprise they experience when they felt fully accommodated because their professor did not question their reality, in this case, their disabilities:

She was never like, why do you need this? She never made a point of just like questioning any of my reality when I ask her for things, she just said yes, and then went all the way through to make sure that I have this accommodation. That's how it was just like mind blowing. I still do not know how this happened and I'm just like, what the heck (Participant 4, March 2020).

Having one’s reality or disability questioned was iterated by all participants as they all had multiple invisible disabilities such as pain, PTSD, mental health and sometimes with concurrent physical disabilities. They noted that this questioning or disbelief happened because there was a lack of knowledge or understanding about their disabilities. When participants were accommodated, they felt understood by their professors as their flexibility and willingness helped them learn well and succeed in the course. Another participant also recounted her experience where another professor demonstrated flexibility and contributed to her academic success:

There are a lot of good professors too. e.g give it to me whenever works for you with assignments, take home. He was really understanding, asking if I needed help and I ended up getting a B in the course.

I felt that the difference was that the prof was flexible and allowing me to learn. I don’t mean that all professors do it and who understand and say not to worry and do your best. They give me the flexibility to learn and do so well on it (Participant 1, March 2020).

Participant 3 also echoed points made by fellow participants that further illustrates understanding and flexibility by faculty:

But yeah, I ha I had a prof like that for sure. Like I have her class at the end of like a six hour, like straight day of lecture. So, I'm always having to like stand up and walk around and I feel really bad. But like I talked to her about it and she's like, don't even worry. Like I don't care. And she was just like so nice about it. It was awesome (Participant 3, March 2020).

Overall, participants suggested that support from faculty or teaching assistants significantly impacts their sense of welcome and inclusion at SFU.

Positive Peer Attitudes and Perspectives

Peers or fellow students are also key players in contributing to a sense of inclusion among students with disabilities. Participants also had positive experiences with peers in and beyond the classroom that showed empathy and understanding for their circumstances. Participant 1 shared her experience on her commute to

campus where other students had rushed to take up the accessible seating in front of the 145 bus, a popular bus up to the SFU Burnaby campus. The participant who also has an invisible disability used the picture “Noticed” below to describe the feeling of one’s presence being acknowledged and a colleague making space by giving her a seat.



Someone was just like. Hey, you can have my seat. And so that doesn't happen very often where someone's like, Oh, yeah, this person needs to see, Oh, give them a seat. Even if they notice, I need to see, it's like they all look around and be like, okay, someone else can get up. I don't want it to, and then it's just this awkward, like everybody not wanting to get out and expecting someone else to do it.

Um, so yeah, that's why I took a photo there and I wasn't really sure how to like capture that in a photo. So, I just kind of showed like me sitting down and people standing and like the person who let me sit down (Participant 1, March 2020).

Figure 18: Photo of Noticed illustrating peer attitudes

Participants shared that understanding from peers and proper use of the accessible seating area on the bus or in class made a big difference in their experience. It showed respect and understanding that some students need the accessible seating to feel comfortable in a space.

Negative Peer Attitudes

Although participants noted that positive attitudes from peers made a difference, negative attitudes from peers were common and raised as problematic. These attitudes were reflected in taking up the accessible seating in classrooms, a lack of awareness about disabilities, lack of acknowledgement of the presence of and barriers faced by students with disabilities, inappropriate or rude remarks such as being mocked or the lack of knowledge about the purpose of the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL). Participants with invisible disabilities were also more likely to receive negative attitudes or comments from peers such as making fun of their disabilities in social or class settings. One participant shares her story:

Right? Yeah. I think cause like especially socially, like in friend groups, people don't really understand like why I have to like walk slower or why sometimes like can't go down to Cornerstone with them. Like, and I tell my friends like about my disability and stuff and like, so they know, but they still kind of don't get that. It's like not something they should really like make fun of.

You know, people like, kind of assume that it's this, you know, they kind of see it as something that it isn't. They're just like, Oh, you're just trying to like, mess around or be funny, or you're like too lazy to walk down with us or whatever. But it's really not that, um. So, yeah, definitely people can kind of see it as something that it's not (Participant 3, March 2020).

These comments were sometimes because students without disabilities do not know about disabilities and how it impacts their peers with disabilities and the barriers that they face in participating in activities or campus life. Even when students learn about their friend or colleague’s disabilities, they may not understand or trivialize the impacts on their experiences using inappropriate remarks or disregard interpersonal boundaries. The same student continues to describe these experiences:

Well yeah, cause I kind of thought about that cause like this is another really like terrible thing. But like, um, some of my friends like friends who are like, not as understanding of like me actually being disabled, like call me cripple as a joke, which is like rude. Like to me it's the same as like, you know, being called the F word being queer. Like it's just super offensive, but people don't see it as like a big deal (Participant 3, March 2020).

Participants stated that this lack of awareness and understanding by peers stems also contributes to why peers without disabilities may not know how they can support someone with disabilities and create an environment where they feel like they belong. Another participant captured the image “Out of Focus” to emphasize lack of awareness by peers:

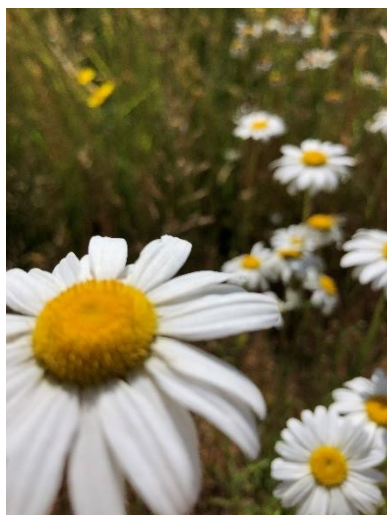


Figure 19: Photo of Out Of Focus flowers illustrating feelings of being excluded

So, then I was like, it made me think about how, um. People with disabilities could feel like they belong as part of the SFU community, but there's things missing that make that happen. So, kind of like the photo is out of focus because I wasn't really paying attention while taking it.

Um, the, uh, there's things that students with disabilities face sometimes come out of people not really paying attention or being aware to what people with disabilities, disabilities face and what they can do to improve their experience.

Um, so then I kinda got into thinking about like, um, like the behaviors of other students and how other students don't necessarily know what people with disabilities are going through or what they can do, um, to change like a student's experience in a class and how they can support someone with a disability and to just create like an environment where, um, students with disabilities feel more like, like they belong there, that they're welcome there and that people are accepting of their differences (Participant 1, April 2020).

The participant's story suggests that a sense of belonging and welcome is also connected with students with disabilities' differences being accepted by peers. The lack of acceptance of difference makes it challenging for students with disabilities to interact with peers without disabilities in class conversations as the same participant describes further in the story below:

Like I often find myself...not sharing what my experiences are with other students because of, like comments that students make about students with disabilities because it might be aware, like I have a class that I, um, get a ride partway to campus. So, I'm like, Oh, I'm not gonna bring my crutches cause then my hands are free.

I can just manage without it. So, then the students in that class don't know I have a disability. When we're talking, they'll talk about other students with a disability like, Oh, this person, they don't write their exam here. They write it at CAL. Why do they need to go there? Like what's wrong with them?

Comments from peers such as the above highlight the lack of awareness of the purpose of the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) and the stigma that students with disabilities face with accessing supports and

services intended to create a more accessible and inclusive learning community. It further highlights the gap in students' knowledge about disabilities, campus resources like CAL and use of inclusive language about disabilities to foster a safe, welcoming space which leads to the next sub-theme on stereotypes.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are widely held beliefs either positive or negative about a specific group of people or community. Stereotypes were the most recurring sub-theme under the theme of "attitudes and beliefs". All stereotypes that the participants raised were negative stereotypes that negatively impacted their sense of belonging and inclusion. The negative stereotypes shared include people with disabilities as incompetent or less capable, lazy, antisocial, or lying about accommodations to get supports or cheat the system (All participants, March 2020). Two participants describe these stereotypes in their own words:

Like. They think it's just something that you can see or that like, I don't know. And then it's kind of like, there's also a bit of an attitude or belief that like people with disabilities are kind of just there and not really like, uh, like the same kind of, I don't know, like, uh, like. Maybe that they're not as intelligent as, or like not going to have like as good of a future as everyone else (Participant 1, March 2020)

It's just a lack of knowledge about what it means to have a disability. People believe that people with disability are less capable or less competent (Participant 2, March 2020).

Participant 2 expressed frustration with the stereotype of being viewed as "less capable or less competent" because she has a cumulative grade point average (GPA) has a 4.33 out of 4.33, yet people often do not treat her as capable. Participant 3 also expressed concerns about being viewed as "lying" about one's disability or "not being a social person" which likely stems from the lack of understanding of social barriers or the diversity of the experiences of students with disabilities. This participant also suggested that the stereotypes about lying were possibly linked to the need to provide excessive documentation to CAL for one's disability to access supports and accommodations.

You know, cause like if it makes sense. I understand people being skeptical, but I would just rather they take my word. Obviously, I'm not lying. That would be a super weird thing to lie about. Yeah. I think a big part of that comes from the SFU CAL, which that was probably my only complaint about like trying to, you know, join in my services is you need to provide so much documentation. You need to get like written off these notes, those cost money and they're not covered by insurance and you need like just sheets filled out.

Yeah. I think it's definitely tailored towards some of those stereotypes about disabilities too. Like you know, you definitely even see me and think that I had disability or sometimes like another stereotype is you look at someone with a disability and you don't think of them as like a very social person. That's another really problematic stereotype. And I think some of that might've gone into the planning. I can't say for sure, but definitely, you know, there's no social spaces with specific standing desks options (Participant 3, April 2020).

Participant 4 links the negative stereotypes to the underrepresentation of students with disabilities on university campuses. The participant also noted that the views within academia of people with disabilities are not positive or biased towards showcasing the "ideal student with disabilities" as being a top achiever whereas students with disabilities have diverse experiences even for ones with the same disabilities:

And so basically there was the stereotype of this one ideal academic one ideal student, one ideal prof, one ideal researcher, and why it's deviating from that, everybody kind of like starts being like, stops understanding stops like putting you into box of researcher...

And because disabled students are so under-represented in universities settings there's not really an ideal disabled student that you will like look at it and say, Oh, I know how to navigate school now. Because like the ideal in the sample students, like doesn't go to all the lectures, but maybe records all of them and like listens to them or like does a lot of homework, maybe ideal disabled students advocates for themselves in every single class, to make sure that they're accommodated, but there's not really a stereotype of disabled person in academia that's positive.

Participant 1 elaborated on negative perceptions that people with permanent disabilities are viewed as incapable of performing like other people:

...No, what was going on and be understanding, like if someone else were to have a surgery, they would be understanding of it, but because my disability is permanent, they think that I'm just incapable of like doing what other. And a lot of people end up doing that and then companies aren't accountable and uh, they'll just keep doing that and having these. Stereotypes about people with disabilities and yeah (Participant 1, March 2020).

... Yeah. Yeah, and I think that could really change if we took all these little steps to slowly change people's beliefs and the way that we do things, because we're so stuck in these ways of like just not really thinking about accessibility (Participant 1, April 2020).

The stories of participants' experiences illustrate the impacts of stereotypes on their sense of belonging and inclusion. Participant 1 comments that small steps towards changing people's beliefs could contribute to changing behaviors towards disabilities.

Stigma

Stigma was highlighted in the literature review as one of the main social barriers that students with disabilities face (cite) in post-secondary institutions. Consistent with the literature, stigma was another finding that impacts participants' sense of belonging and community at SFU. Stigma surfaced in the form of non-disclosure of one's identity due to concerns about stereotypes about disability or fear of being ridiculed:

I haven't really told many people about my disability. people don't consider me competent even when I have a 4.3 GPA. (Participant 2, February 2020).

I guess just like a place where like I know I can ask for accommodations and it won't be like ridiculed and like people actually care. Right. And I think another thing for me might be like with finding people with invisible disabilities, like it's so hard because like you can't see, you. And a lot of people don't come forward into more inclusive spaces because they're like concerned (Participant 3, March 2020).

Interestingly, Participant 3 had emailed the researcher prior to applying to participate in this photovoice project for fear that she may not fit the criteria:

Like even for this group, I kind of emailed Precious beforehand and I was like, like, is it cool if I come? Like I don't know if I'm fitting the criteria to be here. And so that's kind of another aspect of it (Participant 3, February 2020).

Concerns raised by participant 3 suggests internalized stigma such as a belief that they may not fit the criteria to participate due to the beliefs and behaviors of others towards persons with disabilities. Participant 1 explicitly names “internalized stigma” such as the fear of being judged due to comments from others who resist providing accommodations at work or at school.

But like you said, not everyone has that are in that same place or they don't know how to go about it. Or maybe they have like that internalized stigma where it's like they just believe that if someone's saying this, then that's just how it is. Like, Oh, I have a disability. I'm not meant to work here. Like without knowing that there are accommodations that are supposed to be made.

and, then like, leaves me to have beliefs that like, Oh, they won't want me to apply for this opportunity at school because I have a disability, or I don't have the energy to advocate for myself to get involved in this. Or like, or like, shouldn't share that I have a disability these, because then people will judge me. And so, then that also like limits, um, my ability to feel like I belong at SFU because I have all those experiences. And then also experiences at SFU where it feels like I should just go there, get as much as I can out of the education. And that says like, I don't know (Participant 1, March 2020).

Participants' comments indicate that prior negative experiences in which they were stigmatized for having a disability were barriers to seeking out opportunities at school, thus limiting their sense of belonging at SFU. Furthermore, these stigmatizing experiences made participants' more likely to focus mainly on their education and less on social activities because the campus environment was not as welcoming particularly in “stressful” situations where people “laughed” at them for having disabilities (Participant 1, March 2020).

Participants suggested that the lack of awareness of disabilities pointed to the need to raise more awareness of the barriers that students with disabilities face on campus and the diverse strengths of students with disabilities.

4.3.3 DISABILITIES AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

This theme builds on the earlier theme on attitudes and beliefs as it focuses on possible underlying factors such as the lack of education about disabilities that impact students with disabilities' sense of community and belonging at SFU. The participants also provided detailed suggestions on how to raise awareness and education. This theme is discussed under three sub-themes: lack of knowledge or education on disabilities, faculty education opportunities and campus-wide disability awareness education or training.

Lack of knowledge or education on disabilities

All participants emphasized the lack of knowledge or education on disabilities in society and specifically at SFU as a main barrier to getting disability related supports and accommodations. During a photovoice interview, one participant who lives in one of the campus residences shared her perspective:

Things that I have experienced e.g. people starring at you, around SFU is mostly people looking and asking, why are you here? and I think it is lack of education... Our society doesn't really teach

people a lot about disabilities and what that looks like. It's like people must take the initiative to access that information themselves or to know someone and be willing to ask them questions (Participant 3, February 2020).

The same participant also shared challenges that she encountered with accessing disability-related accommodations and specific supports on residence for accessibility such as accommodations for her mattress. The participant stated that the “front desk housing often has students doing their Co-op term and may not have training for supporting students with disabilities”. In the participant’s words:

When I did have to ask for accommodations for my mattress, I was told to email the housing general inquiries that everyone’s email gets filtered to. It would be helpful to have specific supports on residence on accessibility. The front desk is usually like students doing Co-op, so they don’t have training for supporting students with disabilities.

...I know that a lot of the students that are there [Residence] for Co-op and don’t get training. So, there is no one that students can contact directly that has been trained to deal with disability specific accommodations (Participant 3, April 2020).

Participant 3 also noted that the lack of awareness about disability was likely a factor that influenced why able-bodied people ask personal questions or inappropriate advice about one’s disability:

Yeah. Or like telling you I'm okay right now. Like people telling you like what you should do and it's like, Oh, you know, you should really get on more medication. Like you're not my doctor (Participant 3, March 2020).

The perceived lack of training or education was also echoed by another participant who expressed that she had attended a student-led event at the SFU Surrey campus in which disability-related information was not provided and impacted her experience in getting to the event:

So, I was like, okay. I had just had surgery, so it was a bit hard to get around. Luckily, I had a friend with me and like there's a lot of stairs there and I'm like kind of scared about going up and downstairs on crutches cause it's like. I'm kind of wobbly, so, but yeah, luckily, I had a friend and they like stood behind me, so I felt like a little bit safer and just went slow. But just things like that, like I don't think students are really aware to think of when they're planning things (Participant 1, April 2020).

Participant 1 stated that students were not aware about disability-related supports and did not account for these supports or provide the needed information in planning on-campus events. Beyond planning for disability-related supports for on-campus events, there was a lack of dialogue and awareness of accessibility information for disability supports in classrooms or learning spaces:

no, they don't. They don't talk about accessibility at all really. I had one time where I got to class late, I usually end up getting to class late because, um, um, elevator's not working or things like that. Um, so I got to class late and I was trying to find a seat and there was like someone sitting on the end and then a seat available aside out. So, I was like, is anyone sitting there?

And they moved their bag and I went to sit and they were like, Oh, I'll just move over one seat. And like, usually people don't even think to do that. And they're like, Oh, I already got my seat can't move. So, she moved over and then I got the end seat. And it was like kind of awkward because it all ended up happening with the entire class watching and the professor like stopped as we were trying to figure out seats, but then he was like, okay, thanks for sorting that out. Like that was really nice. And you, but. Other than that, like I've never really had a professor say anything about accessibility in class (Participant 1, March 2020).

This participant noted that her professors did not really discuss accessibility in class beyond the experience she had trying to find seating in her class. On a different point, Participant 2 noted that negative stereotypes about disabilities exist because there is a lack of understanding on what having a disability means:

I think lack of knowledge on what it means to have a disability. Many people believe that people with disabilities are less capable, less competent (Participant 2, March 2020).

This participant navigated their experience as a student with disability on campus by choosing the specific contexts in which she self-identified needing disability-related accommodations for access. When asked if using the term disabilities was contributing to the negative stereotypes or there was a need to shift our naming of disabilities, Participant 2 maintained that what was most important was not the name itself, but people's knowledge about disabilities:

I don't define myself as having a disability unless in the context where I need accommodations. It doesn't matter much what we call it e.g. disabilities because it is at a policy level. What matters more is peoples' understanding of disability, not about the name itself (Participant 2, March 2020)

Participants provided several suggestions on how we might raise more awareness and education on disabilities at SFU. Their recommendations are covered in the two subsequent sub-themes on faculty or TA education and disability awareness education or training.

Faculty or Teaching Assistant (TA) education opportunities

Education opportunities for faculty members was raised as an important step towards improving a sense of inclusion and belonging for students with disabilities at SFU. Suggestions ranged from: joint conversations with the professor, teaching assistants (TAs) and the student on how to support the student with their accommodations, more awareness for TAs on accommodations, educational opportunities such as workshops for faculty including online courses and also support with how to discuss disability-related information and supports in class. The quotes below include quotes from one participant who was very keen on discussing suggestions for faculty education opportunities:

Organize joint conversations with the professor, TA and student to discuss disability-related accommodations:

Like it's all good. But I think there should be like an actual meeting between the professor and the TA and the student and be like, Hey, how can we support you because even if I have a conversation with a professor at the start of the semester, by the time something comes up, they don't even remember that we have that conversation (Participant 1, March 2020).

The participant observed that while CAL liaises between students and faculties on students' specific accommodations, professors may not track students in their classes who need accommodations or pass this information on to the TAs. She suggested that this system was not working and proactive conversations with TAs, professors and the students would be helpful.

Another suggestion was to include emphasis in online courses on accessibility and disability awareness:

And for like even TA's, to have more awareness on accessibility because I think there's a lot of, Mmm. Emphasis on communication with professors when like a lot of online courses don't have a lot of interaction with the professor. So even though professor might have knowledge of accommodations.

Notice there's not much conversation with the TA around what that might look like. So, when I ask the TA about accessibility related things, they're clueless (Participant 1, March 2020).

Apart from these intentional conversations, the participant also suggested that SFU create in person or online workshops including online resources for faculty members in Canvas, SFU's learning management system. These workshops are intended to provide information on how to support students with disabilities and barriers that students with disabilities have and are experiencing.

I think it would be, um, it might be helpful if, um. Like how, for example, um, created a workshop that all professors have to do, like, um, for example, so like most courses that students take, they're required to go through this plagiarism workshop on canvas.

And, um. Even though we've done it so many times, we have to do it like every semester because they want to make sure that we follow those rules. So, I think if professors, where maybe required every semester to go through a workshop, either in person or online, on supporting students with disabilities and what that looks like, or, um, what students with disabilities have faced.

The same participant also suggested that the online or in person workshops could also include an educational component on how professors could talk to their class about disability-related information or about supports from the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) and how students could get involved:

Yeah. I think it would also be interesting if like part of the professors, um, educational thing about it includes, like how to talk to your class. Like, um, one of the professors I have now at the start of the term, he was like, Hey, the CAL is looking for, um, someone who can take notes for one of the students in this class. And you'll get a gift card. And, uh, like go talk to them to learn more about like, how it works.

The suggestion on how professors could take to their classes about accessibility was also supported by another participant:

That would be a big shift. I think it is society in general. Education is definitively the answer. At the start of each term, professors usually say that you can go to CAL. "maybe mentioning that just be respectful of other people, that goes a long way."

Participant 1 acknowledged that they had not initially considered how professors or TAs may not have the knowledge about disabilities or accept that they needed to learn more. However, the photovoice interviews

made her realize that these faculty or TA educational opportunities could make a significant difference for students with disabilities (Participant 1, April 2020).

Disability awareness education or training

Participants provided several suggestions for disability awareness education or training opportunities for specific campus community members and the broader university community. The suggestions centered on learning or training opportunities for SFU community members to gain more understanding of the experiences of students with disabilities and how to better support this diverse population.

For specific campus groups

a) **Residence staff training in accommodations:** One of the participants who lived on campus Residence stated that there should be training in accommodations, specifically for front-line staff or student-staff such as student Community Advisors (CAs) or Co-op students who interact directly with students. The participant also noted that it was important to have a contact person in Residence with expertise in disability related supports or accommodations:

I feel like some training could help, like even CAs are trained in accommodations that could be helpful and there needs to be some contact person (Participant 3, February 2020).

Campus-wide education or training opportunities

a) **Disability awareness workshops:** Another participant suggested a combination of lecture and conversation-style workshops in which participants could both receive information and share their learnings or ask questions through dialogue. The student suggested that there were inadequate opportunities on campus to gain information about the experiences of students with disabilities or the awareness of disabilities in general. She states:

I like the idea about workshops about disabilities...offer opportunities to get to know this population, maybe people will be more understanding. A combination of lecture and conversation-style workshops (Participant 2, March 2020).

b) **Short interactive online courses for students without disabilities:** Participant 1 suggested that students could be educated about disabilities by providing a short engaging online course in Canvas with a few modules and short quizzes to share knowledge about the experiences of students with disabilities, their experiences in the classroom and how to support students with disabilities:

To correct them or to educate them because it's just stressful and like, I'm just going to sit here and be quiet and let them talk. Um, so I think, yeah, more education around that. Even if it was like, like for example, earlier we were talking about how there's the plagiarism thing on canvas. Maybe they had a short program about students with disabilities, what that looks like in our classroom, and how to support each other and have that more available, um, and more like accessible to students without disabilities, have that knowledge accessible for them to learn about people with disabilities. Um, and then one of the.

It's super short. It's like, I don't know. It has just like, a few modules. They are really quick. It's just, um, gives you examples of plagiarism and what you can do differently. Uh. So yeah, it's like really

brief and it like helps to see the examples and be like, okay, I'll watch out for that. Not going to do that. I'll do this instead. And then you just have like a quick little quiz and, yeah (Participant 1, April 2020)

The participant further suggested that students with disabilities could be involved in developing the interactive online course with peers without disabilities. The participant highlighted that the practical student-driven project would give students hands on experience beyond reading about accessibility. In the participants' words:

Yeah. I think that's really cool. I think that's, that would be a, um, like I really think it's good way to like give people, um, a practical thing to look at instead of just reading about it and being like, Oh yeah, okay. It would give them something to see and be like, Oh, okay (Participant 1, April 2020)

The experiential approach would also contribute to enhancing the sense of community and belonging of students with disabilities on campus and building connections with students without disabilities.

c) **Educate staff by sharing successful projects or practices in implementing accessibility:** Another practical tactic suggested by Participant 1 was for SFU staff to host forums or spaces to discuss strategies to make the university more accessible. This suggestion was shared in context of barriers that this participant had faced in accessing on-campus housing as they are one of many campus groups that regularly interact with students. Participant also recommended that there should be some incentives to educate people such as sharing successful examples of how different groups are implementing accessibility on campus and encourage staff to learn from these groups.

But I think a priority should be like professors, students, the people who regularly, um, engage with each other and work together. But then I think once that is established and like housing and those more like direct to university systems, I think that it could be extended also to other staff, and how they can make other areas of the university more accessible.

I think, um, in some situations some kind of incentive might be good or, um, just to educate people more by highlighting, um, ways that accessibility is being, Um, implemented on campus, and by like sharing what those people did, then other people can learn from it (Participant 1, April 2020).

d) **Establish Disability history and awareness month(s) at SFU:** Disability history and awareness month was suggested by a participant as a step towards providing university-wide opportunities for all SFU community members to learn about the history of disabilities in Canada. Participant 4 suggested that a month-long series could also be an opportunity to showcase the activism and cultures of diverse disability cultures and groups through film, dialogue or other programming:

Yea, yea, I think the easiest one to do is like disability history months. It talks specifically about history of disabilities, doc, specifically about like legislations that they're here in town. And that a hearing you say because like USA has like the ADA American with Disabilities Act and so how people fought for it and how people were standing up for it and also making sure that like different parts of the community are amplified.

Oh amplified. I don't know where that word is coming from. Like autistic culture and like people was chronic illnesses. People with chronic pain, like people was intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, all kinds of people to have like just like a day or two, like a page or like a stand or an event shows a film or a discussion or something else (Participant 4, April 2020).

The participant commented further on the importance of disability history months in building community which could involve in person or online programming (e.g. live stream):

And so being able to connect with different, as their history of disability, it would be so important because for people who are disabled, they will be able to connect with different things that showcase where people are coming from and how people are fighting for it and things that are right.

And in the fall. But then maybe the spring where everybody's a little bit more relaxed, where people have more time or like summer, where not a lot of people are here, but like maybe thinking about like distance communications, like being able to Skype in or being able to watch like a live stream. So, I feel like disability months would be important, but one of the other important things is to be able to stay connected to organize this (Participant 4, April 2020)

Recognizing the need to build sustainability and community, Participant 4 also suggested that an organization or group was needed to stay connected yearlong and organize the disability history and awareness months.

e) [Establish a group of SFU community members to organize disability awareness events](#): These events could include outreaches, advocacy and other general educational opportunities throughout the year. The participant continued to state that creating disability history months would foster a sense of community among SFU community members with disabilities and for community members without disabilities to gain education about disabilities.

