CREATING CONDITIONS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

**Social justice
perspectives from a
South African university**

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BACKGROUND, RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLICATION

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BACKGROUND TO AND RATIONALE FOR THE PUBLICATION

Student success remains one of the intractable challenges for higher education internationally (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek 2011; Tinto & Pusser 2006), and even more so in South Africa as universities are struggling with balancing the imperatives of widening access with those of academic success of students (Badat 2010; Boughey 2002; Lewin & Mawoyo 2014; Scott, Yeld & Hendry 2007). At many institutions worldwide various initiatives have been launched to support students and to enhance student success (Kuh et al. 2011; Tinto 2012). This is also true of Stellenbosch University (SU) in South Africa which has invested in several structures, systems and interventions to widen access and enable student success.

Two problems remain. Firstly, the effectiveness of these initiatives and the extent to which they actually contribute to student success have not been ascertained through scientific study. Secondly, from a systems perspective, a holistic view of these initiatives is lacking, and at best, piecemeal, anecdotal evidence exists of their value or contribution.

The book aims to contribute towards addressing both these gaps by bringing together 15 studies that have been done on different ways that conditions for student success are being created at SU. All of the studies, with one exception (Chapter 13 by Schreiber), were done by master's and doctoral students of the Faculty of Education at SU.¹ All of the authors are staff or alumni of the institution, hence this volume presents 'insider' research on a single institution in the form of case studies. Being both 'insiders' and researchers, the authors wrote from a solid knowledge base of practice, theory and research.

¹ The full theses and dissertations of these studies are available on SUNScholar, the SU repository of doctoral dissertations and master's theses.

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The purpose of the book is to disseminate the results and findings of the 15 case studies of a range of efforts engaged in by an institution to effect positive change in student experience and performance. It is not a 'show and tell' or promotional book, nor is it purely descriptive in nature. It is firstly a scholarly book that disseminates research results, hence meeting the requirements of scholarly or academic publication. Secondly, the chapters are positioned within a social justice framework (Bozalek & Leibowitz 2012) which serves both as a cohesive tool and a lens through which researcher-authors looked with 'fresh eyes' at the data collected for their studies. This implies a critical stance by authors with respect to the initiatives they had investigated, and suggestions for how these could be improved to better give effect to social justice imperatives. From a 'learning organisation' perspective (Senge 1990) this means that the book can serve as a rich source of information for institutional role players at various levels to learn from and improve on shortcomings, and so enhance the effectiveness of the institution. Furthermore, these case studies can find broader application in other higher education institutions (HEIs) nationally and internationally by demonstrating how institutions can go about creating conditions for student success and how social justice imperatives can, more or less successfully, be responded to by higher education.

When the first of these studies was done in 2012, the reigning discourse in many institutions was that students were 'unprepared' for the demands of a university education, that they 'lacked' crucial knowledge and skills and that they needed to 'up their game' (Case, Marshall, McKenna & Mogashana 2018; McKenna 2012). Yet, with larger numbers of students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds entering higher education, it became increasingly clear that these 'unprepared' students were quickly becoming the norm, that the 'student deficit discourse' needed to change and that HEIs had to do more introspection to gain an understanding of how institutional conditions affected student success and students' experiences and how institutions themselves should change to ensure that a broad diversity of students could gain access, feel at home and be supported to be academically successful (Case, Marshall, McKenna & Mogashana 2018; O'Shea, Lysaght, Roberts & Harwood 2016). The chapters in this volume illustrate how SU over the past decade has taken a variety of initiatives to do just that.

Obviously, this publication is not exhaustive of all the strategies that are employed to enhance student success at SU, and we acknowledge that many academics, tutors, mentors, and staff in a broad range of support services are innovative and working hard to support students in their learning and in making the campus 'a home away from home'. It is also important to acknowledge that SU is continuously transforming

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and evolving and that some conditions have changed since the first of these studies was done in 2012. Yet, I believe that each one of the case studies contains lessons around student success for this institution and others.

INSIDER RESEARCH EXPLAINED

As pointed out above, all of the studies in this anthology were done by students and/or staff members of SU, and therefore are examples of insider research. According to Greene (2014:1), “[i]nsider research is that which is conducted within a social group, organization or culture of which the researcher is also a member”. Trowler (2016:5) defines insider research simply as “[d]oing research within the university where one is employed or studying”.