It's just that like there is an organization there, there's a place, there's, there are people who are organizing this who are still in contact throughout the year through, who are able to like start strategize, to do what they're going to do during that month, but also what they're going to do out of months. Like I'm doing any advocacy other than doing any outreach or doing any, like kind of like artistic work.

Are they doing any other like interesting, like education opportunities for other people? So, like throwing just history, disability history month, who would be not only beneficial, in that we have like a month where people talking about it, but it's also created a community where people will be enjoying things (Participant 4, April 2020).

Overall, participants described their ideas with excitement and hopes to participate in building solutions that contribute to enhancing their sense of community. All participants' suggestions for raising disability awareness and education covered a range of topics, campus groups and formats including dialogue, training in person or online, workshops, disability awareness months and a disability awareness organization or network to facilitate the implementation of these opportunities.

4.3.4 FOOD AND FINANCIAL EQUITY

Food and financial equity relate to barriers that participants faced with accessing affordable and dietary-inclusive food on campus and at affordable prices in physically accessible locations. Like accidental inclusivity, this theme was also somewhat a surprise to the researcher as it was not discussed in the literature reviewed in the Chapter 2. Two participants shared barriers they face, highlighting the importance of having accessible and affordable food options. Participant 2, who also lived on campus, mentioned that there were limited food options on campus and was unable to eat most of the food options due to disordered eating.



Figure 20: Food Photo about Disordered Eating
affordable] (Participant 2, March 2020).

She expressed this concern using the food picture below to illustrate her experiences with limited food options:

I was just talking about that there is too limited option on campus. So, for me, some food is easier to eat than others. if there aren't many options on campus, then I have to cook, or go to somewhere downtown.

For me if there was some kind of soup or liquid. I think there is one about \$15, but it is not affordable at all. Yea, normally noodle should only cost \$1. There aren't many options and even if there is, it is not really affordable. so even if I live on campus, I don't really dine out a lot like \$10 [would be

Participant 2 suggested that there should more affordable food options particularly for students with disordered eating who may feel excluded due to food options that do not reflect their dietary needs. Another participant who lived off-campus about three hours away noted challenges with existing student food voucher program through the undergraduate Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) that provides a limited number of food vouchers per term to students in financial need. The student discovered the program through SFU's Financial Aid and Awards program when they were really struggling for money a couple years due to significant health concerns that prevented them from working (Participant 1, March 2020).

The participant appreciated learning about this resource. Although they were able to apply and access the food vouchers, they the SFSS program is limited for grocery purchase at specific stores on campus which poses commuting barriers and food access concerns. The participant faced additional mobility challenges that makes buying groceries inaccessible given the limited program locations. These barriers were also worsened with the current pandemic given limited transportation options and her having a compromised immune system. According to this participant:

After class, get groceries and bring them back. So, it's just really inaccessible because for someone with a physical disability, you're expecting them to only go to a specific store and have to carry all those things home when they might be really far. Like it just doesn't really consider everyone who might be needing to access that support, and especially since people with disabilities are more likely to not have jobs, and not making enough money. Uh, you would think that that, that would. Be

something people consider like I'm sure there's reasons why they only do it at those certain stores, but it's not accessible.

Yeah. Yeah. For Burnaby campus, it's nesters. For Surrey, I think it's Safeway or something like that. And then I think Vancouver's also Nesters And like right now, so last month I applied for it and then this month, 'because you can do it three times a semester, anything ask me like one month apart.

So, I was going to apply for it again. But then with all this stuff going on [COVID19 pandemic], I don't know how that would work. Like would they expect me to take a bus three hours to get to Burnaby campus to buy my groceries and then get another three hours to get home? (Participant 1, April 2020)

When asked how the program could be redesigned to make it more accessible and inclusive, the participant said that there should be more flexible off-campus food locations in the program:

Like. What would be nice is if they chose like a couple of companies that are generally around, like, I don't know, Walmart, save on foods, whatever they want to do. And then in your application, you put in your address and they show you the options near you. You select the one and they send you a gift card. That way, you know it's near your house. And you have a gift card, so nobody really thinks anything of it and it's accessible and, yeah.

The participant also added that "most students do not live near campus" given that SFU has a large commuter student population, so the program could be made more flexible for students who do not live near a Nesters market and need access to food. The same participant also suggested changing the program from a food voucher to a food gift card. She asserted that it was more dignifying for students as some students like herself struggled and were ashamed to ask for help initially or use the food bank due to cultural norms of not asking for help and finding ways to make things work within their means (Participant 1, April 2020). She cited the differences between "empathy versus sympathy" to explain her rationale:

And I actually think that was a big part of one of the reasons why I don't think I really liked using the food bank at the time when I was struggling because it was odd, as you talked about it. It's like, what would people think of me going to use it? What would people think of me accessing it?

Maybe it's a friend who's like, here you go, here's, you know, something. You can go get yourself. Something like being nice to you. Like, and then if voucher is kind of like looking down on you and being like, Oh, I feel sorry for you. So here you go. It's kind of like the empathy versus sympathy saying, yeah, it's like a gift card would be more like, Oh, I understand you're going through a hard time, so here's something to support you and a voucher feels more like, Oh, I feel bad for you. Like the sympathy kind of response. Yeah (Participant 1, April 2020).

Participant 1 also suggested that more ways the program or other programs could be redesigned to support and work with students with disabilities. For example, the online form could include an option to ask if the student applying has a disability and planning with the student to identify what options are accessible for them:

The way to involve students with disabilities, I think would be to have, um, have something in the form where you apply for it. So, you ask about disabilities. And then if someone.

Uh, responds to it and they have a disability that would significantly [00:33:00] impact their ability to go to one of those stores. Then maybe they come in and have a conversation with someone else who has a disability that works with the program and who can talk to this person and figure out what option would work best for them. And then if that person must apply again in the future, and they already know what the plan is (Participant 1, April 2020).

Although participants have different disabilities and unique circumstances, the findings indicate the need to plan campus food locations or food programs with accessibility, particularly with the needs and experiences of students with disabilities, in mind.

4.3.5 IDENTITY, SELF-ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM

One of the most common themes raised by participants focused on identity, self-advocacy and activism. This theme covers concerns about labelling and navigating their identity as a student with disabilities in university or reclaiming identity as a student with disability through self-advocacy and activism. Within this theme, there are four sub-themes discussed in subsequent sub-headings and represented in the chart below:

- Activism – Claiming or Challenging Disabled Identity
- Barriers to self-expression or creativity
- Diversity of experiences of students with disabilities
- Intersecting Identities

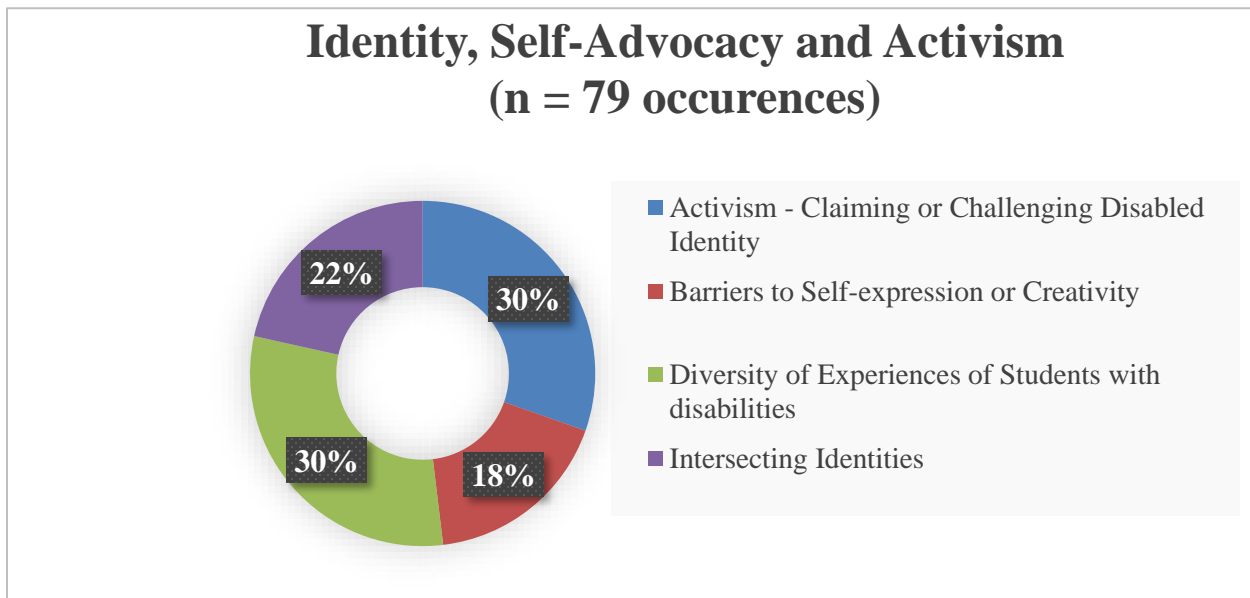


Figure 21: Summary Chart of Identity, Self-Advocacy and Activism

Activism – Claiming or Challenging Disabled Identity

Students with disabilities face challenges as they navigate what it means to be labelled as “disabled” after being diagnosed of their disabilities. Participants 3 and 4 who were both diagnosed after they started their undergraduate programs at SFU share their experiences:

No. I literally did that too you like every time I got a diagnosis I'd be; I'd go home, and I will google [my disability]...just like be going in and like looking at different like forms. I feel like, what am I? Like? People really like tend did gatekeep with stuff like that. It's interesting (Participant 3, March 2020).

And then, you really so scared of people gatekeeping you that like at least one person will say, no, you're not disabled. Go and do something that will prevent you from something. And just being afraid of that one person is like monumental. You may just like roll your identity into a carpet and just be like, eh, it's okay. I'm going to be, I wouldn't at all because I'm afraid of somebody say that I'm not the person that I'm claiming to be (Participant 4, March 2020).

Both participants expressed their fears and concerns about being disbelieved by people who do not think they have a disability. They used the term “gatekeeping” to describe when someone states that they do not have a disability or are eligible for disability-related supports or services. Gatekeeping, therefore, made them question their identity as a person with disabilities. Despite the gatekeeping they faced in accessing services and supports, Participant 4 shared how they were reclaiming their disabled identity through self-advocacy and activism on disability-related issues:

Raise your hands up. But it's more about like understanding and accepting. Your identity is also about believing and making it part of your life...and to me that's really important, like important to listen to or like disabled people who like, I don't know, I use plastic straw. So long fight for plastic straws for all the other disabled people. So, for them to like this label, it's more about like description, not prescription on what they need to do (Participant 4, April 2020).

Another participant also mentioned that they had lost confidence in advocating for themselves over the years having faced several barriers with employment discrimination. Recently, this participant stated that they had regained their confidence and were more accepting of their life as a person with disabilities:

I didn't have the confidence to advocate for myself. And, um, so I just was like, okay. And for a while I was like, no one's gonna want me to work for them. So, then I lost confidence there as well. And, over the years, then as I gained like more confidence and like became more accepting and understanding of my life as someone with a disability, um, then when I had the situation with [my work], I was able to have the confidence do something about it.

Even though I have like, more confidence and like understanding of how things are. I don't always like have the energy to, um, advocate for things. Um, like it was last summer. I needed a new job and found one that was perfect (Participant 1, March 2020)

Barriers to gatekeeping also showed up in a different from in barriers to self-expression or creativity.

Barriers to self-expression or creativity

One participant discussed how their artistic or creative interests were stifled in an academic environment:



Figure 22: Photo of Art Attack illustrating Barriers to Creativity and Self-expression

Academia is one of the barriers to self-expression, because it makes you act and express in a specific way. You have to abide by a certain formula. “School time is very structured and regulated by what academia expects of you.”

Being open in academia is so hard because there are so many punishments. Everyone views you as this cheating person...that you are less capable and have to work twice as hard...academia is not really a place where you can be open and really say things about yourself (Participant 4, February 2020)

The participant stated that being open about one’s identity as a disabled person in academia has consequences such as being viewed as “less capable” or receiving “grade deductions for straying away from essay prompts or the need to express oneself in a specific way in assignments” due to prescribed ways that a student should learn. They used the image “Art Attack”, a photo of an artwork barricaded by construction signs to illustrate the barrier to self-expression or creativity:

This is the barrier that you need to overcome to be able to enjoy the art, to see what it is, but then I look at it more and I was like, this is the next experience so far. This is like how you experience it. Now it's kind of like art installation or like art exhibition when you don't just put things randomly, but you put them in (Participant 4, February 2020).

Participant suggested that opportunities for creativity or self-expression were valuable for them as it helped them succeed in classes, particularly in a class where they got creative in writing an essay and “got a good grade” for it. They felt like their learning style was recognized and valued.

Diversity of experiences of students with disabilities

This sub-theme describes the diverse experiences of students even with students with similar disabilities and how disability impacts the experience of students with disabilities compared to students without disabilities. Participant 4 describes her concerns about what is considered normal student behaviour in class and her preference for a one on one learning style given her disability impacts her participation in group settings:

Um, because we are sitting in the class. I think sometimes I feel like it's normal if you only talk to people and if it's abnormal if you just stay quiet and don't just interact with people. So, I think there's that expectation that, and, um for example in classrooms there is a lot of discussion activities, and it's abnormal if you just don't interact.

Yeah. Office hours work only works if it's one to one format. so, for example, for example, for run, it's like half of the class, which office hours, like half of the classes, the students are going to help us. So, it's like if the professor is talking to a whole bunch of people, then it doesn't work very well for me.

She adds that disability means diverse needs of students to succeed:

In terms of disability, I would say that, I would define disability as having needs just like everybody else. We all have different needs whether it's academic or social needs. I think people with disabilities just need something to do well. I think we deserve that (Participant 2, March 2020).

Another participant emphasized that disability impacts everyone's lives in unique ways depending on their circumstances:

Yeah. It affects different people at different levels. Like I'd be a lot more affected if I was like a pole dancer and then I found out I had hypermobility. That would be like a way bigger change. Someone coming from a way different perspective than me, I mean affects everyone in their lives so differently (Participant 3, April 2020)

All participants gave the disclaimer that their experiences were not representative of all persons with disabilities. As such, there is no all-encompassing experience of people with disabilities:

Yeah, I need to, because like I feel, especially right now because we feel kind of pressure of being like the ambassadors or representatives of disabled people. And I feel like it's an important step for everybody to step up, step down and say, this is my experience and my experience is not all encompassing. And I must understand that other people on this campus have different experiences. And so. It's like a very important disclaimer that everybody kind of must make, to make sure that they're being truthful to themselves...And so I feel like it's very important statement to just make. (Participant 4, April 2020).

These stories highlight some of the diversities of experiences of students with disabilities at SFU. The participants noted consistently that their experiences are not representative of all students with disabilities. As such, there are more diverse experiences not reflected in the stories above given diverse contexts including personal and environmental circumstances.

Intersecting Identities

Participants also discussed the intersections of race and diverse disabilities how it impacts students' experiences. For the purposes of anonymity, the participants intersecting identities are not included in detail to protect their anonymity. The participants acknowledged their own intersections and recognized that there were perspectives of diverse students with disabilities that should be centered:

Yeah. Cause everyone has like different levels of challenges. Even if like for me, like feeling with being disabled and being a student for someone else, dealing with being a person of color and being a student or mental health issues or like an intersection of a bunch of different things. So, yeah, I think that I fit in the same as other people is. Everyone's kind of like dealing with their own issues with fitting in, in that way (Participant 3, March 2020).

Two participants specifically noted that accessibility and inclusion should be considered within the intersections of physical land inaccessibility for Indigenous peoples, barriers to sustaining one's culture and their impacts on their experiences of disabilities.

Uh, we don't think about how we we're all living and working on land, that most of us, it's not, it doesn't like belong to us. Like it's been taken from other people. And so, I think that has to be considered. And like some people with disabilities. Um, might be affected by that as well. Uh, especially if, uh, I'll try to think of an example.

Um, like if they're not, uh, allowed to, um, if something isn't accessible in an area, like physically, for example, and that isn't, like, what am I saying? Uh, like for someone who's, uh, like First Nations, for example, if they have a disability and they're not able to access somewhere on their land, and then that would affect them in probably a different way because not only are they dealing with their disability, but they're also dealing with like the way society has made their land inaccessible to them (Participant 1, March 2020).

Participant 4 suggested that access for Indigenous people's land is an accessibility need:

Yeah. Because like for indigenous peoples, like being able to access their land is an accessibility need is just to me, able to connect with the land that they're on and to be able to know that this is, they're able to sustain their culture and they're able to sustain their traditions and they're able to sustain themselves off their land, is the something that makes sure that their physical and mental wellbeing is met and being in good position.

and like learning about different intersections, learning about mental health, learning about it. Disabilities, like all types of different disabilities of like how they can manifest and people, how being in fact people's lives to be able to connect with different peoples, with different experiences, to be able to see different strands of activism. Like, what are the people fighting for and what are people's accessibility needs? (Participant 4, April 2020)

The same participant had captured a photo representing the remembrance of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Men and Women (MMIMW) event at SFU to illustrate that they felt that SFU values reconciliation which suggests that the institution cares about honouring safe, cultural spaces. Both participants 1 and 4 noted that it was important to highlight that we are living, working, and studying on stolen lands – “land that does not belong to us” and it is important to acknowledge this fact in conversations on belonging and inclusion.

4.3.6 INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES AND STRUCTURAL GAPS

This theme includes gaps in institutional structures, policies and processes that impact the experiences of students with disabilities under these sub-themes:

- Accessibility standards
- Communications gaps
- Hiring staff and faculty with disabilities
- Policies for accountability and compliance
- Under-resourced Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL)

These themes are represented in the chart below:

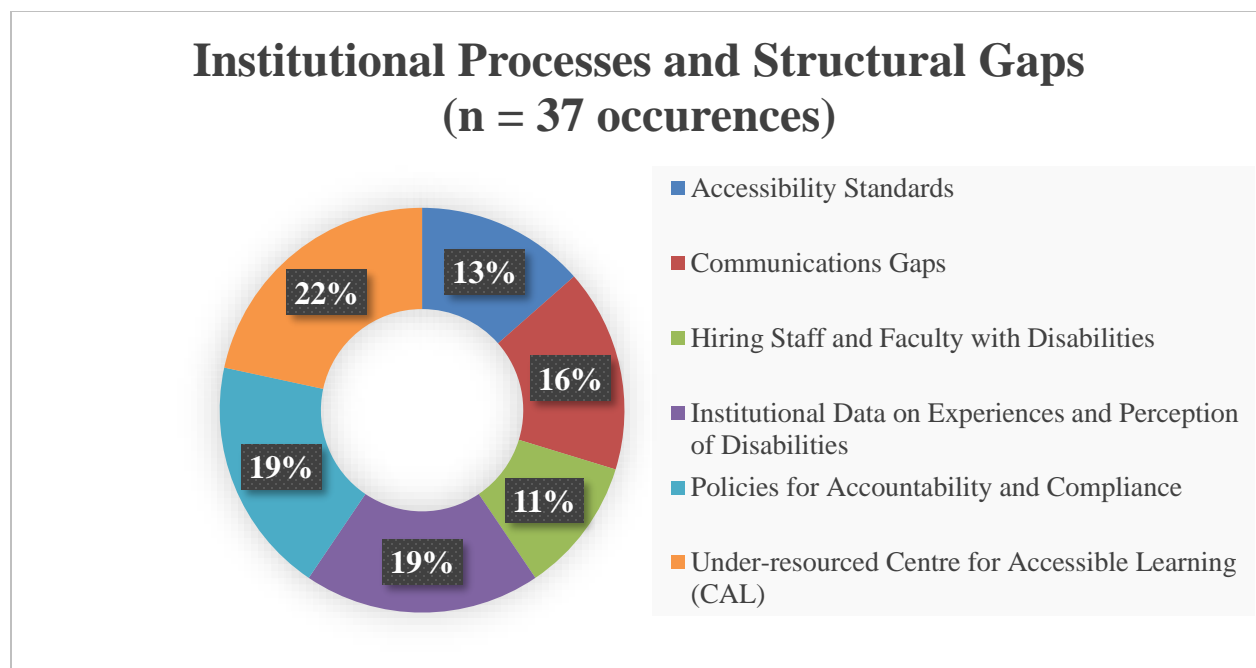


Figure 23: Finding - Summary Chart of Institutional Processes and Structural Gaps

Accessibility Standards

A sub-theme that was raised was the need for clear accessibility standards that clearly denote different forms of accessibility for diverse disabilities and how diverse people with disabilities can access spaces. This topic was raised during a photovoice interview in which the researcher and the participant discussed how the wheelchair symbol has become a popular symbol for accessibility and how this symbol might inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes about disabilities. Participant 4 responded in these words:

“...every single symbol needs to have robust understanding of what is accessible there, because everybody can slap like the wheelchair symbol everywhere and just say like, because it's accessible because it means access, but like they don't even really mean, they didn't really describe what kind of access they're providing with this.

And by having specific symbols attached to specific meanings and attach to specific standards of accessibility that you can use them interchangeably or you can use like a few different ones to denounce that you have this as disability that a disability for this kind of person who has the ability for that type of person, to denounce that like, you are thinking about multiple people in there. So, having something that denounces specific things and also having a variety of different things to denounce, to be able to describe different rooms, environments, and how the spaces are accessible for different types of people are (Participant 4, April 2020).

The participant also emphasized that the symbols needed to clearly describe what kind of access was being provided. Clear communications about accessibility standards and symbols matter to help convey that and that individuals or groups planning an initiative or space are planning for multiple people of diverse abilities to use the space and feel welcomed.

Communications Gaps

The topic of communications extended to gaps across units with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) in communicating changes to accessibility features or physical accessibility in different parts of the campus. One participant shared how lack of notification from Facilities or groups organizing construction impacted their sense of welcome and campus experience. The participant took a picture of a broken elevator titled “going the long way” to express the negative impact of the lack of communication such as getting to class because she had to go around the campus to find an alternate route.



Figure 24: Photo of Going The Long Way illustrating that a broken elevator left unfixed creates delays in getting to class

Like maybe there needs to be an accessibility section where it says this elevator isn't working, or maybe if you need to get to this part of campus. There is a different pathway (Participant 1, March 2020).

The participant noted that there used to be regular updates to CAL and from CAL to students. In recent times with more construction on campus, “the people that are doing the construction are not informing CAL of everything”:

And I contact CAL and they're like, Oh, we haven't even been notified of this. Let us look into it. And then they don't get a response for so long, and then by the time they do, they're like, Oh, they've informed us. It's working now.

The participant also described the impacts of lack of notification for students who are blind:

...like I was trying to imagine for my friend who's blind and when there's the pathways always changing to get to MBC or even just through Convo mall there for someone who's blind and relies on, um, like getting used to areas and knowing which ways to go, and then all of a sudden, every single day you're on campus, it's a different pathway. Like, I can't imagine how stressful that would be for me. I would be like, I'm not going to school anymore. Um, because that would just be too much.

When asked how the communications issues could be addressed, the participant suggested a better tracking system for notifying CAL and updating students “like some kind of system that makes it easier for people because I'm sure it's hard for them to like, Oh this is the person who has to keep track of it all” A better tracking system would ensure that CAL and students with disabilities are notified of accessible routes. The participant also suggested having an accessibility option in the SFU Snap App to support with campus navigations or having a point of contact to call to assist with navigating with finding classes, particularly for people who are visually impaired, using campus maps may not be feasible:

So, I don't know, like there's that app that students can use to find classrooms and all that information...especially if you don't know who to talk to or what's going to happen when you get to school. I'm like, it's already stressful for me to be like, okay, this is the way I have to go, but how

long is it going to take me to get to class? Or if I go around this corner, where is it going to lead me next? Um, so I think that like, yeah, even just having like an accessibility option in the app.

Um, um, for me it is, but I don't know. Like for someone who's visually impaired, I don't know what their experience would be like. Um. It doesn't really help me in finding classes. Um, especially because like, I don't know sometimes if you're following a map and it's showing you where to go, I can't really use crutches and follow a map. And then like, I'd have to keep stopping and being like, Hey, where's this class? Or I don't know. Even if there was someone to call and be like, Oh, I'm trying to find this class. This is where I am. Can you explain it? Like something like that would make it easier, but yeah (Participant 1, March 2020).

The findings suggest that a better notification and communication system is needed to improve the experiences of students with disabilities in feeling more included on campus.

Hiring Staff and Faculty with disabilities

Another suggestion raised was hiring more staff and faculty with disabilities across SFU. One participant suggested that having more staff and faculty with disabilities would support students with disabilities' sense of community as they could serve as role models and expose students without disabilities to the experiences of people with disabilities on campus:

So, and then with TA's. I think it's not ideal, but having more disabled TAs, having more disabled professors, having more disabled staff would be helpful because even though they wouldn't be like the model representative of themselves and they won't be always correct and they will forget about things and they'll be imperfect in different ways.

Having them as supports, and having them as role models, and having them as people that you interact with would be helpful for both disabled and non-disabled students because non-disabled students won't be, that would probably be what their first big encounter with a person with disability.

And so, university is this place where you get exposed to lots of things, but I don't think that there is enough exposure to disabled people and disabled culture on campus (Participant 4, April 2020).

The participant further emphasized that staff and faculty with disabilities were more likely to understand the unique barriers faced by students with disabilities on campus, in considering how to make their classrooms more accessible for themselves and for students:

So, what I'm saying is that disabled profs will not be perfect, but they'll be better understanding. Because they have better capacity to understand the circumstances that other students are in in their classroom, and that they have better understanding of what their classroom was like and like how they make it accessible for themselves and how they would make it accessible for other students.

Because they would be more empathetic, because they would be more understanding... (Participant 4, April 2020).

Institutional Data on the Experiences and Perceptions of Disabilities

One participant noted that there were rarely institutional surveys on the experiences of students with disabilities or questions in existing SFU undergraduate surveys about what students without disabilities know about the experiences of their peers with disabilities:

I think it would be interesting if like, it was some kind of survey where there was an incentive for them to fill it out and it was anonymous where they fill in all the things that you said. And then there's like, and you get the general picture of like, what kind of students are going to school there and what they might mean out might be a way to do it. But I think that, um. Yeah. I like, it would be hard to like apply that to housing if you didn't know who the people are, but if housing included that in their application, then they could have some kind of algorithm that organizes people based on their answers.

The participant had tried multiple times to access on-campus housing in Residence, thus suggested that there could be better institutional systems in residence and housing to prioritize applications of students with disabilities who already face multiple barriers to accessing housing and campus activities. The participant also suggested that a specific university-wide survey about disabilities should be developed to provide institutional data to understand this population, what the community knows to help improve the experiences of students with disabilities:

Other things that I mentioned in my notes, um, that I thought would be interesting is, um, like, like all the time surveys about this or that student experience stuff. Um, going out in emails and like, Oh, you could win this if you answer this survey. Um, but based on the ones I've seen there's never been anything about students with disabilities.

And yeah, a survey would help because like, we don't really know what students already know or like what behaviors they have, stuff like that. Um, yeah. Mmm. I think like if it was just like how other surveys are put out, like through the emails and all the students get and kind of these would be the same words, like, Oh, you could [send] an answer that like, there's always all sorts of fancy prizes to like inform the school on what to do about different topics, but there's never one about disabilities.

Policies for Accountability and Compliance

Participants also suggested the need for mechanisms to ensure accountability and compliance with accessibility requirements or accommodations. The participant who had experienced discrimination during her on-campus volunteer opportunity highlighted the need for regulation to influence behaviour change:

there is only so much people can do to accommodate and unless there is a regulation, then it may not change people's attitudes (Participant 2, March 2020).

Another participant also identified the need for policies within the university system to inform how things are done with regards to disability-related accessibility:

Yeah. I think that would help. Um, and I guess that goes back to like, um, having policies and education within the university system as a whole to like to inform how things are done (Participant 1, April 2020)

Participant 1 also suggested that SFU create some form of lived experience policy with specific guidelines for populations with lived experience including students with disabilities to be involved in shaping what specific situations such as programming or spaces could look like and what role the individual or population could play in these respective projects. This policy would ensure that the voices of students with disabilities were integral to foster more sustainable change in the long run:

I think that like, hey, there were some kind of policy created. Then, part of that policy should be that, um, in whatever steps you're taking, you have to include that lived experience. Um, and then, yeah, I guess like, like, maybe if there was a policy, and then part of that policy is that there are specific recommendations and maybe people can choose from that, but then there's certain guidelines for that that I don't know,

but maybe part of every recommendation that you do could adjust. Um. Like go into detail about how specifically someone with lived experience could be involved and what that looks like and the benefit of it in that certain situation. So then if someone was following it, then they would have that picture in their head about that, the role that that person play and how we work together. Um, and how that's gonna benefit the long-term outcome (Participant 1, April 2020).

Under-resourced Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL)

All participants recognized the valuable role that CAL plays in providing students with disability-related accommodations for their classes. However, they also noted that there are limitations in CAL's role with different units at SFU. One participant requested that CAL extend their services to SFU Residence:

I know that CAL and Residence have different systems and different staff. I have never heard of anyone on the Residence team that specializes in accessibility support, so they are not getting anyone with accessibility that advocates for students that need this accommodation. In my ideal world, I would like for CAL to extend their services to residence. But it's just that there is no support over there (in residence) for accessibility issues.

I asked about CAL and Residence support when I was having my interview to renew my accommodations and they said they don't have any power over Residence and they don't provide supports there (Participant 3, February 2020)

CAL's mandate and resource constraints were also raised during a photovoice conversation on if there were accessibility consultants that could work with instructors to redesign their classrooms to make them more accessible such as accessible syllabi with disability-related information. Another participant suggested that given that CAL focuses primarily on accommodations for students with disabilities, they may not be able to do so as they also highlighted the need for improved website navigations:

I don't know about that because I don't think that that's what CAL would be able to do because CAL primarily focused on like the accommodations for students.

But CAL used to have like a page, just if things still has with like the navigation on the website, but the navigation on the website is a wonky that you cannot see it. They had a page was like this, with accessibility statements on it. It's like the different, like throw-in lines on how to make like the syllabus more accessible

And so, there was some sort of attempt to make sure that these offices are reflective of the all kinds of students that are going to be taken to class, but I, it's really hard to access (Participant 4, April 2020)

Participants' comments demonstrate that the need for more resourcing for CAL as it plays a vital role in supporting students with disability-related accommodations and advising faculties and units on disability-related supports and services.

4.3.7 PHYSICAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS

This was the second most common theme discussed by all participants under three sub-themes: commuting challenges, impacts of construction and mobility barriers in navigating campus. The number of occurrences for each sub-theme is illustrated in the chart below:

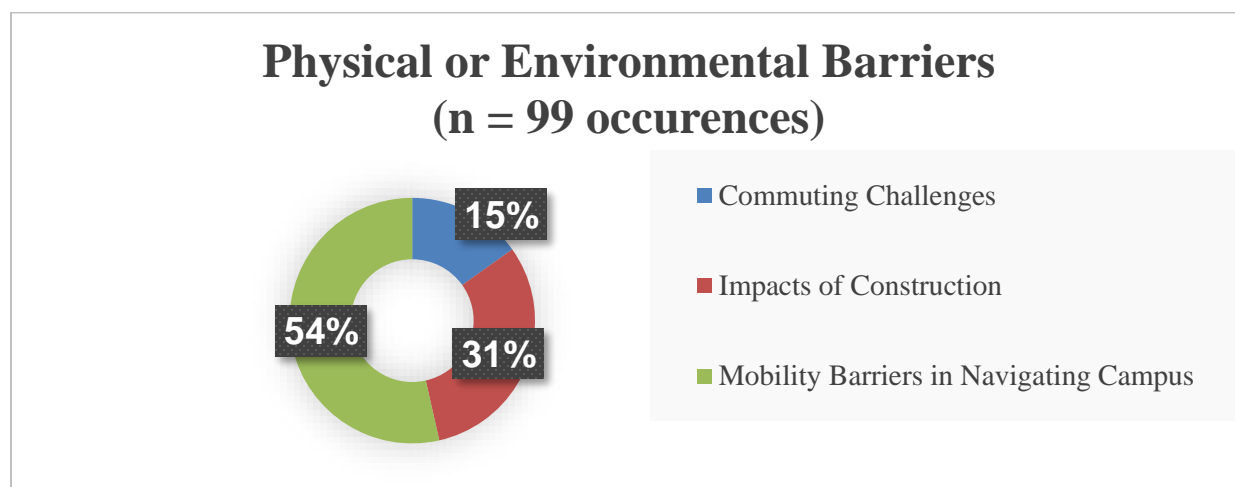


Figure 25: Summary Chart of Physical or Environmental Barriers

Commuting Challenges

Commuting challenges was not rarely raised because all participants lived on campus except one participant who commuted three hours to and from campus. This participant noted that the long commuting distance was the largest barriers to engaging in class and in co-curricular activities such as on-campus events:

Um, well, one thing that I've noticed. That's like the huggest barrier for me is the fact that I live so far from campus and it's because of my physical disability. It takes so much energy for me to go to and from campus because it's like a two to three-hour bus ride, transferring buses multiple times one, so by the time, yeah.

Yeah, So, by the time I get to campus, I'm basically already exhausted and just have the bare minimum of energy to engage in my classes. And then I have to leave right away afterwards because it takes so long to get home and I don't want to risk going to an event or something and then being completely exhausted after that and having an even more difficult time.

When asked about solutions to address this challenge, the participant suggested that access to on-campus housing would improve her sense of belonging at school. The participant used the image "left out" to convey

her feelings of feeling left out of from not accessing on-campus housing. She shared several ways in which her sense of community and belonging would improve by living on campus:



Figure 26: Photo of Left Out
Illustrating barriers to accessing on-campus housing

So, I have tried for a long time to get housing on campus because that would, um, make so many things more accessible for me. I would have more energy for my courses. I'd be able to study more, be able to, um, work with other study groups. I'd be able to get involved in things and meet other students.

I'd be able to not have to worry about, um, like only getting a few groceries at a time to carry home because I would be closer. Um, and I would get more sleep and all these things that would not only make me healthier, but also, um, improve my education and improve, like my sense of belonging at school.

Impacts of Construction

All participants commented on the impacts of construction across campus on their health, safety, well-being and ability to access resources and supports on campus. They stated that construction posed physical accessibility challenges and sound inaccessibility due to the noise population, difficulty in focusing on lecturers and interference with their accommodations. One participant captured a picture called “Safety lights and construction materials by the Rotunda, a popular social space for students on campus:



Figure 27: Photo of Safety Lights and Construction materials by the Rotunda, SFU Burnaby illustrating the impacts of construction

This picture shows the impact of construction at SFU, and how it makes safe spaces harder to access. The focus on the light relates to my experience feeling more unsafe on campus at night because of the reduced accessibility and the blocking of natural light from the surrounding buildings.

I think everyone at SFU has been affected by the construction! I feel that marginalized groups have been especially impacted, as centres like Out On Campus and the Women's Centre can be more difficult to access with all the rerouting across campus. I feel that SFU hasn't been considering the well-being of current students very much in terms of the construction...This photo displays what we are

losing out on, and how confusing it can be to get around campus in its current state. Hopefully this opens up a larger discussion about marginalized groups that have been impacted by the construction (Participant 3, March 2020).

This participant suggested that construction could be improved for better mobility around campus:

I think with the construction,...to improve on the stairs and mobility functions, particularly with issues around construction (Participant 3, March 2020).

Another participant discussed the impact of construction on her disability or mental health and well-being using the image captioned “high noise” to represent the noise population and distractions she faces in the classroom as a student with Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD):



Figure 28: Photo of High Noise illustrating the noise pollution impacts of construction

Because of the high noise caused by the construction, I become overstimulated everyday. As I walk to the classroom, I am overwhelmed by the noise because the construction happens everywhere on campus

SFU students have to be troubled by the construction noise for a better community in the future. “Because of my mental health issues, I am really sensitive to sound. During the daytime, I usually wear a noise cancelling headphone when you walk around campus. That doesn’t make me feel very included.” “I need to take extra efforts to prevent it from impacting you.”

Do something for the current students. SFU can understand that construction can cause problems for current students and it can be really distracting in the classroom. Because of ADHD, then if there is construction going on, then I may not hear the lecture at all. I have to record my lectures to listen to it again, because it’s hard to focus in class (Participant 2, March 2020).

Participant 2 stated what she hoped would be done differently to address the situation, emphasizing that there needed to be balance a between “meeting the needs of current students and that of future students.”

Mobility Barriers in Navigating Campus

Mobility barriers was the most common theme under physical or environmental barriers. Beyond construction challenges, more mobility barriers were described by multiple participants in navigating the SFU Burnaby campus. One participant said they struggled to get through physical classroom doors are that were heavy to move around campus when elevators were not working:

It was really hard to get through in the classroom, hard to move around. Some of the classroom doors are really heavy, sometimes the buttons don’t work for the entrance doors, and the elevators might be out of service and they don’t notify CAL, so I don’t know about it. If it’s a few stairs, it’s okay, but sometimes then I have to go a long way (Participant 2, March 2020)

Another participant had mixed comments about the campus shuttle and transit system on campus using the photo of the bus stop or public transit below. The participant expressed that the campus shuttle has been life-changing as it supports her sense of being included on campus and also concern about debates to cancel the campus shuttle because it makes a significant difference for students with disabilities who rely on the shuttle to navigate the campus physically:



Figure 29: Photo of Bus Stop illustrating public transport around campus

The transportation system has changed my life. The buses and campus shuttle were intended for accessibility purposes, but it definitely works for that (accessibility). The inclusion of the campus shuttle has been hugely helpful to so many groups - disabled students, FIC students, those living in residence, and so many more!

When I was at FIC, I had to walk through the stairs. Now that the shuttle has been introduced, and now that I am disabled, I don't know how I would have done that (walked to FIC), I hope that they can consider that point of view that it is actually making campus more accessible and I hope they keep it.

There has been some debate about getting rid of services like the campus shuttle, and I hope the story behind this photo encourages SFU to keep the program (Participant 3, March 2020).

Pathway to residence

The same participant also captured photos of the walkway to residence to raise concerns that the “walkway was really icy for a long time” and is an accessibility issue that makes it impossible for “someone with a wheelchair to get down that walkway”. The participant noted that the snow-covered parking lot was her alternate route and was not often cleared promptly during the winter months with heavy snowfall on the SFU Burnaby mountain campus.



Figure 30: Photo of Pathway to Residence illustrating physical access to on-campus housing



Figure 31: Photo of Snow-covered Parking Lot Beside Pathway to Residence

Signage

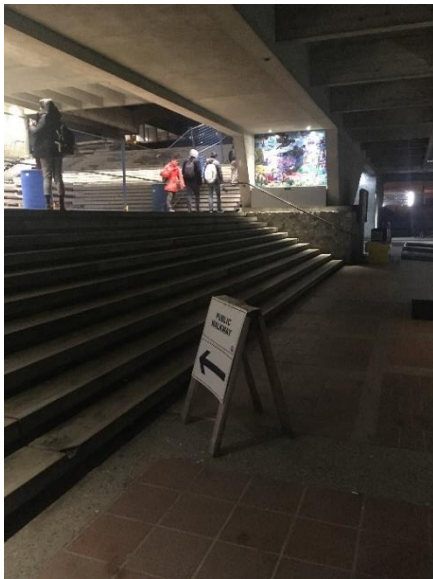
Participant 1 describes the problem with lack of signage for accessibility features like elevators that are not working as a moment when she felt that she did not belong on campus. She advocated for better signage to communicate to users if elevators were not functioning:

Yeah. And even like signage, something as simple as that, like an elevator might not be working. And then like one of the, um, late in, for example, the elevator, it's like a picture of, I was standing there for a while thinking like, okay, sometimes it's slow.

Like, people might be using it to move things around. So, I just wait and then, um. Before I took that photo. Someone networks with like the campus, I don't know, the people that are in charge of like, monitoring what needs to be fixed and that kind of thing. I don't know what they are, what their role is, but he came by and he's like, Oh yeah, I don't think that one's working.

We've had a lot of issues with it and haven't had a chance to repair it yet. And I was like, Oh. And he's like, yeah, there should be a sign on there. I don't know what happened to it. I was like, Oh, okay. I've just been standing here for like a long time thinking it's just slow and there could have been a sign on it (Participant 1, March 2020)

Participant 4 took the picture of the “public walkway” sign to demonstrate that construction signage to indicate how to navigate campus did not consider diverse groups of users who need to use the space. e.g. directions to climb the stairs was insensitive to the needs of wheelchair or scooter users.



This participant summarized the comments on mobility barriers as “plan better physical access, be creative in accommodations, help others be comfortable” (Participant 4, March 2020).

Figure 32: Photo of Directions illustrating a Public Walkway Construction Sign leading up a flight of stairs

4.3.8 RESOURCEFULNESS AND PREPARATION

Resourcefulness and preparation include the physical, mental and emotional preparation needed to support students with disabilities to embed accessibility and “thoughtfulness” in the planning, design and implementation of learning, programming and spaces. Participant 4 illustrates resourcefulness using a photo of a cabinet box of Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (SFPIRG) supplies below:

And so, it's empowering people to be themselves in the space. And how do you prepare for this? How do you make sure that everybostady else is, feeling welcomed there. So, for example, that

cabinet, it's what really struck me is that they're like, kind of like a cabinet for pads and cabinet for like clips, cabinet for like forks, and for like other stuff, cabinet for like, for tea and coffee.

And so, it's really, it really made me think of like, why were those the categories that they chose? Why were those the supplies that they bought? Why were those in place?

And it was, I was thinking about the history of this space and how they must have gone through different types of things that they offered, and then they settled on those and that it was coming from different people accessing the space and also asking for things (Participant 4, April 2020).

The same participant continued about how we might prepare for diverse people to access our spaces, in the context of moving programming online during the COVID19 pandemic to keep people socially connected. The participant emphasized that there were different levels of preparedness



Figure 33: Photo of Resourcefulness illustrating a drawer set of student resources

How do we prepare for different people to access our spaces? ...It's mostly about planning and the services that are being provided. Out on Campus has just launched the Discord Server for their space to chat about what they should do in terms of programming. It's thinking about the people you want to connect. There are different levels of preparedness and accommodations.

Thinking about people that need accommodations ...Preparedness is like knowing the people in your spaces and the answers that they need (Participant 4, April 2020)

The participant further discussed preparation in terms of organizing events by planning for accessibility needs:

And then there's also like planning of the event. Like, for example, if you have an event, is it planned with breaks? Are there, like accessible readings? If you are distributing your readings, is it, do you have to read the readings during in the meeting?

Can you read it later and how people are able to notify the facilitator about their accessibility needs and if they change during the meeting? But it's also about like think, we prepare mentally to accommodate people because I feel like defensiveness can come through when somebody asks for accommodations and can go like, Oh no, this place is really accessible... We wouldn't ever exclude everybody, but having that humble like, stay with, just say, Oh yeah, I made a mistake. There is not, it's honestly simple as in, you'd be for you to be here. I will. I will change that. I'll fix that, or I will try my best to make sure that you will be able to be here.

So preparing for people, it's not just like making sure that like a wheelchair can pass through, but it's also making sure that everybody who is in the space is feeling welcome and, clued in and then they can be active participants in this space (Participant 4, April 2020).

The participant's comment underscored the need for mental preparation to make everyone feel welcome as "active participants" without defensiveness when someone requests accommodations for a space that is inaccessible for them. The participant's comment connects to the theme on positive attitudes towards improving accessibility such as openness and humility matter in fostering inclusive, welcoming campus communities.

4.3.9 RETHINKING ACCOMMODATIONS AND ACCESSIBLE CLASSROOMS

This theme refers to the need to view accommodations as essential for the success of students with disabilities and sense of belonging. Participants also discuss accessible seating design, the need for better accessible classrooms and suggestions for improvement. This main theme is grouped under three main themes: accessible learning design and resources, accessible seating in classrooms and accommodations.

The chart below illustrates the percentage of occurrences of the sub-themes:

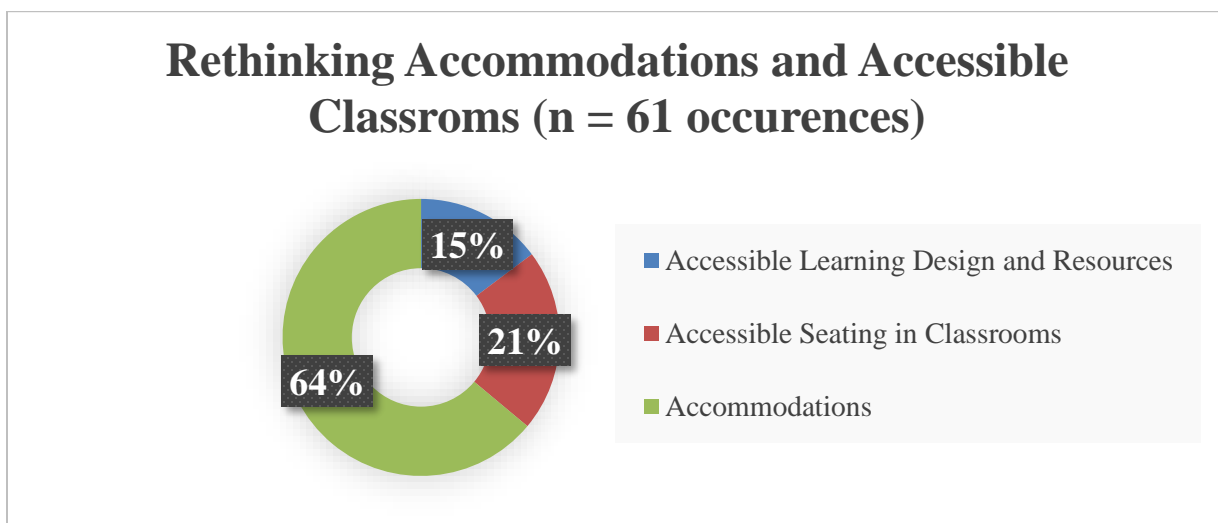


Figure 34: Finding - Summary Chart of Rethinking Accommodations and Accessible Classrooms

Accessible Learning Design and Resources

Participants noted that accessible learning design and resources are important in creating accessible classrooms. They discussed resources ranging from accessible course outlines with "disability-related accommodations, resources using multiple media such as videos with subtitles, audio or transcripts and distributed workloads throughout the semester" (Participant 4, April 2020). The same participant noted that accessibility should be integrated in the course design and planning from the beginning, not as an add on:

I feel like it's kind of like a little bit easy to say and like probably will not be like the magic cure for everything, but anticipate accessibility and disability in your classes from the get go...Not every prof is aware about CAL and what they do, and so integrating accessibility from the get go from not adding it on. Yeah. I think this is like a, a point that one of my friends always makes is that. Accessibility is not an add on disability.

And are they accessible? Is this a video? Does it have subtitles? Do I have to make some titles? Is this an audio? Is there a transcript where people who cannot hear is there different types of things

that I can attract with to make sure that all the students with all the different types of learning and access all, all of the learning that they need to, and also like how we'll be graded (Participant 4, April 2020).

The participant also recognized the availability or use of accessible learning approaches and resources is a matter of design. The participant noted that some faculty are often focused on “how to teach the content” and “not about accessibility and diversity of learners:

And so, it's the issue of design because when profs are designing their syllabus, they're not thinking about accessibility, they're not thinking of how it's going to be used and they're not thinking of like the students who are going to be in their classroom. They're thinking about themselves and thinking about how they're going to teach it (Participant 4, April 2020).

They provided the example of a good course syllabus with accessibility information developed by teachers with disabilities to demonstrate that course resources could be redesigned to be more accessible and inclusive:

And so, I think I like, I read like a really good, a few good like syllabuses that were made by disabled teachers who say, well, teachers in like specific syllabus when it was talking about how they are making this class accessible for everybody. Where to talk to other people had like, how'd you reach out to a prof to say that something's not accessible specifically for them?

And so, it was an issue of design. It wasn't issue of like thinking through, thinking to every single situation that could happen in your class and making sure that it's reflected in the syllabus (Participant 4, April 2020)

Another participant offered suggestions on the value of having recordings of lectures to support students with disabilities with diverse learning styles:

Cause sometimes, um, I'm not as good with like visual learning. Sometimes it helps me to, um, hear the information and then process it that way. And then it makes it easier to go back to the visual stuff. So. There's like kind of different layers to it and like for people with other disabilities or even just other learning styles, it might be helpful for them to have those recordings (Participant 1, April 2020)

Participant 1 noted that “a lot of professors prefer to not record their lectures, as it encourages people to skip classes”. She adds that “a few professors who record lectures state that they have not noticed differences in class attendance. The participant “hoped that more professors would record their classes as her phone recorder was limited in memory space to set up her own recordings with permission from CAL to record. Thus, there were a variety of ways that professors could redesign their courses and resources to be more accessible to support students with disabilities in feeling welcome and included.

Accessible Seating in Classrooms

Participants shared their experiences and concerns with the accessible seating in classrooms. One participant captured the photo of a “view of a lecture hall from the accessible seating in the back row”. This



participant took this picture “to bring attention to the current situation with accessible seating” as its position in the classroom made it less accessible:

By discussing the purpose and need for accessible seating in lecture hall, we could start to question whether there are better solutions to this issue (Participant 3, March 2020).

Figure 35: Photo of Lecture Hall Accessible Seating to illustrate inaccessible seating location in the classroom

Another participant iterated the concern that the accessible seating in classrooms for people with disabilities was often taken up by students without disabilities. The accessible seating is also placed separate from other students and makes it difficult to participate in class activities:

Yeah. Like even just how people sit in the classroom, like, Mmm. Like, yeah, there's the seat for people with disabilities, if it happens to be available, then that's an accessible place for me to stay, but it's often not available. And sitting there also makes me feel less included in the class.

If the desk and the accessible space is nowhere near the other students that live, it really puts like, someone with a disability on the outside, like if there's class discussions and I've just had surgery and I'm sitting in the accessible seat and they're like, Oh, talk to the people around you. Like I can't go downstairs and talk to people, but the people nearby could be encouraged to come talk to me. (Participant 1, March 2020).

Both participants suggested that the accessible seating could be better integrated within the class, with accessible routes to access them. Another participant also suggested that students could receive more education on how to contribute to more accessible classroom spaces:

Um, and then like, there's been classes where the accessible seat in the front of the class and it's like down all of the stairs and there's other doors near the front, but nobody knows how to get to those doors in order to get to the accessible seat. So, then I end up like, I can like sit on it, on the chair at the top of the stairs.

That's easy. But like. Just little things like that where it's like teaching students what to do to make the classroom a better space (Participant 1, April 2020).

Accommodations

Accommodations for academic work were the most frequently discussed sub-theme. One participant used the two images below titled “equality” to express that accommodations provide students with disabilities with “equal access to educational opportunities” (Participant 2, March 2020).



Figure 36: Image of Equality to illustrate accessible exam rooms



Figure 37: Photo of Equality No.2 to illustrate access to equal education

Participant 2 suggested that more awareness and education is needed on how accommodations for disability contributes to students’ learning and success:

So, so for example. If I'm writing exams with other people and I get distracted, so my mark would really not reflect that, my understanding of the course material. it'll just reflect the fact that I'm distracted, so because of the academic accommodation provided, I can have equal access to education. Okay. I'm not sure if it's correct expression, but, um, I'm looking at chance to perform, even make it possible for my mark to reflect my efforts, not other elements such as how much noise is in the background.

Provide more education on the individual differences and needs of students. Raise awareness and instructors can structure classrooms in different ways that accommodate for people who prefer discussion or other forms of learning strategies. It helps some students to receive academic accommodations because it contributes to student success (Participant 2, March 2020).

Another participant also commented that on the differences between accommodations that “one would make for an able-bodied person, not for a person with a disability.

Yeah. It's not like everyone is the same, like, Oh, people are sick. They all get the same accommodation. It's like there's different, each person is different. It's like you can't do the same accommodation for every kind of category of things because it could be different. Like sometimes, if I have an appointment, um, and another student has an appointment.

They would be like, Oh, okay. You can have a day extra to hand this in. But for me, having an appointment means like, it takes so much extra energy, like having to go on transit into Vancouver and spend the whole day at the hospital and then take transit back. And then like, since I also have PTSD about hospital experiences, then that impacts me for like the next week. So, it's like completely different circumstances, even though it's like, oh, it's a medical appointment. It's, it impacts people in different ways (Participant 1, March 2020).

The participant elaborated that there should be differences in accommodations for people with similar disabilities. However, there were limitations in how accommodations were designed because everyone experiences similar disabilities differently:

So, um, one person's experience with a disability is going to be different than another person's experience. And even if some people have a very similar disability, it's still going to be a different experience for them.

And, um, we don't really think about that very often. I find even like, even though the Center for Accessible Learning is so helpful in advocating for different things, um, it's still like, Oh, these disabilities get this, that kind of thing. It's like people are really limited, whereas like, not everyone experiences it in the same way (Participant 1, April 2020).