Being both a member of an organisation such as a university (either as a staff member or student), and a researcher of features of such an organisation raises questions about the positionality of the researcher as an insider. Greene (2014) maintains that researcher positionality is not fixed but can shift during the research process. Chavez (2008, citing Gergen & Gergen 2003:595) concurs that the notion of a single researcher self or position has given way to ‘polyvocality’, indicating that as researchers and research participants we hold many competing and even contradictory values, conceptions and sense of our ‘selves’. Trowler (2011), Mercer (2007) and Greene (2014) view ‘insiderness/outsiderness’ as being on a continuum rather than fixed identities and binary opposites. Banks (cited by Chavez 2008) identifies the two extremes of this continuum as ‘indigenous insider’ which is closest to the community and socialised within the community, versus ‘external outsider’ which is socialised outside of the community. ‘Indigenous insiders’ would probably be the most suitable depiction of the authors of the chapters in this publication.

Doing insider research has both advantages and challenges: on the one hand, insiders have a depth of understanding of an institution, its culture and practices that outsiders often lack. On the other hand, insiders may find it harder to achieve the detachment required for robust scientific research as they have “a personal stake and substantive emotional investment in the setting” (Brannick & Coghlan 2007:60). Greene (2014) regards institutional knowledge, ease of interaction and access to research participants and/or data as advantages of insider research, while being too subjective and biased are possible challenges. Similarly, Mercer (2007:6) identifies “access, intrusiveness, familiarity and rapport” as “pros and cons of insiderness”. Whereas access to research subjects, participants and data is usually more readily available for the insider researcher, on the downside this could mean that the research becomes “all-consuming”, intruding into the work and personal life of the

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insider researcher (Mercer 2007:6). Chavez (2008) agrees that the positionality of the insider researcher affords him/her expediency of access. Familiarity with the context and the social setting of the research can contribute to a better understanding of “the subtle and diffuse links between situations and events” (Mercer 2007:6), and the insider researcher often has stronger credibility and rapport with the research participants or subjects. Yet, these very factors could also lead to participants being less frank in their responses. Chavez (2008) warns that the insider researcher’s social roles in the community or organisation could also constrain her/his research role and objectives. Mercer (2007:7) hence concludes that “conducting insider research is like wielding a double-edged sword”.

Several factors mitigated the potential pitfalls of insider research in the case of the studies represented in this publication. Having done these studies towards attaining a master’s or doctoral degree required the researchers to utilise recognised scientific research designs and methods of data collection and analysis. They were also constantly cognisant of ethical issues and disparities of power. In cases where the researchers were too closely involved in the phenomenon under investigation, they used peers or other experienced researchers to, for example, conduct interviews or focus group discussions. Whereas these studies drew on the advantages of being insiders with deep knowledge and understanding of the institution and the environment in which the research was conducted, they attempted to avoid the challenge of being too close to the problem which could result in biased findings. In this regard, the supervisor(s) had a vital and critical role to play. Yet, Drake (2010:86) warns that “within a research environment that is also a political environment, the researcher’s neutrality is often not desirable and is always unachievable”. As a whole, this publication represents what Connell (2019:24) describes as follows: “Research-based knowledge comes out of a complex labour process. The workforce is diverse, the methods are varied, ... the results are unpredictable.”

BRIEF NATIONAL CONTEXTUALISATION

The South African higher education system consists of 26 public and 126 private higher education institutions registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET 2019). The public institutions are differentiated into ‘traditional’ or ‘academic’ universities that are research-intensive and offer a broad range of general formative and professional (mainly degree) programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and ‘universities of technology’ that focus on applied research and offer programmes that are vocationally and/or professionally-orientated, primarily at the undergraduate level, and ‘comprehensives’ that resulted from mergers and incorporations that offer the full spectrum of programmes, including

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vocational, professional and general formative programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Most private higher education institutions (who are not allowed to call themselves ‘universities’) are small institutions with a narrow programme focus and low enrolments (some as few as 25 students). There are, however, notable exceptions with some private institutions enrolling more than 3 000 students in a wide array of programmes. In 2016, 14.6% of higher education (HE) students were in private HE compared to 85.4% in public HE (DHET 2019:29).