4.3.10 SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The theme of social connections includes two main sub-themes on participants' lack of social connections, suggestions for building opportunities for social connections and the need for transition supports in and out of university. The percentage of occurrences are illustrated below:

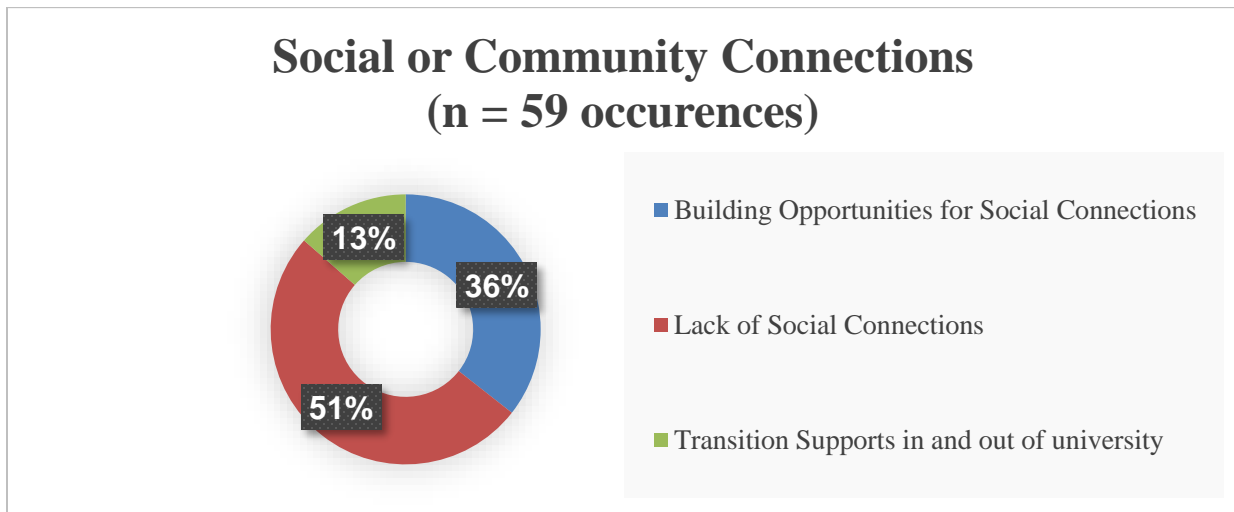


Figure 38: Finding - Summary Chart of Social or Community Connections

Lack of social connections



Figure 39: Photo of Empty Bench to illustrate a sense of social isolation

This was the most common sub-theme under “social or community connections”. participants felt they did not feel a sense of community at SFU or have the meaningful connections that they desired. One participant took a picture of an “empty bench” at the SFU Burnaby campus to illustrate her sense of loneliness and lack of deep connections with people:

So, yeah, I used the bench to say that students are too isolated and there is too little option for deeper connections, the conversation on the bench in reality, it simply doesn't happen just because people are too busy, like just focusing on their academics.

I don't really see that people can build that connection. yeah, I think the only way to have deep connections people is to have meaningful conversations and then I don't see that happening here (Participant 2, March 2020).

When asked about barriers to participating in existing opportunities for social connections such as campus events or activities, Participant 2 shared her sense of exclusion:

Well, I guess what can be overwhelming is going to events, like other people going to events, like they go to events with their close friends, like a couple of people, then that I go to events alone, and then I can just see other people talking to their friends and then I just can't go there like people don't really like to get to know others outside of their circle and it makes me feel excluded and rejected (Participant 2, March 2020).

Another participant who also felt that they did not belong said they created their own sense of belonging through building social connections in their circle:

I don't think that I belong, but I make up my own belongings. So it's less of like the Dandelions and then Dandelions, English growing through like, do you know like this classic of like... (Participant 3, March 2020)

Participant 1 had minimal social connections on campus. They shared that they did not feel welcome at SFU due to difficulties accessing supports, commuting barriers like travelling 3 hours to campus and therefore not being able to get involved with people with similar interests:

Mmm, well, I guess like, I just don't really feel welcome at SFU and as if new and also I, I don't really, yeah. I don't really have the ability to get involved in much. Um, like, everything is so limited and, um, so difficult to access for me that I can't really, umm get involved really with people, even with just similar interests. So, yeah (Participant 1, March 2020).

Only one participant identified with the larger institution, stating that they felt they belonged at SFU in general. The participant also noted that there were some spaces where they may belong “a bit more or less”:

Yeah. So, I think that there are different spaces where I feel like I belong, maybe a bit more or less. Mmm. But I do kind of feel in general, like I belong, but I know that would be very different. Like depending on who you ask it to, cause a lot of different ways and present people and not feeling included in all spaces means that you feel like you don't belong to the community in general (Participant 3, March 2020).

Family Relationships

Beyond the lack of social connections at school, some participants struggled to find a safe space at home with family members where they could be themselves and be accepted:

And so, but for example, I cannot be, I cannot have a safe space in my family's home because my family will be hurt, quote unquote, by me being gay. So, like I cannot be authentically, I can't be myself, but it will hurt the people around me and they'll be uncomfortable with me. And so, it cannot be a longer, I would say, space because other people will be hurt.

... And then I was like, I'm going to go to this [religious] meeting and I'm going to sit there and I'm going to just enjoy the meeting. And now I'm involved and now I'm part of it. But it's just like, the barriers that you have to overcome in order to be there. It's just like, unimaginable (Participant 4, March 2020).

The participant described the lack of close family relationships impacts her sense of social connections, particularly during the current COVID19 pandemic:

Yeah. Um, but like, uh, we're not like super close. And even though I, like I, I even rent my parents' basement suite and we're still like, not very close. And even, um, my mom, she has like lung problems, so she doesn't want to go out. She doesn't want to be around anyone. So, it's just like a really weird time. And then like my siblings, they're just like, they're just in their own little world (Participant 1, March 2020).

Transition supports in and out of university

Two participants were concerned about transition supports for life after graduation such as how to gain disability-related accommodations for their employment and finding mentorship support to navigate the workplace:

...able to work from work on “people think I am lazy because I am not visibly disabled. Basically, I have a lot of joint pain, so I can't stand for too long. I have two things – retail and film, which requires... There is a choice between personal things about myself and having people think I am lazy. And I've been wondering how to handle that transition when I get a different the thing you talk.

I didn't get diagnosed until about 4 years ago. I have a friend who...Had to find people with invisible disabilities is difficult because you can't see them. I am entering into a field where the stereotype is running around getting coffee and 12-hour days. And I need to be able to move around without damaging my career (Participant 3, March 2020)

Another participant offered that having mentorship within a network, instead of one on one mentorship, is more sustainable in gaining the support that one needs:

finding a mentor that suits your needs can be difficult. People are at different stages at their life in getting support. Sometimes, it's just helpful to have someone. Hoping that it will get fixed with one person is a bit suspicious to me and it needs to be a network to make it more sustainable (Participant 4, March 2020).

Building opportunities for social connections

Several suggestions were provided to facilitate building social connections including: one on one social opportunities outside the classroom, small in-class groups within the classrooms, pairing students with disability within the same faculty and developing disability support networks. These suggestions are reflected in following comments:

a) One on one social co-curricular opportunities to meaningful connections and conversations:

I am not really sure what is feasible at the university. Apart from the recreational activities, I am looking for more activities that can foster connection on a deeper level. e.g. with the dog therapy event that is just two days, you only get to see people for a short time, but not longer. I crave that deeper connection. I want that opportunity to interact with people one on one, but not in a group setting. I just feel like it's hard to have a deep conversation in a group (Participant 2, March 2020).

b) Faculty members could develop in-class groups for students to create social connections:

I think one thing that. I've always thought could be helpful is if professors maybe, um, like created like. Little groups in class where, um, maybe those are the people you get to know and have class discussions with.

Because the professors, often what they do is they're like, Oh, talk to the people around you. And everyone's kind of awkward because they're like, Oh, Hey. Yeah, okay. And they don't really want to like share much because. They don't know you. And they're like, I don't know what to say. Um, so I think if we always had, um, a group like that, not necessarily even for class discussions, if there isn't discussions (Participant 1, April 2020).

c) CAL could pair students with disabilities in the same faculty as buddies to support one another:

But if professors were to talk about it in classes, then it could maybe be you where the CAL is able to like, pair students with disabilities up with. Other students in their faculty, or it could be where, like I said before, we were professors in classes, um, ensure that students are kind of paired up with a few students, um, so they can support each other, or the faculty could be the one that ensures it happens within students in that faculty.

And even if I do connect with other students, um, it's still, it's hard to keep that connection going because the other people are like, Oh, you're never here. You're not really. I don't really exist anymore. So, um, if there was like someone that was connected with you as like a volunteer to provide social support and friendship, then, um, I think that could really help students with disabilities. (Participant 1, April 2020).

d) Disability Support Networks: Participants suggested that informal networks of people with disabilities and a formal network and space for sharing information and resources at SFU are valuable for building connections:

having other disabled people tell you this information is really helpful, because you know it works. The power of the underground disabled people (Participant 3, March 2020).

having a Disability Cultural Centre where we have a Coordinator, where we have space for people to drop in, that you have this structural piece of someone to be hired to be the keeper of knowledge, to collect and share it and know that it is available. It is not okay to just hire one person to do everything. The underground system works for a reason because it is a network/group of people, fostering the system and connections (Participant 4, March 2020)

4.3.11 INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE SPACES

The theme of inclusive and equitable spaces is grouped into five sub-themes or kinds of spaces: accessible on-campus residence, online spaces, recreational spaces, social spaces and study spaces. The chart below shows the percentage of occurrences for each sub-theme with most comments focused on accessible on-campus residence (31%), recreational spaces (24%) and study spaces (22%):

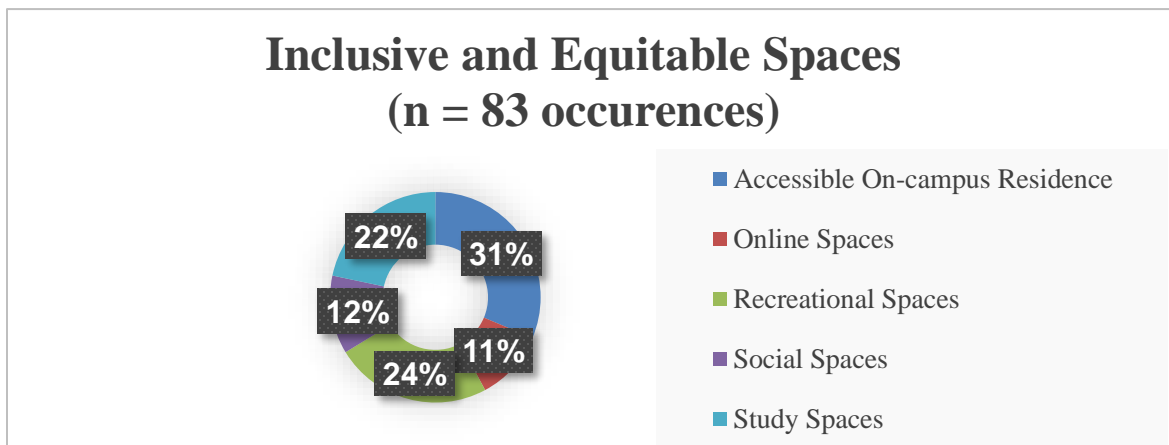


Figure 40: Finding - Summary Chart of Inclusive and Equitable Spaces

With each space category, participants discussed barriers within existing spaces and how they could be addressed:

Accessible on-campus Residence

One participant had experienced difficulties with accessing on-campus housing in Residence. The participant noted that the lack of priority housing for people with disabilities made her feel “left out” (illustrated in the image) to access on-campus housing due to her perception of a “lottery system”:



Figure 41: Photo of Left Out illustrating Need for access to on-campus housing

like just like have some way of (Participant 1, March 2020).

But they don't give like, priority housing to people with disabilities. It's just, um, they say it's just like a lottery system. It's random. Um, and they don't even, uh, consider different people's, um, barriers if they're faced with, um, but like, I found it interesting. I thought someone told me that like, people on sports teams get like, priority housing. So, like, if someone on a sports team can get housing, then why is it so hard to help people with disabilities get housing? Like it just, yeah.

The participant also suggested a different system on how CAL and Residence and Housing units could work together to support students with disabilities with access to on-campus housing:

But why don't they do that with housing? Like they could have a certain number of people who CAL designates those. Priority for housing, and then the housing people look at that. And then, maybe there's other things to consider, like international students or people who live really far away. Um,

Online Spaces

Another participant discussed the barriers different people with disabilities face in accessing online learning spaces given the shift to increased use of online or digital spaces because of the pandemic:

there are lots of different things. Like for example, Zoom has a chat option, but I think it's inaccessible for people who use screen readers. It's not. Yeah, I think so. I think I heard it for some, from somebody it's not really accessible, to do like, join the meeting.

Because, because it's like reading out and so it's kind of like a little bit hard, or for example, not everybody's familiar with Zoom, so it's like when you're asking people to do something on Zoom and they're not used to it, like raising a hand or doing something else. You have to teach people to do that (Participant 4, April 2020).

The same participant commented further on access issues with different online platforms for socialization. They also discussed considerations for considering alternative online options to ensure that people still connect and can access different types of programming:

And, um. Like screen readers is like a big thing. Like for example, discord, like a very popular platform that I've been, lots of people use, including us, it's not really like great or friendly. And so, we know, for example, that some people would not be able to access our discord, where we congregate and where we, when we make like, Oh, make decisions right now.

And so, it's like expanding and making sure that there are other options for people to connect and making sure that there are different things for people to be able to access. And so, it also about thinking about people who are going to access this is also like different programming. Like what are you, what can you do from home that will attract people, that will make sure that people's needs are met? (Participant 4, April 2020)

Recreational Spaces

The lack of spaces to relax and de-stress were discussed as a factor in feeling excluded on campus. A participant describes the barriers she faces with using the gym due to her disability and how the “swing” (image below) in an elementary school on the Burnaby campus is where she relaxes.



Figure 42: Photo of a Swing illustrating the need for access to recreational spaces

I like to come here to relax every time I feel overwhelmed. Since I’m physically weak, I do not feel like going to the gym or playing any sports. The swing helps me to stay grounded outdoors

I was trying to express there are limited options for recreational activities. I know that there are gyms and sports, but not everyone likes that. I feel really relaxed going to the elementary school, which is technically on campus (Participant 2, February 2020).

This participant suggested that they would like to see more options for recreational activities that require less physical energy to accommodate their disabilities:

“If I have anxiety attack some days, then I can’t go to the gym anyways. I hope that there are more recreational activities on campus that do not require much physical energy like the swing. I want to see much large variety of things/activities. I know there are activities like dog therapy that helps people de-stress and relax, but they are only on two days. What about other days?”

Social spaces

Participants raised the need for more social spaces to connect, particularly for students with disabilities to feel like they belong at SFU. Suggestions included accessible gathering spaces for students with disabilities to connect with one another and their social network:

Yeah. I think that would be really cool if there were somewhere that, uh, students with disabilities can go hang out and meet other students with disabilities, or maybe they bring like a couple of their friends with them and then those people can be like, Oh, Hey, there's not much difference between me and someone who has a disability.

The participant also added that some existing campus spaces could be used more effectively and made more accessible:

It's just about like making sure things are accessible. Um, I think that would be really cool. And then like, also on the topic of space, I think a lot of spaces on campus could be used more effectively. Um, like for example, I forget what it's called, but it's near that frozen yogurt place where they have like all the plastic chairs. Um, it's like the something safe study space because there's like, yeah (Participant 1, April 2020)

Study spaces

Participants also identified the need for more accessible and inclusive study spaces with individual and group study areas that meet the needs of diverse students with disabilities. According to a participant:



Figure 43: Photo Of Chair On Top Level of West Mall Centre illustrating the need for accessible study spaces

There is a lot of inclusive spaces, but they are not often where general people tend to hang out. There are [spaces with] accommodations, but they are usually hidden away...I think that's kinda my question...a lot of the accessible rooms are designed for studying alone rather than in groups. That doesn't really work for me.

I think it's tailored towards. "one of the stereotypes - you look at someone with a disability and you don't think about they are social". "There [are] no social spaces with specific standing desk options" (Participant 3, March 2020)

When asked how study spaces could be improved for students with disabilities, Participant 3 commented on the kind of accessible study space that they hope to see, like the study space illustrated in the image of West Mall, a popular SFU Burnaby campus location, while highlighting the challenge of designing inclusive spaces for people with diverse disabilities:

I would love to see more study spaces that are more like West Mall, like all types of seating in study spaces, it's like a good mix and I think that's intentional.

Um, well, I love to see more study spaces that are more likewise West Mall. Like I know another one is like, just inside the entrance to the AQ, they have like a lot of different types of levels of seating altogether. So, they have like different chairs and desks. They have sofas, they have standing desks. So, it's like a really good mix of stuff.

Um. Which I think that's intentional. That awesome because it makes it accessible pretty much anyone to be able to study together. Um, so I think that's a really good one. And I think another one is with the construction making as it be more accessible, cause, I noticed that if you're a wheelchair user or if you're a someone that needs to use the elevator, that's almost impossible.

Designing a truly inclusive space is kinda impossible. Designing comfortable study spaces for people with different kinds of disabilities. Trying to design accommodations can be hard. Making comfortable spaces, people will figure out ways to make it comfortable (Participant 3, March 2020)

Another participant also suggested that part of the challenges with existing study spaces is that the accessible seating in these spaces is often used by students without disabilities:

And, and so if I have to walk around champ for a long time just to find somewhere to sit down and work, then it's not very accessible because then I'm just walking around forever, which is hard for

me. Um, and I've also noticed that, um, students. Without disabilities, we'll take the wheelchair. Accessible area is in like seating places.

So, it's like they kind of just assume that no one in a wheelchair is going to be around and want to use that desk. But maybe if. Students and didn't just take the accessible seats, maybe other students with disabilities would be more willing to go around campus to work. Um, so that was one thing that I thought of because that's one thing that prevents me from staying on campus, and I'm sure other students as well (Participant 1, April 2020).

Participant 1 suggested that existing campus spaces that were perceived as underutilized could be designed to be welcoming by included multiuse spaces for individual or group activities:

So, I think if it [James Douglas Study Space Area] was a more welcoming space, then it would. You better like they could have part of the area where they use for like student activities still. And another part where it's like for studying and working together and have made me like sections where it's like, Oh, this is a group study area.

This is a silent study area where it's all kind of together and it's like, I don't know. I think that. There would be so much that you can fit in that space that isn't happening now (Participant 1, April 2020).

4.3.12. THE DUALITY OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

An important finding that participants raised across photovoice interviews is the “the duality of inclusion and exclusion” in creating inclusive and accessible spaces. A participant describes this duality in these words:

think on how “inclusive spaces” can exclude and separate and do harm...because for example, it's like different accessibility things. Some people need a guide dog to be in a place and some people have dog allergy. And so making it as the space safe, there's to accommodate both of them to maybe like, taking care of the seating in a way that they will not interact much or like having an air purifier or somewhere in the rooms so that like the burden of like allergy is shared (Participant 4, March 2020).

Another participant also provided another example on how an accessible space could be designed to meet the needs of specific students with disabilities who prefer to study alone and exclude students with disabilities who prefer to study in a group:

That's kind of my question too, cause um, you know, I like studying with my friends. They'll be focused and I usually don't get anything done if I'm studying alone. So, having like other people there is important to me. But it seems like a lot of the accessible rooms are kind of designed for you to just be like studying alone. Um, which doesn't really work for me. So, then I have had to find things that you work (Participant 3, April 2020).

4.4 Limitations

The researcher aimed to recruit 8 participants. Though 8 students had initially applied to participate, 2 were not students with disabilities and therefore, did not meet the research criteria. Of the 6 students who met the research criteria, 4 were able to finish the project as the other 2 participants could no longer participate

due to time commitments required to juggle both work, school and other commitments as well as returning home to their home country due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

The researcher decided not to recruit more participants as the timing of the pandemic was not appropriate to continue with recruitment given the intense stress that students were experiencing due to changes in learning from in person to online due to the pandemic and struggling to meet their food and housing needs. As such, the sample size and qualitative nature of the project limits the generalizability of findings to the broader community.

There were no self-identifying male participants with disabilities in the study which limits the findings to the experiences of self-identifying female or non-binary students with disabilities. Although participants referenced intersecting identities of disabilities such as Indigenous students with disabilities, no participant self-identified as an Indigenous student with disabilities. To protect participants' anonymity, details on participants' intersecting identities are not included.

The project was intended to provide more in-depth analysis on a small sample size to answer the research question and develop further recommendations to explore a larger project with more students with disabilities. All participants showed up to all scheduled meetings and provided detailed stories about their experiences. The data provided was rich in context and details (Agarwal & Spohn, 2017) and described several aspects of participants' sense of belonging or inclusion at SFU.

Additionally, the photovoice exhibit and dialogue to share the findings with the community was not held as plan due to the current pandemic. However, participants shared detailed feedback on ideas to share the findings in multiple ways and engage the broader community in dialogue. Participants' ideas will be shared with the client for direction on how to proceed with the dissemination of results.

4.5 Outcomes - Participant Feedback on the Photovoice Process

Informal assessments were conducted at the end of the photovoice sessions through reflective questions and storytelling. Participants were asked what about what it meant for them to participate in the project, what worked and what could be improved for future projects. They provided positive feedback, citing the empowering and highly reflective nature of the project in helping them make sense of their experiences. Participants' feedback and key takeaways align with the **intended outcomes to:**

- empower students with disabilities to share their stories, from a lived experience point of view.
- continue to raise awareness on the unique experiences and needs of students to disabilities
- encourage more peer to peer conversations and university-wide dialogue on inclusion and belonging.
- develop specific recommendations/calls to action that SFU can act on through the SEI, EDI and other university initiatives.

Space for reflection and empowerment:

Yeah. I think that like, um, as you've been working on this project and we've been talking, it's also helped me learn more just by having these conversations and realizing like, Oh, Hey, yeah, that's, that's something I deal with, or that something that could improve my education or improve, um, feeling like I belong at SFU.

Um, so yeah, it's just helping me think about different things and I'm like, sometimes. It feels like these things are like my fault and then I just have to deal with it and that I shouldn't feel frustrated with some things. And then, this is just how life is, and I just have to go with it. But having these conversations, I'm like, no, actually this, this needs to change (Participant 1, April 2020)

An opportunity to share one's life experience:

I also say that it has been a meaningful experience for me (Participant 2, March 2020)

Yeah. I really appreciate that you've held this kind of space, like an opportunity that like you don't normally get to talk about your life experience, and you did a really good job of hosting. Thank you (Participant 3, April 2020)

Developing new skills in photography and sharing one's authentic perspective:

Thank you. Thank you for doing this. It's been really helpful. It's been really exciting to do this because photography is absolutely not my thing and I'm just like, I tell stories and I'm comfortable in telling stories. When I went to the pictures and now just like, no, I took pictures now about my experience, now I know how to do this (Participant 4, April 2020).

I would hope so. I'm really glad that I'm able to share things that are impacting others and I'm really glad that I'm able to do it on my terms and I'm able to do it without compromising my authenticity. And so, really glad and really thankful for you to be trying in this space and providing this opportunity (Participant 4, April 2020).

4.6 Summary of Findings

The findings from the four photovoice Research Ambassadors or participants over twelve photovoice sessions provide detailed stories with pictures that convey some of the experiences of inclusion and belonging of diverse students with disabilities at SFU. The photovoice participants were asked to capture photos of what belonging, and inclusion means to them, images that reflect when or where they felt included or excluded in the community and write photo narratives using the photovoice SHOWeD worksheets.

These photos and narratives were discussed over three to four photovoice interview sessions per participant. Participants were also asked to include their suggestions for improving their experiences of inclusion and belonging to answer the research question. The interviews were typically two to two and half hours long in which participants explored multiple themes beyond the stories they had captured in their pictures.

The list of themes is visualized below by overall number of recurrences per theme:

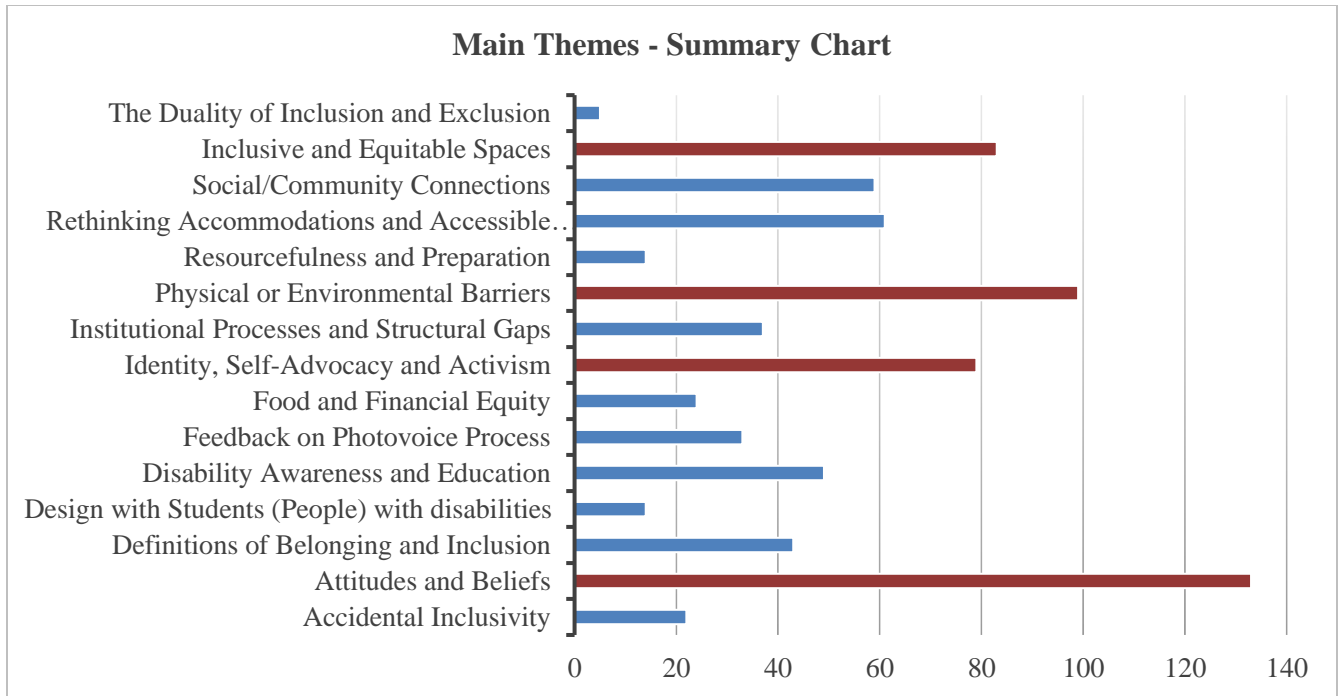


Figure 44: Summary of Findings - Main Themes Summary Chart

The next chapter is a discussion and analysis that will address the strengths (positives or enablers), challenges (barriers) and suggestions for improvement that emerged from the themes. The themes will be analyzed based on findings from the literature review and aligned with **the primary research questions:**

1. What are the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities at SFU?
2. How might we improve the sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU based on the lived experiences of students with disabilities?

5.0 Discussion and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This section covers a discussion and analysis of data and insights emerging from the photovoice project. The purpose of this chapter is to ground the findings in its intersectional, organizational, sociopolitical, historical contexts using evidence from the literature review and highlight emergent or divergent themes. Findings from the photovoice interviews, photos and accompanying narratives and the literature review will be discussed. The findings are grouped based on participants' responses to the primary research questions:

1. What are the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities at SFU?
2. How might we improve the sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU based on the lived experiences of students with disabilities?

Photos and interview narratives from participants were analyzed based on contextual factors such as sociopolitical and legislative contexts discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2 of the research report. The analysis will also draw on theories of belonging and inclusion discussed in Chapter 2 that focus on the experiences of students with disabilities in post-secondary institutions. These findings will be analyzed using two theoretical frameworks, ableism and intersectionality considering the intersections of multiple identities based on race, gender, disabilities, cultural and environmental factors, as discussed in Chapter 3 on Methods and Methodology. Building on suggestions from the participants, the discussion and analysis will provide a foundation for the final recommendations in Chapter 6.

5.2 Analysis of Findings

Research Question 1: What are the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities at SFU?

5.2.1 DEFINITIONS OF BELONGING AND INCLUSION

Findings from the literature review suggest that a sense of belonging and inclusion differ by individual circumstances and context (Strayhorn, 2012; Zimmer, 2012; Duran, 2019). From the literature, a sense of belonging was defined using the Vaccaro et. al. (2015) model: the multidirectional interaction between belonging, self-advocacy, social relationships and mastery of the student role (p. 683) in a post-secondary context. The current research study asked participants to define what belonging and inclusion meant for them as a student with disabilities within the SFU context. Participants provided several definitions that aligned with or diverged from the literature review findings:

| | Points of convergence with the literature review | Points of divergence from the literature review (or additions to the literature) |
|------------------|--|---|
| Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not a passive invitation into a space, but being proactive with - to include students as active participants, not passive observers, to remove barriers one faces without questioning one's reality (Prince, 2004) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling welcome in a space through resourcefulness or preparation and when one's access needs are met e.g. correct pronouns, receiving accommodations, etc. |

| | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing the diversity of experiences and strengths of students with disabilities and seeking out more perspectives as having only one perspective is limited • Claiming one’s intersectional identities • Simple acts of care and recognition e.g being valued, accepted or welcomed (Booker, 2016) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To listen without trying to fix the situation (or “overstep”) • To be authentically one’s self in a safe space without posing harming to others • Designing with and by people with lived experiences |
| Belonging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple acts of care and recognition e.g being valued, accepted or welcomed (Booker, 2016) • Fitting in with one’s small group or web of connections without being part of the mainstream community (Zimmer 2012) • Fitting in and identifying with the larger group even when there are barriers against connecting with the broader community (Zimmer 2012) • Contextual depending on individual circumstances and spaces on campus Strayhorn (2012) e.g. flexible or rigid spaces that allow/do not allow for accessibility and inclusivity • Embracing one’s identity as a student with disabilities despite rejection or disapproval by others in one’s network or being accepted for the identities that one holds (Zimmer 2012; Strayhorn, 2012) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing one’s role as part of the community and working together as a community • “Making your own belonging” when one does not find themselves belonging to the larger campus community • Having the resources that one needs to overcome barriers e.g. academic accommodations, acceptance and valued by peers, teaching assistants (TAs) or faculty |

Figure 45: Table of Comparison of Definitions of Inclusion and Belonging in the Literature Review Findings and the Current Research Findings

The definitions for inclusion and belonging are interconnected as both concepts imply that one is welcomed and valued by their communities. Participants’ insights on these concepts were closely aligned with findings in the literature review as indicated by the column listing the points of convergence. Interestingly, nearly all participants who participated in the study noted that they did not feel like they belonged or were included

in the larger institution due to the barriers they faced. A participant's quote illuminates their perspective on inclusion:

“Not a *passive invitation into* a space but being *proactive with* - to include students as active participants, not passive observers, to remove barriers one faces without questioning one's reality.”

This quote indicates that inclusion should move beyond being invited into a space to a proactive process of removing barriers to accessing and feeling welcome in a space. This point has broader implications for SFU. On a macro scale, it suggests that accepting students with disabilities as an SFU student comes with the obligation to work proactively with students with disabilities to address and remove barriers that students may face during their time at SFU.

Furthermore, the quote suggests that invitations for all students including students with disabilities should proactively consider and plan for diversity of learners to participate in SFU classrooms, events, activities or other campus initiatives. In addition, to move beyond inclusion suggests students with disabilities could be involved in helping to shape their experiences as active participants. Inclusion is not simply done *to* and *for the students with disabilities*; it is done *with and by the students with disabilities*.

As highlighted in the comparison table above, the current research findings reflect the literature review findings in that belonging is defined as “fitting in with one's small group or web of connections without being part of the mainstream community” or “fitting in and identifying with the larger group even when there are barriers against connecting with the broader community” as discussed in Zimmer (2012). Furthermore, the findings in the current research and the literature review also converge on the idea that belonging is contextual as it depends on individual circumstances and their unique environment (Strayhorn, 2012).

Based on this project's findings, the researcher proposes some additions to the Vaccaro et. al (2015) model on belonging (image below), is the inclusion of the “campus environmental factors” and “intersecting identities.”

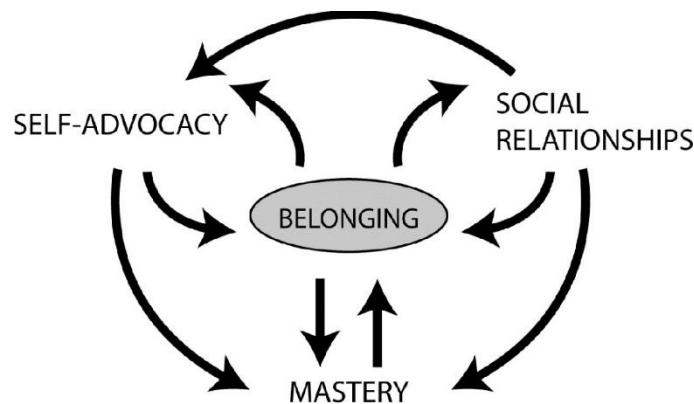


Figure 46: Theoretical Model of Belonging for College Students with Disabilities

Source: Vaccaro et. al (2015)

These additions contribute to understanding the unique experiences of inclusion or belonging for students with disabilities as context is everything from a Community Development perspective. In addition, students are not simply gaining a mastery of their role as a university student; students are navigating the academic,

social and various aspects of university life through multiple intersecting identities. As such, the concept of mastery could be more robust to focus on intersecting student identities.

This finding corroborates the initial inquiry that inspired the current research inquiry which was that findings from an SFU EDI survey noted that students with disabilities were one of the student populations that felt the least sense of belonging and community at SFU. The background for this initial inquiry was provided in Chapter 1. The two participants who had initially participated in the study, but did not complete the project also noted that their reason for participating in the project was to share their experiences of not feeling included on campus, particularly at the intersections of their identities. While there may be concerns with self-selection bias, the evidences provided by the participants through photos and in-depth narratives highlight both enablers or barriers that impact their sense of inclusion and belonging at SFU.

5.2.2 ENABLERS FOR INCLUSION AND BELONGING

Theme: Attitudes and Beliefs

Positive attitudes of peers, teaching assistants or faculty members

Participants in this research emphasized positive interactions with peers and faculty members as key players in improving their sense of inclusion and belonging. This finding aligns with previous studies by Hong (2015) and Scott (2019) that positive interactions or relationships with peers or faculty contribute to a supportive learning environment and students' academic success. An interesting finding was participants' emphasis on the role of teaching assistants (TAs) which was not emphasized to the same extent in the literature review. Participants commented that TAs, like their peers and faculty members, also play an integral role in ensuring that their accommodation for disability-related needs were adhered to and a key social connection or resource in thriving in their classes.

These positive attitudes by TAs or faculty were demonstrated through "going the extra mile to ensure that students were fully accommodated in the classroom or following up with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) to coordinate arrangements to follow through on accommodations. Positive attitudes by peers were demonstrated through empathy, understanding of disabilities, openness and willingness to accept their peers with disabilities without judgement or ridicule.

Students also commented that participating in the project was helpful in learning that there were other students on campus with shared experiences of having a disability on the SFU campus, a finding that is consistent with (Scott, 2019, p. 17). Participants also discussed the importance of having an "underground disability network" of peers with disabilities, TAs, faculty, staff or other community members at SFU who shared important information with them to thrive in their university journeys. This bridging social capital (Putnam, 1993) of the underground disability network was a key lifeline in overcoming the barriers to inclusion and belonging they faced on campus.

Participants used the term, network to demonstrate that each person plays a role and has a key piece of information or strength to contribute to the group. The concept of networks of community members suggests an emergent process in a complex system (Onyx & Leonard, 2010). Onyx & Leonard (2010) note that "community development is a non-linear process that may arise from the initiatives of people within the community, leveraging their social capital" (p. 493). In fact, "the essence of social capital is networks" (Onyx & Leonard, 2010, p. 493). As emergence and bridging social links are key elements of leading in

complex systems (pp. 503 – 504), the emergent underground network initiated by students with disabilities are key community assets that could be leveraged in fostering a sense of inclusion and sharing information and resources that benefit students with disabilities.

Theme: Resourcefulness or Preparation

The theme of resourcefulness or preparation is an interesting finding that overlaps with several factors that contribute to students' sense of belonging such as anticipating resources that students will need to be comfortable and feel included in a space. A participant's picture of the SFPIRG cabinet of supplies illustrates the intentionality of planning for persons with diverse needs and abilities as one's community evolves. Participants discussed that preparation also comes through observation and adaptation of services, supports or resources based on what students need by anticipating who will come to the space, who is not using the space and how we might proactively remove barriers for these groups to participate.

An important finding is that there are different levels of preparation that staff or faculty members could adopt to make campus spaces whether in person or online more inclusive for students with disabilities. Some examples include: modifying course syllabus to make them more accessible, including detailed accessibility related information in event planning and promotions and using accessible online platforms or resources (e.g. subtitles, transcripts, interpreters, presenting information in multiple formats, lecture recordings, etc.) for diverse students with disabilities to participate fully in academic or social activities.

It is important to state that preparation also extends to shifting mindsets about accessibility and inclusivity from a finite process that has been achieved to an ongoing adaptation of space and resources. Participants noted that inclusivity is a flux state and cannot be fully achieved because one may plan to include specific disabilities and unintentionality exclude other persons with disabilities. A participant cited the example the challenges of including different people with diverse allergies (e.g. scent allergies, dog allergies, food allergies, etc) where including some persons with disabilities may exclude others. This finding was discussed under the theme of the duality of inclusion and exclusion. For this context, the researcher coined the term inclusion paradox to capture the flux state of inclusion and the need to stay humble and open to constant adaptation and learning.

Resourcefulness or preparation is described in different forms in the literature. It is described at the organizational level in terms of an adequately resourced disability resource office, an institutional plan with funding to integrate physical and social accessibility enhancements into annual budgets (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). SFU is making efforts at the university level to plan for accessibility through its university-wide plans such as the EDI initiative or Student Experience Initiative (SEI). For university-wide plans on accessibility and inclusion to be effective and sustainable, they require significant ongoing or long-term investments and increased resourcing for student-facing units and student-led initiatives by students with disabilities to leverage the diverse assets of the SFU community.

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) state that asset-based community development is “building communities from the inside out” beginning with an “inventory of the gifts, skills and capacities of community residents” (pp. 1- 4). To proactively what students with disabilities need to belong and feel included at SFU, initiatives or efforts to remove barriers should recognize and leverage their diverse “gifts” as “full contributors to the community building process.” (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 4), not in tokenistic ways, but as active

partners where power is shared and can directly influence the decision-making process of accessibility or inclusion-related initiatives (Arnstein, 1969, pp. 217, 222).

Theme: Identity, Self-advocacy and activism

An analysis on the enablers to belonging would not be complete without stating the resilience of students with disabilities. Aligned with the literature review, students with disabilities grapple with issues of power, privilege and oppression by advocating for their needs (Waterfield et. al., 2018) to overcome the disabling conditions within higher education institutions. These include reaching out to CAL to set up academic accommodations, following up with faculty to ensure that their accommodations are being followed, dealing with issues of inaccessibility or discrimination or participating in campus activism to have their perspectives listened to and taken seriously.

All these activities come with an emotional and mental burden of self-advocacy and activism. The dynamics differ for diverse students with disabilities as there is no one all-encompassing experience of students with disabilities given that every student is impacted by their disability differently and the disabling environment. Furthermore, self-advocacy and activism may come with increased burdens for students with multiple marginalized identities to work against multiple forms of oppression.

Based on the Vacarro et. al. (2015) model, one could state that self-advocacy is an essential skill that students with disabilities build throughout their university careers. This finding holds implications for exploring various skills building opportunities including self-advocacy skills, developed for and with undergraduate students with disabilities that could benefit them in their transitions during and beyond their university programs into the workforce.

5.2.3 BARRIERS TO INCLUSION AND BELONGING

Theme: Attitudes and Beliefs

An analysis of the attitudes and beliefs presented in the findings points to the absence of a provincial accessibility legislation on how individuals within public institutions or organizations should support people with disabilities in British Columbia (BC). As discussed in Chapter 2 within the historical and legislative contexts, the BC government is yet to pass into law an Accessibility Act that mandates equitable supports beyond accommodations for persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, attitudes and beliefs that discriminate against persons with disabilities by not providing accommodations fail to recognize that there are significant physical, social or environmental barriers based the psychosocial model of disabilities adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO). What is problematic is that the accommodations for disability perpetuate the implicit and inaccurate assumption that is based on the medical model of disability which problematizes the individual (cite), instead of the disabling environment that creates barriers to access. Based on the contextual factors above, the researcher will discuss the sub-themes under attitudes and beliefs.

Stigma and Discrimination

In the literature review, Cunnah (2015) states that many disabled students are still excluded in university and work settings and often experience discrimination, negative labelling and stigma related to their disability (pp. 221 – 223). The current research findings align with Cunnah (2015) findings, noting that

these attitudes are entrenched in deeply rooted attitudes, assumptions or negative stereotypes from media and society (Participant interview, March 2020). Cases of discrimination in the current research emerged from on-campus volunteer and off-campus work settings where the protocols for gaining accommodations did not exist or not were provided to participants.

Some participants often remain silent due to stigmatizing comments and behaviours from peers or faculty related to their disability. Stigma from others or internalized stigma of identifying as having a disability in those situations negatively impacted participants. They were less likely to ask for support or accommodations if they did not feel safe in the space and to avoid negative labelling or exclusion (Goffman, 1963; Weinstein, 1965; Zola, 1993; Mullins & Preyde, 2013). Some participants stated that they observed for cues in classroom or social settings such as asking for pronouns, announcements about disability-related supports as a marker of a safe space to request disability-related accommodations.

Participants expressed frustrations and sometimes a sense of powerlessness because Supervisors or employers were in a position of power to determine if they gained access to research volunteer or paid work opportunities. This sense of powerlessness relates to the term “power asymmetry”, a term used to describe the power triangle - the relationship between those who hold power or privilege in a specific context and those who do not hold power or privilege to influence the outcomes. The latter are often at the “sharp end of the power triangle.” The power triangle is relevant in analyzing the instances of stigma and discrimination through the lens of ableism and intersectionality.

One participant noted that her Supervisor treated her who self-identified as an Asian student with disabilities differently than her white peers without disabilities. The participant noted that she was “kicked out of the lab” once she stated that she needed disability-related accommodations and possibly because of her race. Interestingly, another participant who self-identified as a Canadian female student with disabilities observed a similar pattern of being discriminated against at work because of her disability, not because of her race.

These instances suggest that there are intersectional differences in discrimination faced by students with multiple intersecting identities. It also suggests the need to consider how accountability or reporting protocols and processes on human rights complaints could capture intersectional data that may reveal how diverse students or people with disabilities at SFU experience discrimination. The unequal power relations between students and supervisors, faculty or others in positions of power also plays a role in participant’s level of comfort with reporting these issues through existing university accountability mechanisms for “fear of loss of anonymity” and supports as a participant indicated.

There is a need to explore an integrated approach (Cunnah, 2015) in supporting students with disabilities at SFU, not just with academic accommodations, but also with accommodations for various aspects of life such as volunteering, working, living on campus. An integrated approach should consider how participants who face multiple forms of oppression such as racism, ableism and sexism could be better supported on college campuses. Furthermore, an integrated approach requires examining how institutional processes may be structured to reinforce systemic and institutional racism (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010, p. 1393). Such integrated models may have legal, policy and procedural implications such as expanding resources and mandate of the Centre of Accessible Learning (CAL). An integrated model will also require institutional planning frameworks and principles for building an accessible and inclusive campus (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 193; Alyward & Bruce, 2014, p. 42) that shift from able-bodied standards of normativity to recognizing the diversity of students with disabilities.

Negative attitudes from peers, teaching assistants (TAs) or faculty

This sub-theme on negative attitudes from peers, TAs or faculty members is consistent with findings from the literature from the literature from studies on the experiences of students with disabilities by Duquette (2000), Mullins & Preyde (2013), Hong (2015) and Scott (2019). The findings reveal that negative interactions with peers or their faculty made participants' feel less welcome and diminished their sense of belonging at SFU. These interactions include inappropriate comments from peers without disabilities when questioning why some students write their exams at the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL). Some faculty members were resistant to accommodations for some students with disabilities, despite approval from CAL.

Participants commented that the resistance from some faculty members may be rooted in the view that all students – able-bodied and students with disabilities – should be treated fairly by treating them the same instead of their unique circumstances (Mullins & Preyde, 2013, p. 154) as noted in the literature. This view is also rooted in ableism as it applies a normative standard without considering the diversity of students' experiences and additional barriers faced by specific different groups who could be better serviced by using standards of equity, not equality to remove barriers to feeling included.

These interactions with peers, TAs or faculty play a critical role in a students' sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU for several reasons, First, students' success depends on these supportive relationships in the classroom and access to academic accommodations and accessible resources to thrive in the class. Participants noted that not having the needed accommodations impacted their grades in a class which were often not reflective of their learnings throughout the course.

Secondly, participants noted that they sometimes, did not disclose their disabilities or ask for accommodations due to previous negative interactions. As such, non-disclosure poses more barriers to participating in curricular or co-curricular activities with colleagues, asking for accommodations from faculty in future classes or accessing campus supports and services for "fear of being ridiculed" (Participant interview, March 2020). Although these experiences are not representative of all students with disabilities or interactions with peers or faculty as participants also cited examples of positive interactions, these experiences underscore the need for more awareness or education to increase disability awareness and sensitivity on issues that impact students with disabilities.

Ableist Attitudes and Able-bodied privilege

The findings raised by participants on "overstepping" by being asked very personal questions about their disabilities also indicate a lack of knowledge or awareness about disabilities. "Gatekeeping" was also another issue raised by participants to describe barriers they faced when after being diagnosed with a disability and told by others when accessing services that they did not have a disability, and therefore, were not eligible for services or supports. "Gatekeeping" also surfaced through an ableist structure of requiring extensive forms of documentation for one's disability that were often expensive to obtain for the purposes of qualifying for an accommodation or disability-related support.

Participants noted that some of the negative stereotypes on campus about disabilities may stem from how documentation is required to access supports through CAL. CAL's work is based on the policy and procedures outlined in GP-26, the SFU Accessibility for Students with Disabilities Policy which was

created in November 1995 and revised on September 2003 (SFU Policies, 2020). The SFU Access Policy notes that students are responsible for associated costs for documentation and assessment and CAL requests and reviews documentation related to a students' disability (SFU Policies, 2020).

While these structures of documentation may exist to ensure that those who need the supports gain the supports, it excludes those who need the supports and are unable to pay for them or indirectly perpetuates negative stereotypes and perceptions of people with disabilities such as "lying to cheat the system." Without a broader provincial legislation to guide institutions including post-secondary colleges and universities, thus gatekeeping structures may serve to keep people with disabilities who require supports out of the system of supports and maintain the status quo.

The most recent review date of the SFU Access Policy suggests that it was last reviewed in 2003, 17 years ago. Ford & Airhihenbuwa (2010) note that a critical approach to analyzing data is to "question the question", to uncover "assumptions about how things work, biases, assumptions and worldviews that influence our research." Using theories such as ableism and intersectionality suggests the researcher's orientation towards analyzing data through the lenses of power, privilege and equity. As part of EDI initiatives or in anticipation of a potential BC Accessibility Act that could be passed into law, it is worth reviewing the SFU Access Policy to challenge underlying assumptions within this policy that reinforce ableist structures and privilege in its policy definitions or procedures. Such review processes would follow regular SFU processes for the review of policies.

Theme: Disability Awareness and Education

One of the main barriers identified in the findings was the lack of awareness or education about disabilities and how to support students with disabilities. During the photovoice interviews, participants reflected that the lack of awareness among SFU community members such as peers, TAs or some faculties they interacted with was due to the lack of conversations about disabilities more broadly in society. The lack of dialogue in the broader society also shows up in limited dialogue at the institution on how to best support students with disabilities. While the literature review pointed to lack of knowledge from academic advisors (Hong, 2015, p. 217), this theme did not surface through this project's findings. However, participants did highlight the need for training for front line staff or Co-op students at SFU, the first point of contact for students with disabilities who may need services or supports across different units or faculties.

Furthermore, the lack of awareness or education may also connect to the implicit assumption that the SFU Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) bears the main responsibility for ensuring access for students with disabilities rather than the view that it is everyone's responsibility to play a role and working together in the community to improve accessibility as a participant illustrates using the "bee hive" metaphor to express what it means to belong at SFU.

The lack of knowledge or education may also point to the need for a clear institutional mandate such a Strategic Accessibility Plan with resourcing, similar to university-wide plans like *SFU's Strategic Sustainability Plan*, to specifically support ongoing initiatives on accessibility such as disability awareness, training or education opportunities across the institution. Through SFU's Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiative, there may be opportunities to adapt existing resources, toolkits on the EDI website into educational opportunities such as workshops on how to better support SFU students with disabilities. Disability awareness or education opportunities need to include an intersectional approach to educate on

the diversity of experiences of students with disabilities, the additional barriers faced by students with multiple marginalized identities and unique approaches to adapt programming or supports to better reach these students.

Theme: Institutional Processes and Structural Gaps

The research findings identified communications gaps between units and the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL), need for institutional data on the experiences of students with disabilities and what students with disabilities may or may not know about disabilities and how to support their peers. More structural gaps highlighted include the need to hire more staff or faculty with disabilities, policies for accountability and compliance and an under-resourced CAL.

A key issue identified was the lack of regular and prompt notifications from Facilities or construction groups to the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL). There were instances of students with disabilities not receiving updates about changes in accessibility routes or features because CAL was not notified promptly about the issue. These communications gaps create significant barriers for students to physically navigate campus to attend classes or access campus supports and resources. Participants suggested that there needs to be a better tracking and communication system between units and CAL to improve notifications between CAL and students with disabilities. These communications gaps may exist likely due to the heavy construction currently happening on the SFU Burnaby campus and possibly the lack of accountability and compliance mechanisms to ensure that CAL is being notified in time on accessibility concerns.

Participants noted that they appreciated the support of CAL. They suggested that CAL could play a greater role to support students with disabilities such as extending their supports to the on-campus Residence to advise or advocate for disability-related supports. A major part of CAL's role is supporting students with academic-related accommodations and liaising with faculties. While students noted that Disability Advisors may provide advice for navigating volunteer or workplace accommodations, they were not aware of CAL offering accommodations beyond classrooms or exams.

The current under-resourcing of CAL such as staff capacity, space limitations and other resourcing makes it challenging for the unit to expand its influence and work with diverse campus units, particularly on outreach and advocacy initiatives. A review and increase of CAL's funding structure and capacity within broader institutional plans may help address this concern both strategically and operationally.

Drawing from the literature review, Kaufman (2003) in Gillies & Dupuis (2013) assert that institutions can better serve the needs of its members when its own community members transform the structures within it to stop systems of oppression (p. 209) such as ableism from being reproduced. Part of shifting structures is for departmental leaders and senior leaders to communicate the value of accessibility as a core principle and resourcing organizational structures like CAL or other units that support students with disabilities. From a grassroots perspectives, staff or faculty could also internalize accessibility as an integral aspect of campus life and student success to foster a welcoming campus environment (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 207). Both top-down and bottom-up approaches are needed to work across departmental siloes and work towards a shared vision for disability inclusion and equity (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 207).

Connecting Themes: Physical/Environmental Barriers, Inclusive and Equitable Campus Spaces and Accommodations and Accessible Classrooms

Physically inaccessible campus spaces pose a barrier to participants' getting to their classes and accessing supports and services. The findings in the current study align with findings in Gillies & Dupuis (2013, p. 204) and Mullins & Preyde (2013). Physically inaccessible routes and campus spaces were of greater concern to participants in this research due to the nature of the SFU Burnaby campus design with long stretches of stairs connecting most parts of the campus and ongoing construction in various parts of the campus that impacted the health, well-being and sound accessibility of participants.

In analyzing why this issue exists, both participants and the researcher noted that the construction and mobility barriers exist due to issues of design in conceptualization, planning and implementation of projects and spaces. Participants also called for principles of accessibility and inclusivity to be embedded in the design or renovation of various spaces for students to increase a sense of inclusion among students with disabilities.

Furthermore, the lack of integration of Universal Design Principles (UDL) to include diverse types of learners and community members is evident in the design of the built or online SFU environment including classrooms, online learning platforms or various campus spaces for student activities. UDL refers to "guidelines with concrete suggestions, applicable to all disciplines or domains, to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities" ([UDL CAST](#), 2020).

While there are initiatives through the CAL and SFU's Centre for Educational Excellence (CEE) to promote UDL in learning environments, more could be done to embed UDL in the planning and design of construction projects, renovations of campus spaces to ensure that all community members can effectively navigate physical campus spaces or participate in all aspects of university life. The increased adoption of UDL and other accessibility frameworks may reduce the barriers to access for students with disabilities because the disabling conditions that make the campus inaccessible are being addressed to create inclusive and equitable spaces.

"Designing a truly accessible and inclusive space is impossible" (Participant interview, April 2020) given the dualities of inclusion and exclusion discussed as a theme in Chapter 4 – Findings. However, intentionality and ongoing commitments at the individual, unit and organizational levels may ensure that frameworks such as UDL and various accessibility frameworks are embedded in the (re)design of campus spaces, learning materials, courses and programming to be more accessible and inclusive.

5.2.4 PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Research Question 2: How might we improve the sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU based on the lived experiences of students with disabilities?

Participants provided several recommendations for improving their sense of inclusion and belonging:

Hiring more staff and faculty with disabilities:

- Gillies & Dupuis (2013) recommended having more persons in positions of power who are sensitive, aware and open-minded to fostering a welcoming and inclusive campus community (pp. 204 – 205). This finding also emerges from the current study as a recommendation to hire

more staff and faculty with disabilities because they are likely to be more empathetic, aware and open to designing with accessibility in mind. Furthermore, it contributes to increasing the representation of people with disabilities at SFU, opportunities for students with disabilities to have role models in positions of power as well as for students without disabilities to challenge their perceptions of people with disabilities in academia and in society.

Need for Inclusive Study, Social and Recreational Spaces:

- integrate accessibility and inclusivity in the design of various spaces for students and to include students with disabilities when planning for the design and use of campuses.
- As indicated in earlier sections, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework should be embedded in the design, planning and implementation of campus needs to meet the needs of all learners and community members including diverse students with disabilities.

Creating Disability Awareness or Education Opportunities:

- Participants recommended educational opportunities such as disability awareness workshops, short interactive online courses for students with disabilities and campus-wide disability history and awareness months. The idea of disability history and awareness months may require an institutional commitment and significant resources to mobilize participation from student groups, campus units or faculties. Adopting the UDL framework to ensure multiple modes of participation is also integral to embodying accessibility and inclusion in these opportunities.
- Recognize that disability awareness or education opportunities could begin with sharing information about accessibility resources specific to improving supports for students with disabilities. Meadows (1999) identified the flow of information as a lower stakes leverage point (Meadows, 1999) than changing peoples' mindsets given that change takes time, particularly in large public institutions.
- Participants suggested that SFU staff or faculty could share successful projects or practices in implementing accessibility. A disability awareness or inclusion Community of Practice held online using an accessible online meeting platform may open opportunities for various student and campus groups to share best practices on what's working through real SFU examples or case studies.

Need for Institutional Data on Disability Awareness:

- Capture institutional data to learn more about the experience of students with disabilities at SFU.
- Undertake institutional surveys that ask the broader student community to find out what the community knows about disabilities to identify gaps in knowledge or understanding about disabilities and how these might be addressed through disability awareness or education opportunities.
- Data gathering for the above suggestions should include intersectional data to disaggregate responses by various groups of students with disabilities and students without disabilities

Better communication between campus groups and the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL):

- Participants suggested the need for an improved communication and tracking system for campus groups such as SFU Facilities and construction leads to inform the CAL of changes to campus routes due to construction or broken accessibility features such as elevators
- Improved communications about accessibility features also includes more signage on elevators that are not working with a posting of alternate routes to navigate various campus buildings.
- Communicating across organizational siloes is key to an integrated approach to improving a sense of inclusion and belonging with students with disabilities. Regular updates and communications with CAL also ensure that SFU staff or faculty could anticipate accessibility issues and address them more proactively.

Better Accessible Learning and Classroom Design:

- Revisit the accessible seating options in classrooms as they are often inaccessible locations that exclude students with disabilities from participating fully in class activities
- Shift from “one-liner disability statements about accessibility” to include detailed and robust accessibility resources in course syllabi on what accommodations or disability-related supports are offered for different courses or programs.

These suggestions intersect with one another and have significant potential to improve the sense of inclusion of belonging for students with disabilities at SFU. An important point raised by participants was the need to centre the voices and lived experiences of students with disabilities in the planning or implementation of these suggestions. Participants noted severally that a key reason why accessibility features such as accessibility seating in classrooms do not fully meet the needs of persons with disabilities is because they were not designed by persons with disabilities (Participant interview, March 2020).

One could infer that most people who design accessibility features may sometimes fail to engage people with disabilities, not just at the consultation phases, but throughout the project as the process involves. Centering the voices of students with disabilities is also critical in identifying barriers to access due to multiple systems of oppression that create disabling campus environments. As a community developer, the researcher believes that students with disabilities are the experts in their own lives; nothing about us without us (Charlton, 1998).

Need for focus on more accessible and affordable food options for students with disabilities:

Research shows that people with disabilities are one of the groups that face challenges with food access or food insecurity. Schwartz, Buliung & Wilson (2019) conducted a scoping review of literature on disability and food access and insecurity. Schwartz et. al. (2019) found that people with disabilities experience greater risk of food insecurity (p.14) and disability is rarely included in research on food insecurity or food access. Furthermore, the authors found that accessibility within the home and city may constitute a disabling barrier (Schwartz et. al., 2019, p. 115). to access based on a social model of disability. They also found that some people with disabilities were likely to rely on restaurants due to difficulty preparing food at home or overrepresented among food bank users despite physical access barriers (Schwartz et. al., 2019, p. 114).

These findings align with findings from the current photovoice research that participants with disabilities faced challenges with lack of access to affordable food on campus that met their dietary needs as well as address physical access barriers with using the existing student food bank program at SFU (personal

communication, March and April 2020). While there are some food programs on campus such as the SFSS food bank program, these programs do not specifically address how the unique circumstances of students with disabilities are considered and planned for as potential and current program participants. The experiences of food access and insecurity specifically among students with disabilities appears to be an area that may have been overlooked in broader student affairs initiatives at SFU. Therefore, this finding reveals an opportunity for collaboration to address this concern across campus groups or initiatives such as the SFU Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL), the Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), the Student Experience Initiative (SEI) or the broader Student Services organization.

Overall, four participants presented thirty-eight photographs and narratives that reflect enablers and barriers to their inclusion and belonging (Agarwal & Spohn, 2017) at SFU. Importantly, participants articulated the changes that they hope will be considered or implemented to improve the experiences of inclusion and belonging of students with disabilities. Participants were also astute to caution that their experiences are not representative of all students with disabilities given the diversity of the student community. The researcher is mindful of the limitations of the current research and optimistic that the project achieved its aim of centering the voices of students with disabilities by discussing key issues that students with disabilities have been advocating for decades.

5.3 Conclusion

The findings from this current research are summarized in comparison with the literature review findings:

| Topic Area | Literature Review Findings | Current Photovoice Research Findings |
|--|---|---|
| Definitions of Belonging and Inclusion | Inclusion: is the process of including a person or group within processes, structures and everyday experiences in a manner that invites meaningful participation. | Inclusion for students with disabilities is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing the diversity of experiences and strengths of students with disabilities and seeking out more perspectives as having only one perspective is limited • Claiming one’s intersectional identities • Feeling welcome in a space through resourcefulness or preparation and when one’s access needs are met e.g. correct pronouns, receiving accommodations, etc. • Not a passive invitation into a space, but being proactive with - to include students as active participants, not passive observers, to remove barriers one faces without questioning one’s reality • To listen without trying to fix the situation (or “overstep”) • Simple acts of care and recognition |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | <p>Belonging: for students with disabilities is to know and feel like one matter, is respected, accepted and valued for who they are within a specific group or context.</p> <p>It is defined by the interaction of belonging with a students' social relationships, self-advocacy and mastery of their student role (Vaccaro et. al. (2015).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be authentically one's self in a safe space without posing harming to others • Designing with and by people with lived experiences <p>Belonging for students with disabilities is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing one's role as part of the community and working together as a community • Having the resources that one needs to overcome barriers e.g. academic accommodations, acceptance and valued by peers, teaching assistants (TAs) or faculty • Fitting in with one's small group or web of connections without being part of the mainstream community • Fitting in and identifying with the larger group even when there are barriers against connecting with the broader community • Contextual depending on individual circumstances and spaces on campus e.g. flexible or rigid spaces that allow/do not allow for accessibility and inclusivity • Embracing one's identity as a student with disabilities despite rejection or disapproval by others in one's network • Being accepted for the identities that one holds |
| <p>Enablers for belonging and inclusion</p> | <p>Social Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Disability Community - Support of family, friends and campus groups • Inclusive classroom - Positive attitudes of peers and faculty members | <p>Social Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants' self-advocacy and activism skills • Existing disability network – friends or disability student or campus groups • Positive attitudes with peers without disabilities • Positive attitudes and interactions with teaching assistants or faculty <p>Structural/Organizational Enablers:</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | <p>Structural/Organizational Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Effective Disability Resource Office • A shared vision with a plan and funding for accessibility • Institutional culture of inclusion beyond compliance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A supportive Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) in securing academic accommodations • Campus groups that are equipped to support students’ intersectional identities • Accidental inclusivity e.g. modifiable campus spaces that meet accessibility needs |
| <p>Barriers to belonging and inclusion</p> | <p>Social Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma • A non-holistic view of the concept of “normal” • General lack of understanding about disabilities • Negative attitudes of peers and faculty members • Experiencing intersectional erasure • Lack of knowledge and unresponsiveness of academic advisors • Mental and emotional burden of self-advocacy <p>Structural/Organizational Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucracy in getting accommodations and supports • The (in) accessibility of campus • Low awareness and quality of campus support services | <p>Social Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma • Discrimination • Lack of awareness or educational about disabilities • Negative attitudes of faculty members or teaching assistants • Negative attitudes or perspectives of peers without disabilities • Ableist attitudes and Able-bodied privilege – overstepping • Lack of social connections or support network • Lack of transition supports in and out of university • Food and financial inequity • Lack of campus spaces designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities • The paradox of inclusion – the duality of inclusion and exclusion <p>Structural/Organization Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inaccessible classrooms e.g. inaccessible seating • Under-resourcing of the Centre for Accessible Learning • Lack of institutional data on disabilities and experiences of students with disabilities • Physical or environmental barriers of the campus • Communications gaps between campus units and CAL on accessibility concerns • Underrepresentation of staff and faculty with disabilities • Policies for accountability and compliance |

Figure 47: Summary Comparison Table of Literature Review and Analysis of Findings

6.0 Recommendations

6.1. Introduction

The recommendations presented in this section are based on participants' suggestions on what the SFU community could do to improve the experiences of belonging and inclusion of students with disabilities. These recommendations are offered to address a range of complex barriers identified in this research. Given the complexity of these issues, it is recommended that efforts to create change are approached as complex community initiatives, or comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) (Kelly, 2010, p. 36). CCIs are complex and consist of multiple interventions intended to advance community change on specific issues over several years at the individual, group, institutional, social, and political levels (Kelly, 2010, p. 19).

These recommendations are also grounded in a systems analysis by identifying leverage points to intervene in the system of supports, policies and programming, based on research on leverage points by Meadows (1999). Leverage points are points of power, that are counterintuitive to how community members attempt to solve problems on specific issues (pp. 1 - 2). The researcher acknowledges that while there might be some quick wins, these quick fixes often create unintended consequences because these short-term measures attempt to fix symptoms instead of root-causes of the problem (Stroh, 2015, p. 52). With a systems lens, the recommendations include a combination of short, medium and long-term measures or interventions to sustain change efforts over time (p. 52).

Communities such as university communities are complex and evolve rapidly due to internal and external factors such as internal resource allocation, external funding, the current COVID-19 pandemic and socio-political issues (Kelly, 2010, p. 20) that impact the functioning and priorities of the organization and student experience. Depending on the client's capacity and institutional priorities, it is recommended that a combination of these recommendations are implemented, not in isolation, but as part of a broader accessibility, inclusion and equity strategy that addresses the intersecting themes presented in the findings and analysis and emerging, complex factors that impact the experiences of students with disabilities.

The researcher is aware that the client may have varying capacity, depending on institutional goals and priorities to implement these recommendations. An impact-effort matrix is included in subsequent sections for the client to effectively prioritize medium to high impact initiatives that could be implemented with low to medium effort. Some initiatives may already exist. As such, it is more effective to build on existing community assets and strengths.

6.2 Overview of recommendations

The proposed seventeen recommendations are grouped into short, medium and long-term recommendations based on estimated time to initiate or implement these complex change efforts. They are presented as a range of options for the client to consider as it may not always be feasible to implement all recommendations given current resources and capacity. The recommendations are not intended to be prescriptive, but flexible and adaptable to ongoing feedback from campus stakeholders including students with disabilities, staff and faculty.

The recommendations framework below illustrates four overarching areas for change that highlight the interconnections across recommendations and three principles that informed the development of the recommendations. These principles could be adopted to guide the implementation of recommendations.

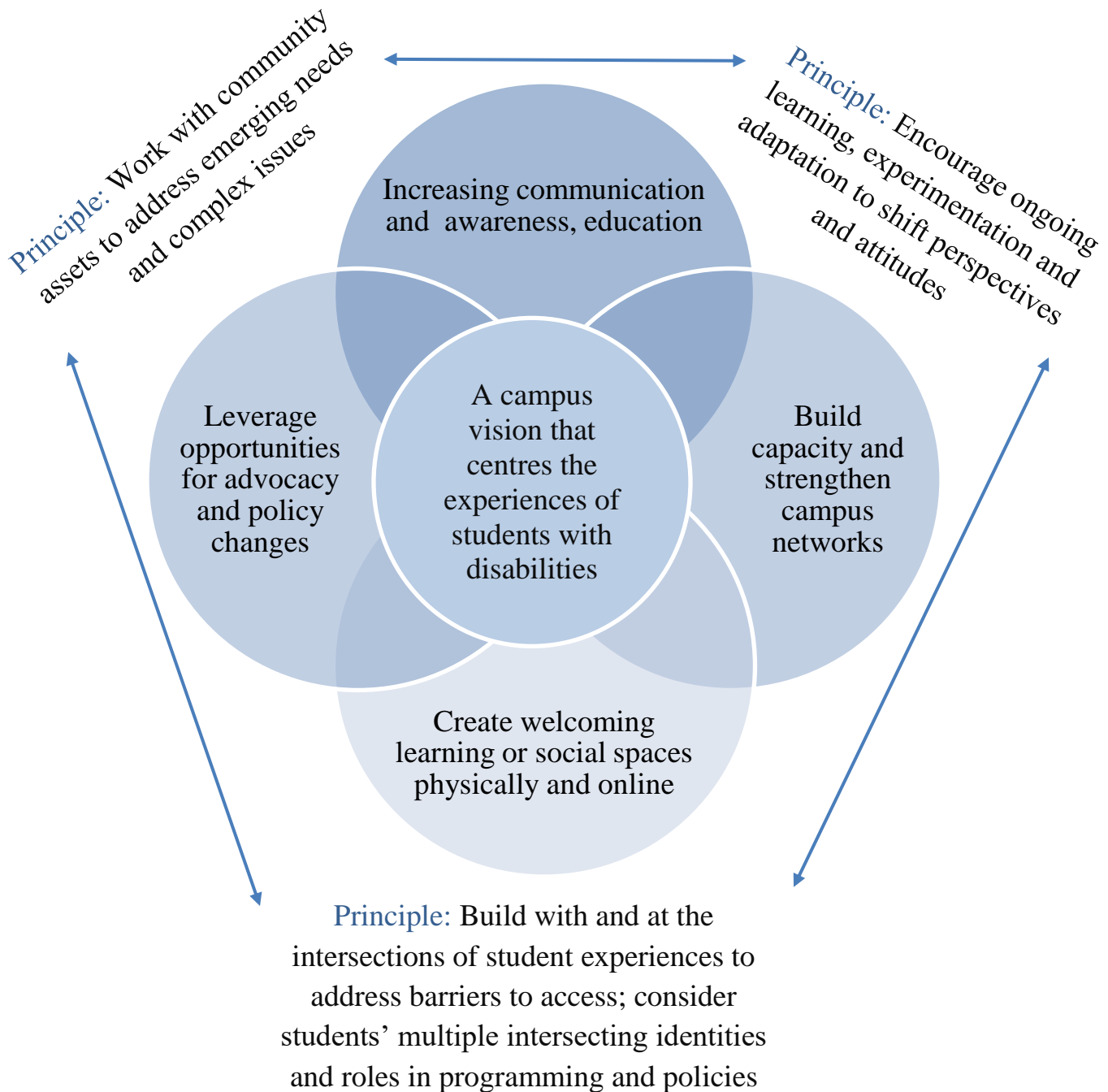


Figure 48: Recommendations Framework

Short-term (under 1 year):

- Recommendation 1: Undertake asset mapping, needs assessment and service gap analysis of existing academic and student supports, and services related to disability supports at SFU.
- Recommendation 2: Improve communications between campus groups such as Facilities and the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) specifically on construction projects and plan for accessible campus routes and maintenance of accessibility features.
- Recommendation 3: Build the capacity of networks of resilience and support with students with disabilities and of learning networks for staff and faculty through Communities of Practice.
- Recommendation 4: Partner with the SFU Library and faculties to highlight books and course readings by disabled authors in the library and classrooms respectively.
- Recommendation 5: Develop a Lived Experience Network (LEN) of student, staff and faculty with disabilities that would be part of redesigning the Access policy and developing further changes to foster a more inclusive campus community.
- Recommendation 6: Explore changes to redesigning existing campus food access programs with further research on the experiences of food insecurity among students with disabilities at SFU.

Medium-term (over 1 year and under 3 years):

- Recommendation 1: Gather and track institutional data on the experiences of students with disabilities and disability awareness.
- Recommendation 2: Establish a clear and compelling shared vision and goals for accessibility and equity for and with students with disabilities at SFU.
- Recommendation 3: Create students, staff and faculty disability awareness or education opportunities.
- Recommendation 4: Hire more staff and faculty with disabilities at SFU.
- Recommendation 5: Advocate for and implement priority on-campus residence and housing access for students with disabilities, as well as staff capacity building through training on supporting students with disabilities.
- Recommendation 6: Advocate for increased budget and staffing resources for the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) to expand its supports and services for students with disabilities and the university community.

- Recommendation 7: Investigate the design and set up of accessible seating options and provide guidelines on more detailed accessibility statements in classrooms that foster more accessible learning or classroom designs.

Long-term (over 3 years):

- Recommendation 1: Advocate for the design of social or community spaces such as a Disability Cultural Centre that fosters a sense of community for students, staff and faculty with disabilities
- Recommendation 2: Consider the revision of the SFU Accessibility Policy to shift from a medical model of disability to a psychosocial model of disability.
- Recommendation 3: Advocate for more inclusive and equitable study, learning, social and recreational spaces in the in-person and virtual campus environments.
- Recommendation 4: Increase Advocacy to the provincial government through the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Funding for scholarships and bursaries with costs with securing documentation for disability-related accommodations.

6.3 Detailed Recommendations

This section provides details of the seventeen recommendations with references to points of leverage for implementing these recommendations.

6.3.1. SHORT-TERM (ST) RECOMMENDATIONS

ST Recommendation 1: Undertake asset mapping, needs assessment and service gap analysis of existing academic and student supports, and services related to disability supports at SFU.

- Gardner, Lalani & Plamadela (2010) emphasize that successful complex change initiatives (CCIs) and strategies build upon a clear measurable vision of success and local knowledge, assets, existing capacities and resources (p. 8). The researcher recommends that the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) undertake a cross-unit and cross-departmental asset mapping, needs assessment and service gap analysis of existing services and supports for students with disabilities. Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) suggest that local community development begins with the construction of a new asset map that reflect existing informal or formal resources, groups, expertise, gifts and skills of students with disabilities and various community assets (p. 4). An asset map is particularly important because it recognizes the barriers that exist in the SFU community for students with disabilities while acknowledging that several campus groups and students with disabilities are already contributors in the community-building process (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 4).
- As this process may take time and requires several stakeholders, a logical place to begin may include student-facing units within SFU Student Services that interact with students with disabilities frequently. For instance, this mapping project could be conducted as a pilot of four to five units by providing guidelines and self-reflective tools on disability inclusion and equity.

Information from the self-reflective tools and service maps could be used as baseline data for specific changes that could be improved in each service area.

- The asset mapping and gap analysis could be conducted in partnership with students with disabilities, the SFU EDI group, leaders from various campus groups, the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) and Graduate Student Society (GSS). Funding and resources would be required to ensure that the process is adequately resourced and findings and recommendations from the process are actionable. The collaborative process will create opportunities to build on what is working (Gardner, Lalani & Plamadeala, 2010) and recognize groups including students with disabilities that are already making intentional efforts or progress towards improving the experiences of inclusion and belonging of students with disabilities.
- From this photovoice research, participants' comments indicate that there are already campus groups like Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (SFPIRG), the Women's Centre and Disability and Neurodiversity Alliance (DNA) student club where they feel a sense of belonging and inclusion and cultivate the attitude of preparedness for diverse student communities. It suggests that various campus groups could learn, adapt and develop innovative and inclusive practices (Gardner, Lalani & Plamadeala, 2010, p. 8) from these campus groups to better engage students with disabilities in the design and implementation of recommendations, potential projects or inclusive and equitable campus spaces.
- *Leverage point* – The gain around driving positive feedback loops. Positive feedback loops are self-reinforcing in that the more it works, the more it gains power to work some more (Meadows, 1999, p. 11). For example, the more we build on and communicate existing assets identified through the mapping process, the more various campus groups are likely to gain an increased awareness of colleagues with similar work and interests in supporting students with disabilities. This increased awareness of what already works could also reduce the use of programming or processes that may directly or indirectly exclude students with disabilities from accessing supports and services.

ST Recommendation 2 – Improve communications between campus groups such as Facilities and the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) specifically on construction projects and plan for accessible campus routes and maintenance of accessibility features:

- Based on the findings, there is a need for an improved communication and tracking system for campus groups such as SFU Facilities and construction leads to promptly inform the CAL of changes to campus routes due to construction or broken accessibility features such as elevators.
- Improved communications about accessibility features also includes clear and accessible signage on elevators that are not working with a posting of alternate routes to navigate various parts of that campus building or other campus locations.
- An integrated communication system on accessibility for disability-related concerns is key to improving a sense of inclusion and belonging with students with disabilities. Regular updates and communications with CAL also ensure that accessibility issues are addressed more proactively

and students with disabilities are provided with timely information to navigate the physical campus environment.

- *Leverage point – information flows:* improving the flow of information and communication between units and CAL and students with disabilities could increase the likelihood that students who face mobility challenges arrive in their classes in time and safely rather than using long and precarious physical routes.

ST Recommendation 3: Build the capacity of networks of resilience and support with students with disabilities and of learning networks for staff and faculty through Communities of Practice.

- Students with disabilities already established a campus club called Disability and Neurodiversity Alliance (DNA) to mobilize and advocate on disability-related matters. While the group may not be representative of all students with disabilities, the DNA group could be provided with funding, dialogue opportunities at staff and faculty Communities of Practices and other opportunities to partner with campus groups on disability-related initiatives. Compensation such as honoraria could be provided for students' time and effort considering that some persons with disabilities may experience an emotional burden from being asked to share their lived experience expertise (LEEs).
- Beyond education and awareness workshops, fostering campus spaces for ongoing learning and reflection on accessibility practices is vital for disability inclusion and fostering a sense of belonging. SFU staff or faculty could host virtual Communities of Practice (CoPs) or online webinars to share successful projects or practices in implementing accessibility in different SFU-related initiatives or services.
- This could take the form of creating a new disability awareness or inclusion Community of Practice, held in-person or online using an accessible meeting platform or space. The CoP may open opportunities for various students, staff and faculty groups to share best practices on accessibility and lessons learned through real SFU examples or case studies.
- Another approach is to leverage existing SFU Communities of Practice or Campus Forums such as the Advisors' Forum or Involved Community of Practice (iCoP) to host conversations and professional development opportunities on disability inclusion and equity within specialized areas of supports, services and student engagement. These groups may invite specific staff or disabled experts or consultants to discuss issues of ableism in curricular or co-curricular student engagement and ways to shift from ableist perspectives to intersectional perspectives and more inclusive programming. Networks flatten organizational hierarchies as the groups decide what they want to get done and are accountable to one another for getting the work done (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014, p. 70). Leveraging existing networks opens opportunities for network members to share knowledge, best practices and mobilize community resources to foster more inclusive and equitable practices that improve the experiences of students with disabilities.
- *Leverage point – the power of self-organizing structures:* the power to add, change, evolve or self-organize system structure is a critical leverage point discussed by Meadows (1999) because community members create new or adapt existing opportunities to create positive change. Building on the earlier recommendation on asset mapping, the Centre for Accessible Learning

(CAL) may consider self-organizing campus groups that are sharing resources or incorporating accessibility in their work as champions to share their learnings and fail forwards with other members of the campus community. By building a strong learning community on disability inclusion, gradual shifts in service, space or programming designs may occur to reflect the evolving and diverse experiences of students with disabilities.

ST Recommendation 4: Partner with the SFU Library and faculties to highlight books and course readings by disabled authors in the library and classrooms respectively.

- Partner with the SFU Library to host a reading series or dialogue event series on books or research by authors with disabilities to increase the community's exposure and awareness of the strengths and expertise of persons with disabilities. This takes an asset-based community development approach by building on the strengths of the community to debunk myths and negative stereotypes about people with disabilities that was raised consistently by the participants.
- Encourage faculty members to include readings, assignments or other forms of course assessments on disability history or research that raises students' awareness of disability rights, culture and experiences. Faculty members are in positions of power to shape teaching and learning in their classrooms or student cohorts. As such, including course readings and resources by disabled authors opens conversations and space for the unique insights of persons with disabilities to be centered in the classroom. It is also important that learning resources compiled by the library or faculty members consider intersectional identities of authors to include diverse voices in learning spaces.

ST Recommendation 5 – Develop a Lived Experience Network (LEN) of student, staff and faculty with disabilities that would be part of redesigning the Access policy and developing further changes to foster a more inclusive campus community.

- Notably, participants stated that barriers exist in the SFU campus community and society at large because i) disabling conditions are an issue of design. ii) physical, learning or social campus spaces or supports were not designed with people with disabilities in mind and iii) these campus spaces were also not designed with and by people with disabilities.
- It is recommended that the project client considers the creation of a Lived Experience Network (LEN) of people with disabilities that involves SFU students, staff and faculty who are not just consulted on matters related to disability, but also direct contributors in the design or redesign of physical, learning or social spaces or projects to improve accessibility at SFU. The idea of a LEN was recommended by a participant through their work on a [B.C. Patient Voices Network \(PVNs\)](#) that includes several engagement opportunities in the health sector which takes a live experience-centered approach. Adapting the PVN framework could provide a range of opportunities for students with disabilities to be directly involved as equal partners in designing more equitable and accessible systems and processes at SFU.
- For people with disabilities to participate equitably, considerations should be given to paying individuals, particularly students for their time, efforts and lived experience expertise. Considerations should be given to the emotional burden of advocacy and activism while honouring students' agency to participate in issues and initiatives that impact their experiences.

- If such networks already exist at SFU, it is worth considering any current barriers to participation for people with disabilities, how these barriers could be addressed and ways to integrate the work of the group in decision-making processes at SFU where they might influence changes at various levels of the institution.
- Participants noted that the current COVID19 crisis also revealed issues on the lack of inflexibility on access to disability-related supports like flexibility around assignments and other coursework that they experienced in the classroom pre-COVID-19. Presently, there are more flexibility and accommodations provided for the general population given the impacts of the pandemic at scale. It might be timely for CAL to consider ways for a LEN or existing networks at SFU to advocate on key issues that are impacting the experiences of students with disabilities, and how their experiences could be centered in the COVID19 recovery planning in unit and organizational levels.

ST Recommendation 6 – Explore changes to redesigning existing campus food access programs with further research on the experiences of food insecurity among students with disabilities at SFU.

- CAL could consider advocating and working with the SFSS to explore the redesign of the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) Emergency Food Bank Program Certificate program ([SFSS Food Bank Program](#), 2020) for undergraduate students to make it more accessible for students with disabilities. Participants noted that the limited options on the grocery stores where students can only purchase groceries with the voucher makes it challenging for students with pain-related or mobility-related disabilities to access these stores.
- Some suggested changes to make the food certificate program more accessible and inclusive for students with disabilities include: offering more flexible grocery store locations beyond grocery locations at the three SFU campuses, the use of e-vouchers or gift certificates instead of mailing vouchers via one's SFU email to allow for online grocery purchase and delivery, and easing restrictions on the purchase of only food products to include other essential items for daily living. These suggested changes are particularly vital during the current pandemic as most students are studying online from their homes and commuting to the SFU campuses may be unsafe or places undue hardship for people with disabilities who have compromised immune systems.
- Conduct assessment or research in partnership with the SFSS and GSS to better understand the experiences of food insecurity among students with disabilities at SFU and ways to address this issue. Assessment could take the form of gathering data about the food needs of student with disabilities, current barriers to access and ways to provide more customized food security programming and resources that meet the needs of students with disabilities.

6.3.2. MEDIUM-TERM (MT) RECOMMENDATIONS

MT Recommendation 1 – Gather and track institutional data on the experiences of students with disabilities and disability awareness.

- It is recommended that SFU gather institutional data to learn more about the experience of students with disabilities at SFU. There are multiple strategies for data collection. Data could be gathered through survey questions in the annual Undergraduate Student Surveys (UGSS) to ask

about the experiences of students with disabilities with specific campus services and what could be improved.

- Another approach is to undertake institutional surveys that ask the broader student community including students with and without disabilities to find out what the community knows about disabilities. The purpose of the survey is to identify gaps in knowledge or understanding about disabilities and how these might be addressed through disability awareness or education opportunities.
- Furthermore, data on student recruitment, engagement and retention of students with disabilities could be tracked by the Institutional Research and Planning (CAL), the Student Services Business and Policy Analysis (BPA) and the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) to gather quantitative data that may reveal structural barriers or opportunities to improve the experiences of students with disabilities.
- Data collection and analysis for the above recommendations should adopt an intersectional approach and allow for Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) in partnership with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) to disaggregate responses by various groups of students with disabilities and students without disabilities by race, gender, sexual identity and disability type.
- *Leverage point -The structure of information flows (Meadows, 1999)*: sharing data and stories with appropriate levels of staff and faculty could also support the SFU community in better understanding who our students are and the unique experiences and journeys of students with disabilities at SFU.

MT Recommendation 2: Establish a clear and compelling shared vision and goals for accessibility and equity for and with students with disabilities at SFU

- Stroh (2015) states that a core element of a systems story is to establish a clear and compelling shared vision, joint goals and common understanding of the current reality (pp. 52 – 53) of students with disabilities at SFU. The compelling shared vision and goal on improving a sense of belonging and inclusion of students with disabilities at SFU should be developed with and by persons with disabilities at SFU.
- The process of designing a shared goal for accessibility and equity for students with disabilities should move beyond one-time tokenistic levels of participation such as informing, consultation or placation (Arnstein, 1969) to mutually beneficial partnerships and delegated power (p. 217) that recognizes the gifts and expertise of persons with disabilities with fair compensation for their expertise. A specific goal and vision on disability inclusion and equity with a clear vision of what success will look like (Gardner, Lalani, Plamadeala, 2010, p. 8) builds a solid foundation for subsequent interventions to be successful.
- *Leverage point*: Meadows (1999) acknowledges that the goal of a system is a leverage point that that supersedes the ability of a system to self-organize (p. 16). Within the SFU context, the university-wide EDI initiative states that its central goal as: “an equitable, diverse and inclusive

SFU is deserved by all” (SFU EDI, 2020). This central goal encourages all SFU community members to conform to or strive towards achieving that goal (Meadows, 1999, p. 16).

- While there are several EDI priorities listed to be accomplished before the end of 2020 (SFU EDI, 2020), the priorities and goals could be more specific to include the need for robust accessibility planning that is specific to improving the experiences of diverse persons with disabilities including students at SFU. Naming a specific goal under the priorities that focuses on persons with disabilities is critical to acknowledge and create rallying points for allocation of resources, funding and development of strategies at the unit, department and faculty levels to achieve that specific goal.

MT Recommendation 3 – Create students, staff and faculty disability awareness or education opportunities:

- *Disability awareness workshops for staff and faculty:*
 - This recommendation builds on participants’ suggestions for unit-specific and university-wide disability awareness and educational opportunities for students, staff and faculty at SFU. These opportunities include organizing disability awareness workshops for staff and faculty to increase awareness and sensitivity on the experiences of students with disabilities and how campus supports and services, in person or virtual classrooms or teaching strategies could be adapted to meet the needs of diverse students with disabilities.
 - Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, disability awareness workshops could be hosted online. These sessions could focus on how to foster accessible and inclusive online learning and social spaces for students to build a sense of community and belonging for and with students with disabilities. Furthermore, these sessions should highlight the unique challenges that students with disabilities face both online and in person environments with a dialogue on how staff and faculty could be intentional in reducing barriers to access when the campus community returns to primarily in person work when it is safe to do.
 - It is also recommended by participants and the researcher that the awareness workshops or education opportunities for faculty include information on how to discuss disability-related topics and supports in the classroom, differences between visible and invisible disabilities and ways to foster more inclusive classrooms. It was identified that there was lack of knowledge on how to discuss accessibility for students with disabilities in the classroom and more education for faculty members is needed to foster more inclusive classrooms.
- *Short Interactive online course for students:* Currently, there are limited campus options or resources for students to learn about disability awareness and their role in fostering inclusive spaces. The Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) could develop a short interactive online course for students without disabilities to learn more about how they could create more welcoming and inclusive spaces for peers with disabilities. This online course should include information on visible and invisible disabilities and challenge misconceptions or stereotypes about people with disabilities.
 - Participants recommended that both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers could be involved in the design and development of the course as both a learning opportunity and a space to build empathy and belonging while collaborating on a project.

Having both student groups working on a project together has the potential to shift attitudes, perceptions and stereotypes about students with disabilities. Participants also suggested that the course could be made mandatory like the academic honesty course that they are often required to complete at the beginning of some courses.

- *Host a campus-wide disability history and awareness month:* The idea of disability history and awareness months was raised by participants as university-wide programming that could contribute to building a sense of inclusion and belonging for people with disabilities at SFU. Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) is an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October in Canada. However, it focuses on employment and does not focus on other aspects of life including academic and social awareness.
- SFU already has awareness months for various initiatives such as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in January. Similarly, the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) in partnership with students with disabilities, the EDI group and several campus groups could advocate for an institutional commitment and funding to recognize a specific month in the fall or spring terms for an SFU-wide disability history and awareness month. A disability inclusion network of students, staff and faculty could be developed to coordinate the implementation of the disability awareness month and identify ongoing opportunities for ongoing dialogue and action throughout the year.
- A collaborative effort could position CAL and students with disabilities to mobilize participation from student groups, campus units or faculties. The initiative could be aimed at creating a culture of inclusion, disability-awareness and accessibility through in class or social media campaigns, dialogue, film screenings and video statements from SFU's senior leaders on a commitment to accessibility. Disability history and awareness months already occur in universities in the United States, the United Kingdom and South Africa. Universities in these countries provide examples of initiatives that could be transferrable to the SFU and Canadian context. Adopting the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework is important to ensure multiple modes of participation for all, and centre accessibility and inclusion practices in these opportunities.
- *Leverage point - Sharing information:* Recognize that disability awareness or education opportunities could begin with sharing information about accessibility resources specific to improving supports for students with disabilities. Meadows (1999) identified the flow of information as a lower stakes leverage point (Meadows, 1999) than changing peoples' mindsets given that change takes time, particularly in large public institutions.

MT Recommendation 4: Hire more staff and faculty with disabilities at SFU.

- Gillies & Dupuis (2013) recommended having more persons in positions of power who are sensitive, aware and open-minded to fostering a welcoming and inclusive campus community (pp. 204 – 205). Findings from participants include a suggestion to hire more staff and faculty with disabilities because they are likely to be more empathetic, aware and open to designing with accessibility in mind. Furthermore, it contributes to increasing the representation of people with disabilities at SFU. Students with disabilities will also have more role models in positions of power in an academic setting while students without disabilities could gain increased connections with persons with disabilities that may challenge their perceptions of people with disabilities in academia and in society.

MT Recommendation 5 - Advocate for and implement priority on-campus residence and housing access for students with disabilities, as well as staff capacity building through training on supporting students with disabilities:

- A participant who lived off-campus noted that the long commutes of two to three hours to campus were barriers to participating in university life. This feedback aligns with concerns from the broader SFU student population given that SFU has a 90% commuter student population. However, participants noted additional barriers such as navigating inaccessible transit to and from transit, difficulties in accessing appropriate food sources which impacted increased their likelihood of being food insecure and off-campus affordability challenges as disability cheques and part-time work combined are insufficient to meet basic living needs. Despite multiple applications, one participant was unable to gain on-campus housing. While there may be several reasons for the lack of access, it is valuable for CAL to explore and mitigate potential barriers to access for students with disabilities.
- There are current efforts including infrastructure developments to expand on-campus residence and housing with hundreds of new beds for students. This on-campus housing expansion presents an opportunity for CAL to partner with specific student-facing units such as Residence and Housing to advocate for and implement an equitable housing application review and approval system that provides priority access for students with disabilities. Currently, SFU Residence and Housing makes on-campus housing arrangements or accommodations on a case by case basis for students with disabilities when there are circumstances that limit their ability to live in SFU traditional housing arrangements, special disability related supports may be put into place (Centre for Accessible Learning [website](#), 2020). However, these accommodations apply where a residence offer has been made for a specific number of rooms in accessible buildings held each term for students with disabilities.
- Exploring a more equitable and inclusive housing application review process may include a data trend review of past applications that were submitted by students with disabilities to identify the number and percentage of those applications that were accepted or not accepted. This review may open opportunities to dialogue on the housing needs of students with disabilities and if there are structural gaps that may unintentionally exclude students with disabilities from gaining access to on-campus housing.
- Furthermore, it is recommended that a housing liaison role be created that focuses on the specific needs of students with disabilities and training for frontline staff including Co-op students. The purpose of the training would be to address concerns raised by participants on ways to better support students with disabilities in addressing disability-related supports and inquires. The training could be developed by CAL in partnership with Residence and Housing.

MT Recommendation 6 – Advocate for increased budget and staffing resources for the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) to expand its supports and services for students with disabilities and the university community:

- Feedback from participants suggest that the CAL is currently under-resourced to support students beyond the provision of accommodations despite efforts from CAL staff to support in providing advice and supports. With the growing number of people with disabilities in the BC population, it

is important that SFU considers and plans for a growing number of students with disabilities within the campus community. This further highlights the need for more intersectional data on students with disabilities and areas of student need to build a case for support for increasing CAL resources.

- Hong (2015) notes that a well-resourced Disability Resource Centre is a structural enabling factor to foster welcoming and inclusive campus communities for students with disabilities. As such, more financial and human resources is needed for CAL to not only support students with disabilities in gaining accommodations, but also in developing and championing programming, outreach and advocacy-focused initiatives that address recommendations on disability awareness and education. Without adequate resourcing of CAL, operational and strategic matters that impact the experiences of students with disabilities may not be considered within broader university planning and barriers to access will continue to exist.

MT Recommendation 7 – Investigate the design and set up of accessible seating options and provide guidelines on more detailed accessibility statements in classrooms that foster more accessible learning or classroom designs:

- CAL could consider partnering with SFU Facilities, the Centre for Educational Excellence (CEE) and group(s) representing students with disabilities on campus to examine the accessible seating options in classrooms as participants raised concerns that the accessible seats are often in inaccessible locations within classrooms that exclude students with disabilities from participating fully in class activities. Conversations with these stakeholders could open opportunities for ways to set up these seats in more accessible parts of the classroom that are integrated within the classroom.
- Furthermore, CAL, in partnership with students with disabilities may want to consider a poster or digital campaign via the Canvas learning platform to educate students without disabilities on not occupying the accessible seats in classrooms and why appropriate use of these seats matters for peers with disabilities to have equitable learning spaces.
- CAL could also partner with the Centre for Educational Excellence (CEE), Health and Counselling (HCS) and relevant campus partners to provide guidance on accessibility statements that move from “one-liner disability statements about accessibility” to provide more guidance on detailed and robust accessibility resources including mental health supports in course syllabi. These accessibility guidelines for course syllabi could include examples on what accommodations or disability-related supports are offered for specific programs or courses including how and where they can be accessed.

6.3.3. LONG-TERM (LT) RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation 1: Advocate for the redesign of social or community spaces such as a Disability Cultural Centre that fosters a sense of community for students, staff and faculty with disabilities

LT Recommendation 1: Advocate for the design of social or community spaces such as a Disability Cultural Centre that fosters a sense of community for students, staff and faculty with disabilities

- The Disability Cultural Centre (DCC) is a space for students, staff and faculty to explore and celebrate diverse disability identities, rights, culture and community (University of Arizona,

2020). Chiang (2016) argues that a DCC can normalize disability, communicate institutional value for disability and serve as a hub for students with disabilities to build community with one another and advocate for specific issues (p.2). The DCC and programming in the space could be modeled using UDL principles. DCCs may take several years to implement given the need for long-term planning for infrastructure development. The [final SFU Burnaby 2065 Campus Master Plan](#) has been published and includes plans for universal accessibility including accessibility guidelines. However, there is no mention of a DCC in the Campus Master Plan.

- Having a DCC at SFU could create a gathering space at the university that recognizes the diverse needs and experiences of persons with disabilities at SFU. Some universities such as the [University of Arizona](#) and the University of North Carolina have DCCs that could provide examples that SFU could explore if opportunities arise to further explore this recommendation.
- Chiang (2016) notes that funding for a DCC, at any university, would likely be limited or even non-existent and proposed several ideas to sustain programming in the absence of a yearly operating budget. Some examples proposed include scheduling low-cost events, soliciting student volunteers or hiring students with disabilities for the DCC, and inviting disability activists to speak on campus (Chiang, 2016, pp. 4 – 5).
- The researcher recognizes that there is limited campus space at SFU. Limited space could be viewed as an opportunity for creativity and innovation in redesigning or adapting existing campus spaces, where possible, to create a welcoming and inclusive community space for people with disabilities at SFU. Should existing campus spaces be adapted, programming or activities in the space should promote and be designed using an intersectional perspective on disability and co-created with students with disabilities to foster meaningful community engagement (University of Arizona, 2020).

LT Recommendation 2 – Consider the revision of the SFU Accessibility Policy to shift from a medical model of disability to a psychosocial model of disability.

- The current SFU Accessibility for Students with Disabilities Policy (GP 26) is premised on the medical model of disability that problematizes the individual, focusing primarily on the provision of accommodations instead of the disabling environmental conditions that make society unwelcoming for students with disabilities.
- The SFU Access Policy should be reframed and revised to adopt to a psychosocial model of disability adopted by the United Nations. Adopting a psychosocial model allows for more dialogue and action on the structural and systemic barriers that make it challenging for persons including students with disabilities at SFU to participate fully in all aspects of university life. It is worth revisiting the SFU Access Policy given that the last stated revision on the SFU website was in September 25, 2003, about 17 years ago (SFU Access Policy, 2020).
- The revision process for this policy should involve meaningful consultations with people with disabilities at SFU, particularly students with disabilities who are directly impacted by the tenets of the policy.

- With the BC Province's move to develop a provincial Accessibility legislation, it may be worth considering how these larger shifts in provincial legislation may impact the need for a more robust accessibility policy framework at SFU that moves beyond the provision of accommodation to the removal of environmental barriers.
- *Leverage point*: Change the mindset or paradigm out of which the system arises (Meadows, 1999, p.17). Although policies may be grounded in evidence or community consultations, there are underlying assumptions, stated or unstated, that shape the development or revision of a policy. Meadows (1999) notes that these deepest set of beliefs shape how the world works and are often challenging to shift than anything else in a system (pp.17 - 18). Therefore, a shift from a medical model of disability to a psychosocial model in a policy document presents opportunities for student affairs practitioners and the university community to reflect on our practices. These policy shifts may take years to shift in practice because changing attitudes and beliefs takes time.

LT Recommendation 3: Advocate for more inclusive and equitable study, learning, social and recreational spaces in the in-person and virtual campus environments.

- As indicated in earlier sections, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework should be embedded in the design, planning and implementation of various campus spaces to meet the needs of all learners and community members including diverse students with disabilities. The researcher recognizes that designing for and with a diverse community can be complex given when needs of specific groups may conflict with others such as when including one group unintentionally excludes another group.
- Where possible, the perspectives of students with disabilities should be centered in planning for the design and use of campuses or providing feedback on how spaces could be redesigned to be more inclusive and accessible.
- A campus accessibility space audit across all campuses could be conducted to identify features or design elements within these spaces that are accessible or inaccessible, as well as short, medium or long-term modifications needed to create a more inclusive space. CAL in collaboration with various campus groups could also develop a guide on baseline or enhanced practices and policy recommendations for creating inclusive and accessible spaces.

LT Recommendation 4 – Increase Advocacy to the provincial government through the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Funding for scholarships and bursaries for costs with securing documentation for disability-related accommodations.

- CAL could explore joint advocacy efforts on upholding the rights of students with disabilities with the Office of SFU's Vice Provost, Associate Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-president, Students and International and SFU's External Relations, particularly with the Government Relations unit at both the university-wide and provincial levels.
- As legislation and policy influence the behaviours of actors within a system, it is important that advocacy efforts persist to raise awareness on the unique experiences and needs of students with disabilities in SFU and British Columbia. This includes the need for short-and long-term measures

to redefine a “new normal” that is inclusive and equitable for all persons including students with disabilities in B.C. post-secondary institutions (SFU Centre for Dialogue webinar, June 2020).

- *Leverage point*: Change the goals of the system (Meadows, 1999, p. 16). From a systems thinking perspective, CAL could play a role in setting up new system goals in advocating for changes through a provincial accessibility legislation. These advocacy efforts in collaboration with various campus partners and also national organizations such as National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) could open funding or policy opportunities beyond SFU to address broader systemic challenges that are impacting the experiences of inclusion and belonging of students with disabilities at SFU and other post-secondary institutions.

6.4 Implementation Strategy

Auspos & Cabaj (2014) recommend that practitioners should not expect to fully develop a plan or map out all interconnections of an issue prior to implementation as some leverage points and strategies emerge over time as work develops and is adapted based on lessons learned (p. 36). The implementation strategy below is mapped based on emerging recommendations from the findings and the researcher’s analysis. Therefore, it is recommended that implementation strategy follows an emergent, experimental and adaptive process given the complex and diverse context (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014, p.10) of fostering inclusion and belonging of students with disabilities at SFU. These strategies could be implemented in a non-linear manner depending on resource availability, organizational and community priorities and responsiveness to emerging student needs and experiences.

The principles and values for implementing these recommendations should be based on mutually beneficial or reciprocal relationships, sharing power with students, accessibility and inclusive design as well as honouring diverse lived experiences as subject matter expertise.

Recommendations Effort-Impact Matrix

The researcher is aware that the client may have varying capacity depending on institutional goals and priorities to implement these recommendations. The recommendations impact-effort matrix is a decision-making tool developed for the client to prioritize initiatives that could be implemented including identified quick wins and major projects. Impact refers to potential benefits or outcomes and effort refers to what needs to be done to achieve potential outcomes ([Group Map](#), 2020). Where initiatives already exist, recommended initiatives could leverage existing community initiatives and assets such as partnerships, student involvement and advocacy, funding or programming.

Recommendations Impact-Effort Matrix

(Reference: Group Map, 2020)

The groupings of impact and effort could be reassigned depending on factors such as the client’s capacity and institutional priorities.

| | Quick Wins – High short term returns on investment (suggested starting points) | Major Projects – High long-term returns on investment (more complex to execute) |
|-------------|---|---|
| High Impact | <p>ST 1: Undertake asset mapping, needs assessment and service gap analysis</p> <p>ST 2: Improve communications between campus groups</p> <p>ST 3: Build the capacity of networks of resilience and support with students with disabilities.</p> <p>ST 4: Partner with the SFU Library and faculties to highlight books and course readings by disabled authors.</p> <p>ST 5: Develop a Lived Experience Network (LEN).</p> <p>ST 6: Explore changes to redesigning existing campus food access programs.</p> <p>MT 3: Create students, staff and faculty disability awareness or education opportunities (may also be a major project depending on effort required to execute).</p> | <p>MT 1: Gather and track institutional data on the experiences of students with disabilities and disability awareness.</p> <p>MT 2: Establish a clear and compelling shared vision and goals for accessibility and equity for and with students with disabilities.</p> <p>MT 4: Hire more staff and faculty with disabilities at SFU.</p> <p>MT 5: Advocate for and implement priority on-campus residence and housing access for students with disabilities, and training on supporting students with disabilities.</p> <p>MT 6: Advocate for increase budget and staffing resources for the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL).</p> <p>MT 7: Investigate the design and set up of accessible seating options and provide guidelines on more detailed accessibility statements in classrooms that foster more accessible learning or classroom designs.</p> <p>LT 1: Advocate for the design of social or community spaces such as a Disability Cultural Centre.</p> <p>LT 2: Consider the revision of the SFU Accessibility Policy.</p> <p>LT 3: Advocate for more inclusive and equitable Study, Learning, Social and Recreational Spaces.</p> <p>LT 4: Increase Advocacy to the provincial government.</p> |
| Low Impact | Low return on investment | No return on investment |
| | Low Effort | High Effort |

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Figure 49: Recommendations Impact-Effort

The implementation strategy table below details the recommendations, suggested deliverables, estimated cost levels and identified areas for designing with and by students with disabilities. Dollar (\$) signs are used to indicate relative costs of various recommendations including financial and human resources.

| Recommendations | Deliverables | Cost Level | Highlighted areas to partner with students with disabilities |
|--|--|------------|---|
| Short term (ST) (less than a year) | | | |
| ST Recommendation 1: Undertake asset mapping, needs assessment and service gap analysis of existing academic and student supports, and services related to disability supports at SFU. | Plan and facilitate meetings on asset mapping and needs assessment. Develop asset map, needs assessment and map of service gaps. Identify specific areas for improvement. | \$ | e.g. as mapping collaborators to identify assets, service gaps and existing community needs |
| ST Recommendation 2: Better communication between campus groups such as Facilities and the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) specifically on construction projects and plan for accessible campus routes and maintenance of accessibility features. | Cross-unit meetings involving CAL, Facilities and relevant campus partners Conduct a Communications review and accessibility notification plan for construction projects Contact person on each team to liaise on communications Regular email updates or accessible website with updates on accessible routes/features | \$ | |
| ST Recommendation 3: Build the capacity of networks of resilience and support with students with disabilities and of learning networks for staff and faculty through Communities of Practices. | Host a Community of Practice meeting to discuss how different units are currently supporting students with disabilities. Build relationships within CoPs to identify champions for accessibility in different units and faculties Identify a set of accessibility practices and resources to share with student affairs practitioners. | \$ | |
| ST Recommendation 4: Partner with the SFU Library and faculties to highlight books and course readings by authors with disabilities in the library and classrooms respectively. | Digital series for featured books/authors on the library website Virtual dialogue event series to discuss the work of authors that involve authors as guest speakers or panelists. More works from authors with disabilities included in class reading lists/resources | \$ | |

| | | | |
|--|--|-------------|---|
| <p>ST Recommendation 5: Develop a Lived Experience Network (LEN) of student, staff and faculty with disabilities that would be part of redesigning the Access policy and developing further changes to foster a more inclusive campus community.</p> | <p>Lived Experience consultation and recruitment process</p> <p>Lived Experience Network virtual meetings (x3). Compensate participants for their time and efforts.</p> <p>Organize and facilitate the development of the Terms of Reference and priorities</p> | <p>\$\$</p> | <p>e.g. Involving students with disabilities in the LEN's collaborative decision-making process</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 6: Explore changes to redesigning existing campus food access programs with further research on the experiences of food insecurity among students with disabilities at SFU.</p> | <p>Plan meetings with the SFSS and campus partners to discuss food access programs like the SFSS Food Bank.</p> <p>Review recommendations from participants and explore areas for potential redesign or adaptation of existing programs</p> | <p>\$</p> | <p>Involve students with disabilities to provide further feedback on potential changes to existing programs.</p> |
| <p>Medium-term (MT) (1 – 3 years)</p> | | | |
| <p>MT Recommendation 1: Gather and track institutional data on the experiences of students with disabilities and disability awareness.</p> | <p>Initiate and facilitate meeting between CAL, Institutional Research and Planning (IRP), Business and Policy Analysis (BPA) in Student Services, EDI Group and various campus partners</p> <p>Consult with diverse people with disabilities and how best to capture and identify intersectional questions to assess the diversity of the community.</p> <p>Explore including intersectional data in CAL's intake or assessment process to track within CAL registrants</p> <p>Identify plans to integrate questions in existing annual university benchmarking surveys</p> | <p>\$</p> | <p>As participants in framing questions to be asked or providing responses to institutional surveys</p> |
| <p>MT Recommendation 2: Establish a clear and compelling shared vision and goals for accessibility and equity to improve the experiences of and with students with disabilities at SFU.</p> | <p>Online or in person consultation meetings and engagement process with LENs and other campus stakeholders.</p> <p>Recommendations for accessibility goals using an intersectional lens</p> | <p>\$</p> | <p>e.g. As key stakeholders in articulating a vision and desires for an inclusive and accessible campus community</p> |
| <p>MT Recommendation 3: Create students, staff and faculty disability awareness or education opportunities.</p> | <p>Plan and deliver online disability awareness workshops or webinars for staff and faculty</p> <p>Design and launch a short interactive online course for students</p> <p>Provide low-barrier funding for students with disabilities to organize programming</p> | <p>\$\$</p> | <p>As collaborators or lived/subject matter experts in conceptualizing, designing or implementing disability awareness workshops or</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|---------------|--|
| | <p>opportunities for fostering social connections</p> <p>Plan and facilitate programming or disability awareness initiatives including Disability History and Awareness month (x5 events).</p> <p>Pilot with pop-up events or online film screenings and dialogue events to discuss disability history and current topics on disability arts and culture. Pilot with students with disabilities club, Student Services units, SFU Public Square, SFU's Offices of Community Engagement or the School of Contemporary Arts</p> <p>Recruit a group of students, staff and faculty including LEN members to plan the Disability History and Awareness month.</p> <p>Provide accessible online resources by themed topic areas such as recruitment and hiring student staff, training for students, staff and faculty focused on disability awareness, inclusion and equity.</p> | | <p>education opportunities.</p> |
| <p>MT Recommendation 4: Hiring more staff and faculty with disabilities at SFU.</p> | <p>Develop a committee/LENs to review existing recruiting and hiring practices for barriers to access. Provide recommendations to CAL and university leaders.</p> <p>Identify and implement ongoing plans to reduce barriers to access in the hiring and recruitment process</p> <p>Recruit, onboard and retain more staff and faculty with disabilities</p> | <p>\$\$\$</p> | <p>As members of the recruitment panel or advisory to provide recommendations in the recruitment or hiring processes</p> |
| <p>MT Recommendation 5: Advocate for and implement priority on-campus residence and housing access for students with disabilities, as well as staff capacity building through training on supporting students with disabilities.</p> | <p>Initiate and facilitate meetings between CAL, Residence and Housing and relevant campus stakeholders</p> <p>Review existing Residence and Housing application process for potential barriers to access and opportunities to reduce or remove barriers</p> <p>Identify a liaison on both CAL and Residence and Housing to support</p> | <p>\$\$\$</p> | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--------|---|
| | <p>students with disabilities living in residence</p> <p>Coordinate and implement training or professional development sessions on how to support students with disabilities in Residence (x2) sessions</p> | | |
| <p>MT Recommendation 6: Advocate for increased budget and staffing resources for the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) to expand its supports and services for students with disabilities and the university community.</p> | <p>Develop a proposal for increased resourcing such as budget and staffing based on research findings and evidence of under-capacity/resourcing.</p> <p>Develop an advocacy and communications plan for more strategic priority funding over several years, potentially through EDI or other initiatives. Plan and facilitate meetings to discuss resourcing needs and implications to adapt to emerging student needs and experiences.</p> | \$\$\$ | |
| <p>MT Recommendation 7: Investigate the design and set up of accessible seating options and provide guidelines on more detailed accessibility statements in classrooms that foster more accessible learning or classroom designs.</p> | <p>Plan and facilitate meetings (ongoing) to explore better accessibility seating options with SFU Facilities and Centre for Educational Excellence to incorporate UDL principles in campus spaces.</p> <p>Conduct online and in person user testing or experimentation sessions with students to explore more accessible seating or learning designs.</p> <p>Identify concrete changes to classroom accessible seating through meetings for funding and implementation through university strategic priority initiatives.</p> | \$\$\$ | <p>As partners in designing possible accessible seating options - testing and selecting seating options as well as identifying recommendations for based on their experiences</p> |
| <p>Long-term (LT) (greater than 3 years)</p> | | | |
| <p>LT Recommendation 1: Advocate for the design of social or community spaces such as a Disability Cultural Centre that fosters a sense of community for students, staff and faculty with disabilities</p> | <p>Partner with LEN or existing campus partners to engage people with disabilities in the SFU community on the need, feasibility and desirability of a Disability Cultural Centre (DCC)</p> <p>Build a case for support for a DCC including community benefits, funding model and alignment with university priorities</p> <p>Plan and facilitate advocacy meetings with the University Space Planning Groups on the feasibility of the DCC</p> | \$\$\$ | <p>As partners in the conceptualization, consultation, design or implementation of a DCC</p> <p>Providing support letters or signatures that advocate for a DCC</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|------|---|
| | <p>within long-term university planning frameworks and plans.</p> <p>Identify accessibility standards and practices for the proposed DCC and a long-term development plan for repurposing existing spaces where possible to achieve the objectives of a DCC for community building</p> | | |
| <p>LT Recommendation 2: Consider the revision of the SFU Accessibility Policy to shift from a medical model of disability to a psychosocial model of disability.</p> | <p>Community consultations meetings, focus groups, one on one interviews and other engagement methods with student and campus partners</p> <p>Policy review meetings with LEN and various campus partners.</p> <p>Revised Accessibility Policy to address current barriers to access and participation, influenced by significant feedback from persons with disabilities.</p> | \$\$ | <p>through advocacy and activism efforts through the Student Societies (SSs) and appropriate campus committees and groups.</p> |
| <p>LT Recommendation 3: Advocate for more inclusive and equitable Study, Learning, Social and Recreational Spaces in the in-person and virtual campus environments.</p> | <p>Community consultations meetings, focus groups, one on one interviews and other engagement methods with student and campus partners</p> <p>Conduct existing space audits for accessibility at all SFU campuses or within online or in person learning spaces</p> <p>Develop in person or online accessibility space guidelines and accountability structures for operationalizing guidelines.</p> | \$\$ | <p>As partners and champions in the conceptualization, consultation, design or implementation of campus spaces</p> <p>Providing feedback on what is working or not working with the virtual learning environment and impacts on mental health, well-being and social isolation.</p> |
| <p>LT Recommendation 4: Increase Advocacy to the provincial government through the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Funding for scholarships and bursaries with costs with securing documentation for disability-related accommodations.</p> | <p>Develop an advocacy and policy development strategy including funding proposals to contribute to implementing previously recommended strategies.</p> <p>Ongoing advocacy meetings with SFU units/departments as well as government ministries</p> | \$\$ | <p>through advocacy and activism efforts through the Student Societies (SSs) and networks of students with disabilities across post-secondary institutions e.g. through the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS).</p> |

Figure 50: Implementation Strategy

6.5 Summary of Recommendations

The seventeen recommendations arising from the findings and analysis were grouped into short, medium- or long-term recommendations. All recommendations include relative financial and human resources costs for implementation and examples of opportunities to partner with students with disabilities. It is important to note that these recommendations are flexible and could be adapted in favor of more meaningful engagement processes that are based on how students with disabilities prefer to engage. The recommendations may be considered as entry or starting points to fostering change in a complex change system, particularly in a time of uncertainty, rapid shifts and disruptions in several aspects of life. As the SFU context evolves over time (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014, p. 12), the experiences of inclusion and belonging with students with disabilities will also change over time. Students with disabilities are the experts in their own lives and should be involved as key partners in shaping an inclusive and equitable campus community.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Summary

The experiences of belonging and inclusion of students with disabilities at SFU are diverse and nuanced by several personal or environmental factors. The themes emerging from this research indicate that there are enablers and barriers to belonging and inclusion. Attitudes and beliefs about disabilities emerged as the most common theme from the photovoice study. Although most participants suggested that they did not feel like they belonged at SFU due to the social and structural barriers they face on campus, they demonstrated resilience and courage in creating their own spaces on campus where they belonged. While this report focuses on the experiences of students with disabilities at SFU, some themes such as physical inaccessibility of the campus and attitudinal barriers are transferrable to other post-secondary institutions in Canada.

The aim of this photovoice research was also to identify suggestions from SFU students with disabilities to improve their sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU. Findings also include solutions by participants that centered on raising education and awareness on the barriers faced by students with disabilities and celebrating the strengths of students with disabilities. Findings suggest that several opportunities exist at the university to collaborate with students with disabilities, staff, faculty and senior leaders at SFU to foster a more inclusive and accessible campus community through programmatic, process or policy changes.

With local and global shifts caused by the COVID19 pandemic, the recovery and resilience plans of the SFU community could center the experiences of students with disabilities to foster an equitable and inclusive campus community. Students with disabilities are the experts in their own lives. Changes to improve their experiences will be more sustainable and meaningful when they are involved as equal partners in future change initiatives.

Community change is a complex process which depends on several leverage points (Meadows, 1999) such as the timing, increasing the flow of information or changes in the goals of the organization or system. Systems leadership (Ferdig, 2007) is needed to address the range of complex factors or themes including the recommendations presented in this report. Future research may explore the specific experiences of students with disabilities in navigating belonging and inclusion digitally in a COVID19 era. Recommendations for future research are discussed further in the next sub-section.

7.2 Future Research

The limitations of the sample size and demographics present opportunities for future research. One recommendation for future research is to conduct a second photovoice study with reduced sessions from 4 to 2 sessions with a broader sample size of students with disabilities and students without disabilities. A comparative study of both populations could seek to explore what SFU students without disabilities know about the experiences of students with disabilities and identify further gaps and areas of improvement in awareness and understanding.

A second recommendation is to use a different method by conducting a university-wide qualitative study using survey or focus group methods while recruiting from diverse networks of students with disabilities. Although efforts were made to recruit through diverse campus groups, the timing of the recruitment and data collection coincided with the snow period and the health pandemic. Furthermore, challenges with recruitment may also be emblematic of barriers such as time, lengthy commutes to campus, physical campus inaccessibility and social barriers that students with disabilities face in engaging in existing campus initiatives. As such, future research may consider alternate forms of data collection that are less time intensive and could be conducted remotely.

Another research opportunity is for the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) to partner with internal student groups, another BC or Canadian university such as the University of Victoria (UVic) or University of British Columbia (UBC) to conduct a comparative community-based research in partnership with external disabilities support organizations in Canada. The purpose of the research could be to identify valuable practices and case studies of successful projects that focus on improving disability inclusion and accessibility. The outcome of the project could be an interactive case study and accessibility toolkit to support partner universities and the community partner to share best practices as well as apply or advocate for more funding opportunities that improve the experiences of persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, SFU's Community Engagement Initiative (CEI) provides small grants for projects of up to \$10,000 to SFU staff or faculty for projects developed with community partners to build relationships and create meaningful impact. This funding could be used to provide work placement opportunities to connect students with disabilities with paid hands on work experience that contributes to disability inclusion. Both students with disabilities and students without disabilities could be recruited and hired to implement one or more of the recommendations detailed in Chapter 6 of this report. Furthermore, with the launch of SFU's Community-Engaged Research Initiative (CERi), there might opportunities to explore community-based research funding to implement recommendations from this current research that align with CERi funding requirements (SFU CERi, 2020).

Future research opportunities should adopt an intersectional analysis in better understanding the complexity and diversity of experiences of students with disabilities. Future research could also explore how intersectional data collection, programming or policies look like in practice in improving accessibility and inclusivity for diverse student populations in post-secondary institutions. Research by Bowleg (2008) states that it is virtually impossible to avoid an additive assumption – centering one marginalized identity over other marginalized identities - that is implicit in the questions that we use to measure intersectionality (p. 322). This bias shows up in research questions and subsequent questions in the research process. Bowleg (2008) suggests that intersectional researchers are charged with making explicit, the intersections between several identities and the social inequalities that exist between them (p. 322). For instance, asking questions

using specific constructs such as discrimination, stress, prejudice may reveal insights about an individual's intersectional identities than relying solely on demographic questions that measure race, gender and/or sexual orientation alone (Bowleg, 2008, p. 316).

Admittedly, this current research began as an additive approach and pivoted during the first photovoice session when it was evident that an intersectional approach was critical to understanding the experiences of students with disabilities in a holistic and nuanced manner. The participants themselves also noted that it was impossible to only share their experiences of inclusion and belonging comprehensively as a student with disabilities without taking an intersectional approach to consider race, gender, sexuality, nationality, economic status and several identities (personal communication, February – April 2020). If student participants are already aware and perceptive of their intersectional contexts and experiences, then campus groups including staff, faculty, and researchers could examine the need to shift our frames of research inquiry and student success interventions using the lens of equity and intersectionality. Such shifts may include a move from a one-dimensional frame of disabilities to a more holistic, intersectional frame of marginalizing identities and systems of oppression that impact a student with disabilities' sense of inclusion and belonging in post-secondary institutions.

This research holds relevance and utility to other universities or post-secondary institutions in British Columbia (B.C.) to examine and improve programming, practices, teaching, research and policies that impact the experiences of inclusion and belonging of students with disabilities. This study also presents opportunities for students, practitioners, researchers or administrators in post-secondary institutions to collaborate on joint initiatives that contribute to rethinking and reshaping how we work with students with disabilities to centre students' lived experiences in broader campus conversations and initiatives that impact their student experience. With ongoing dialogue and incremental changes, we, as the broader community could make positive shifts towards building more welcoming communities for, with or by students with disabilities.

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9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A – Information and Invitation Letter for Photovoice Project

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Project Title: | Disability Through My Lens – Inclusion and Belonging Photovoice Project |
| Project Researchers: | Researcher and Primary Contact - Precious Ile, Masters Candidate, UVic School of Public Administration <email address> <phone number> Supervisor, Dr. Helga Kristín Hallgrímsdóttir, Associate Professor, University of Victoria, UVic School of Public Administration, <email address> |
| Client: | Mitchell Stoddard, Director, SFU Centre for Accessible Learning |

We believe in the power of storytelling, listening and that people are the experts in their own lives.

What: Help improve your SFU community. Learn about photography. Take pictures of your community. Engage in peer to peer conversations. Share your insights with students, staff and faculty.

Objectives: is to bring students with disabilities together to share what’s working, what’s not working and why, as well as how we can improve the sense of community and inclusion on campus. We also aim to co-lead the process with students to help define the specific issues for dialogue and develop recommendations that can be acted on by members of the SFU community.

We want to recruit a diverse group of 8 – 10 students of various backgrounds and experiences. As this is a qualitative project, the sample size is small to allow for more in-depth dialogue, reflection and action.

The primary research question that we aim to answer through photos and dialogue are:

1. What are the experiences of inclusion and belonging among students with disabilities at SFU?
2. How might we improve the sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU based on what we learn from the lived experiences of students with disabilities?

Accessibility:

- Please contact us if you have any accessibility concerns. If you require ASL translation or other supports, please let us know in your application or at least 2 weeks prior to the first session.
- We want to meet you where you are at, so please reach out if you need any support.

What's in it for you?

- Learn new photography skills
- Identify strengths and concerns focused on inclusion and welcoming community at SFU
- Opportunity to advocate and provide concrete recommendations to improve your student experience
- Build a meaningful connection with your peers by working on a collaborative project
- A safe space to express yourself as you feel comfortable (data analysis will be anonymous)
- Receive a \$100 honorarium for your participation, if you attend and complete the required sessions
- Free food for in-person sessions
- Recognition- Have your work showcased at a community exhibit and dialogue event (with your consent)

Your Commitment:

- Complete a photovoice project application and, if invited, submit ethics forms and other documentation
- Attend 4 photovoice sessions (2 hours/session). The Dates are TBD – November 2019. Food provided.
- Participate in photovoice exhibit at the SFU campus. Date is TBD – likely in January 2020.
- Give us feedback about the project and review the preliminary project themes/findings
- Be responsible for completing photo taking and reflection tasks in between sessions
- Participate in one on one interviews or group discussions about the photos and reflection tasks

When and Where the project will take place: The 4 photovoice sessions will take place primarily at SFU Burnaby, possibly on either Tuesdays or Thursdays. Other locations such as SFU Surrey or online may be considered depending on the needs of the participants.

9.1.1 APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE IN INCLUSION PHOTOVOICE PROJECT

Application questions (to be submitted via audio, video or text):

- Name:
- Phone:
- Email:
- Undergraduate or Graduate:
- Faculty and Program:
- Number of Credits/Units:
- Are you above 18 years of age?

Note: If under 18 years, you may need a legal guardian to sign on your behalf.

1. In a few sentences, please tell us a little about why you are interested in participating in the photovoice project. How did you hear about the project?
2. What do you hope to gain from the photovoice project?
3. What are your accessibility needs? (e.g. mobility, seating support, translation support, allergies, etc)
Please let us know how we might best support you.
4. What is your comfort level talking in small groups? Do you prefer to one on one conversation or a group dialogue?
5. Do you have any concerns related to the project? (e.g. date/time, transportation, etc)
6. We are trying to find the best possible dates for the 4 photovoice sessions and community exhibit and dialogue café. Please indicate your availability and we will do our best to accommodate schedules:
 - Times:
 - Tuesdays 12:30PM – 2:30PM
 - Tuesdays 4:30PM – 6:30PM

- Thursdays 12:30PM – 2:30PM
- Thursdays 4:30PM – 6:30PM
- Fridays 12:30PM – 2:30PM
- Other times: (please indicate)

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Disability Through My Lens Photovoice project.

Next Steps: We will be in touch within 3 – 4 days of receiving your application. Please note that we can only select 8 – 10 participants to maintain a small sample size. If you are selected, you will be asked to meet attend the first training session.

You will also be given instructions to take photos, and we ask that you begin taking photographs. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Precious Ile at (email address) or (phone number).

9.2 Appendix B - Photo storytelling Protocol Overview

Goals

- To provide a facilitated and participatory discussion of issues and enablers of inclusion and belonging that impact the lives of students with lived experience of disability
- To identify specific recommendations and solutions that contribute to an increased sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU
- To provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to share their lived experiences and lead a community dialogue with specific calls to action, developed by students, for improving inclusion and belonging in the SFU community

Photovoice Project Overview (specific dates – MBC)

Tuesdays/Thursdays

Session 1: Welcome, Project Overview and Ethics Review (1.5 - 2hrs)

12:30PM – 2:20PM

- Welcome and Introductions
- Research Project Goals, Research Question and What is Photovoice?
- The Ethics of Photo Taking
- Taking Good and Effective Photos + Photo Practice Session

Session 2: Photo Sharing and Reflection Session* (1.5 - 2hrs)

12:30PM

– 2:20PM

- Discuss photos from the photo taking sessions
- Complete reflective journals

Session 3: Photo Sharing and Reflection Session* (1.5 - 2hrs)

12:30PM – 2:20PM

- Discuss photos from the photo taking sessions
- Complete reflective journals

Session 4: Catch up Week and Planning the Community Dialogue (1.5hrs)

12:30PM – 2:20PM

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power Point Slides • White board/Flip charts • Dry erase markers and eraser • Sign-Up Sheet & Name Tags • Laptop & Projector • Refreshments <p>Adapted from: https://imagininginclusion.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Photovoice_Protocol.pdf</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the research question. Address students concerns. • Share pictures and videos to show examples of photovoice project(s). <p>The Ethics of Photo taking (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator reviews participant consent form and reminds participants on the right to withdraw consent at any point • Facilitator covers topics on confidentiality, anonymity, safety, for potential photo subjects, etc and addresses participants' concerns. • Shares one-pager with tips on ethical considerations. |
| | <p>Break (5 - 10 minutes)</p> |
| | <p>Taking Good and Effective Photos + Photo Practice Session (40 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review guidelines/tips for taking good and effective photos (10 mins) • Practice photo taking (Activity) using your phone with camera. • Participants will be asked to take a picture, add a caption and short description of the photo in their immediate environment. (10 – 15mins) • Participant uses the SHOWeD method to describe their photo and any ethical considerations applied. (15 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review photo taking assignment for Session #2 (10 mins) |
| | <p>Wrap Up and Closing Circle (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address questions, concerns or required documentation. • Distribute folders; Remind participants to bring it to each session • Thank you and check in question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What am I most excited about? What is still muddy or unclear? |

**9.2.2 PHOTOVOICE CURRICULUM – SESSION #2 PHOTO SHARING AND REFLECTION
 SESSION**

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Time: 1.5 – 2 hours</p> <p>Location: SFU campus – Room TBD Food/Snacks: will be provided</p> <p>Objectives: Discuss participant’s photos and reflections</p> <p>Outcomes: Reflect on participants’ experiences of inclusion and belonging Identify emerging enablers and barriers to inclusion and belonging</p> <p>Supplies/Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Handouts/Folders • Icebreaker Photographs • Power Point Slides • White board/Flip charts • Dry erase markers and eraser • Sign-Up Sheet & Name Tags • Laptop & Projector • Refreshments | <p>Session Plan</p> <p>Refreshments, Introductions and Welcome (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator shares overview of the session and photo voice project • Review ethics agreement and informed consent |
| | <p>Photo Sharing and Reflection (40 - 45 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss participants’ reflections from SHOWED worksheet. • Discuss group reflections on photos taken, what the photos represent and calls to action |
| | <p>Break (10 minutes)</p> |
| | <p>Photo Sharing and Reflection (40 - 45 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss participants’ reflections from SHOWED worksheet. • Discuss group reflections on photos taken, what the photos represent and calls to action |

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| | <p>Wrap Up and Closing Circle (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address questions, concerns or required documentation. • Distribute folders; Remind participants to bring it to each session • Thank you and check in question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What am I most excited about? What is still muddy or unclear? |

9.2.3 PHOTOVOICE CURRICULUM – SESSION #3 PHOTO SHARING AND REFLECTION

SESSION

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| <p>Time: 1.5 - 2 hours</p> <p>Location: SFU campus – Room TBD Food/Snacks: will be provided</p> <p>Objectives: Discuss participant’s photos and reflections</p> <p>Outcomes: Reflect on participants’ experiences of inclusion and belonging Identify emerging enablers and barriers to inclusion and belonging</p> <p>Supplies/Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Handouts/Folders • Icebreaker Photographs • Power Point Slides • White board/Flip charts • Dry erase markers and eraser • Sign-Up Sheet & Name Tags • Laptop & Projector • Refreshments | <p>Session Plan</p> <p>Refreshments, Introductions and Welcome (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator shares overview of the session and photo voice project • Review ethics agreement and informed consent |
| | <p>Photo Sharing and Reflection (40 – 45 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss participants’ reflections from SHOWED worksheet. • Discuss group reflections on photos taken, what the photos represent and calls to action (see Questions for photo taking and reflection document) |
| | <p>Break (10 minutes)</p> |
| | <p>Photo Sharing and Reflection (40 - 45 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss participants’ reflections from SHOWED worksheet. • Discuss group reflections on photos taken, what the photos represent and calls to action (see Questions for photo taking and reflection document) |

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| <p>Adapted from: https://imagininginclusion.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Photovoice_Protocol.pdf</p> | <p>Wrap Up and Closing Circle (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address questions, concerns or required documentation.• Distribute folders; Remind participants to bring it to each session• Thank you and check in question<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What am I most excited about? What is still muddy or unclear? |
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**9.2.4 PHOTOVOICE CURRICULUM – SESSION #4 CATCH UP AND COMMUNITY DIALOGUE
 PLANNING**

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| <p>Time: 1.5 - 2 hours</p> <p>Location: SFU campus – Room TBD Food/Snacks: will be provided</p> <p>Objectives: Discuss participant’s photos and reflections, and plans for sharing back findings</p> <p>Outcomes: Reflect on participants’ experiences of inclusion and belonging Review emerging enablers and barriers to inclusion and belonging Identify possible ideas and suggestions for sharing back findings</p> <p>Supplies/Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Handouts/Folders • Icebreaker Photographs • Power Point Slides • White board/Flip charts • Dry erase markers and eraser • Sign-Up Sheet & Name Tags • Laptop & Projector • Refreshments <p>Adapted from: https://imagininginclusion.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Photovoice_Protocol.pdf</p> | <p>Session Plan</p> <p>Refreshments, Introductions and Welcome (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator shares overview of the session and photo voice project • Review ethics agreement and informed consent |
| | <p>Photo Sharing and Reflection (30 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review preliminary themes from group reflections on photos taken, what the photos represent and calls to action (see Questions for photo taking and reflection document) • Ask participants for feedback on themes and notes gathered (e.g. any additional comments not discussed previously) |
| | <p>Break (10 minutes)</p> |
| | <p>Plan the Community Dialogue and Café (45 - 60 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss what participants would want the exhibit and dialogue to look like. • Confirm specific photos to include and not include • Gather participant feedback on their overall experience using the participant feedback survey |
| <p>Wrap Up and Closing Circle (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address questions, concerns or required documentation. • Distribute folders; Remind participants to bring it to each session • Thank you and check in question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What am I most excited about? What is still muddy or unclear? | |

**Photovoice Curriculum – Public Session Photo Exhibit and
 Community Dialogue Café**

Through Our Eyes – Seeing Disability Differently
Students’ Voices – Community Photo Exhibit and Dialogue Café
Draft Agenda (12:30PM – 2:30PM)
TBD

Pre-event

10:30 a.m. Depart to Event Location (TBD)

11:00 a.m. Private Viewing of Exhibit, Videos, and Interviews with Artists

**Bring signed photo/video consent forms.

Event start

12:30 p.m. Lunch Reception and Photo Exhibit Begins; Student Co-researchers discuss their photos

12:50 pm Land Acknowledgements, Welcome and Introductions

1. Introductions of Student Co-researchers/participants moderated by Researcher Precious Ile
2. Welcome & Greetings by Client, Director for Accessible Learning – Mitch Stoddard
3. Students’ Perspectives by Photovoice participants, TBD

1:20 pm Photo Storytelling by the Student Co-researchers

1. Students share a photo, the story and message behind the photo and call to action

1:50pm Dialogue Café – Small Group Circles

1. Participants and Researcher co-lead a dialogue café on research themes and photos
Prompt questions for dialogue circles
 - What did you see/witness today?
 - What can do as a community to continue to foster inclusion and belonging?
 - What actions will you take going forward?

2:20pm Wrap up and Reflections

1. Acknowledgements and Project Next Steps
2. Community Dialogue Café Feedback Survey

9.3 Appendix C - SHOWeD Method Worksheet for Photo Sharing Sessions

Photovoice uses the SHOWED method which helps to describe the photos. Below are the questions related to SHOWED introduced by Wang & Burris (1997) and adapted by other researchers (Ronzi, et. al, 2016).

Your Name: _____ Title of Photo _____ Date Taken: _____

Description of Photo: _____

If person(s) in photo: Photo Release Form obtained? ____yes, ____ (number of forms obtained)

Name(s) of person(s): _____

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| S | 1. What do you <u>See</u> here? (Describe what the eye sees) |
| H | 2. What is really <u>Happening</u> here? (What is the unseen story behind the picture? What does the heart see?) |
| O | 3. How does this relate to <u>Our</u> lives in the SFU Community? |
| W | 4. <u>Why</u> does this problem, concern or strength <u>Exist</u> ? (why are things this way?) |
| e | 5. How could this photo <u>Educate</u> people? |
| D | 6. What can we <u>Do</u> about it? (How does this photo provide opportunities for us to improve life in your community?) |

Additional questions for photo reflection (in preparation for group photo reflection sessions):

1. What does this photograph represent in terms of positive and negative aspects which support or do not support you to feel valued and part of the SFU community?
2. Think of two challenges within SFU that you face every day which creates a barrier for you to make you feel valued and/or included in the community
3. Think of two strengths within SFU that you face every day which creates a positive experience for you to feel valued and/or included in the community
4. Thinking of your photo, what do you suggest could be done differently/better to make you feel more valued and included at SFU