The higher education sector has grown substantially since 1994 when South Africa became a democracy as widening access was an important priority for the new government. Over the period 2000 to 2015, the average annual growth in headcount enrolment was 3.6% (DHET 2019:26). In 2018, a total of 1 085 567 students accessed higher education in South Africa, almost doubling the number of students enrolled in public and private higher education in 2001 (584 713) in less than 20 years. Of these, 76% were black African,² 6% coloured, 4% Indian/Asian, and 13% white (CHE 2020). In spite of the huge growth in enrolments, particularly the black African and coloured population groups are still underrepresented in the higher education system compared to the overall youth population. In 2018, the participation rate (proportion of population age cohort) for black Africans was 19% and 15% for coloureds, compared to participation rates of 46% for Indians and 55% for whites (CHE 2020). The overall participation rate in South African higher education was 22% in 2018, which is regarded as too low for a developing country that needs to position itself in the global knowledge economy (Castells 2017; Marginson 2016). Most of the enrolment growth occurred in private HEIs and in distance education offered by Unisa (University of South Africa – a mega open and distance learning institution with more than 300 000 students) and distance education programmes in contact institutions (CHE 2020). Of the more than one million students in South African HE in 2018, 64 526 were international students, the majority of whom were from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (CHE 2020).

Unfortunately, wider access did not translate into concomitant student success. Whereas the average course success rate (courses passed as proportion of courses enrolled for) overall was 77% in 2018, there were troubling differences in success rates according to population group with black Africans having the lowest success rate of 75%, coloured students having an average success rate of 79%, Indians of

² For statistical purposes apartheid era race-based classifications (black African, coloured, white, Indian/Asian) are still used by government and HEIs in order to track social transformation. I acknowledge that these terms are problematic.

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80% and whites of 86% (CHE 2020). This demonstrates that physical access has not yet translated into epistemic access for all students.

Another measure of student success is throughput rates and time to graduation. Dropping out of higher education comes at huge cost to students, families, institutions and the government. Also, every year additional to minimum time that students are enrolled for qualifications make those qualifications more costly. Cohort studies show that only 52% of students who enrolled at contact institutions for three-year degrees in Science in 2013 completed their degree in six years, whereas 48% dropped out. For three-year degrees in Business and Management, these figures were 66% graduated and 34% dropped out and for Arts degrees, 51% graduated and 49% dropped out (CHE 2020). Clearly much more needs to be done in the South African higher education sector to retain students in the system and to ensure that more students complete their qualifications in minimum time.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTUALISATION

In the South African higher education landscape, SU is one of the oldest higher education institutions. It was established as an independent university in 1918 from its predecessor, Victoria College, with four faculties, namely Arts, Mathematics and Science, Education and Agriculture. Shortly thereafter the Faculty of Music and the Faculty of Law were also instituted (Heese 2018).

For much of its 100-year history the institution was an Afrikaans-medium university with predominantly white, Afrikaans-speaking student and staff bodies. Grundlingh (2018:28) explains that the development of SU as a so-called 'volksuniversiteit' "was essentially an articulation of the need to cultivate and instil a sense of self-esteem. It also manifested in the well-known mantra: 'Stellenbosch stands for an idea' – for the Afrikaner this was a symbol of a robust and enquiring national life". The close ties between the University and the Nationalist government, particularly during the 1960s, are illustrated by the fact that SU produced five prime ministers and ten cabinet ministers in the apartheid state (Grundlingh 2018). In 2008, the reigning perception of SU was articulated by Gibbon as follows: "It [Stellenbosch University] is, in a sense, an extreme case in the South African higher education landscape, a last bastion of white dominance, an anomaly fourteen years after the move to majority rule, and to some, a provocation" (Gibbon 2010:67).

Yet, throughout its history, SU has remained focused on its academic project, as expressed by Grundlingh (2018:37-38):

It is clear that during the 100 years of Stellenbosch University's existence, the interaction between academe and Afrikaner nationalism went through

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various permutations. From the outside, the linkages could be viewed as an unholy alliance, but although the academic project might at times have been impaired as a result, and there were indeed low points, the overall dedication and commitment to academe was of such a nature that there was enough resilience in the long run to develop a university that, after a century, can take its place as a leading institution.

Particularly over the past twenty years, the institution has seriously engaged with its past, a process that started with a pioneering document: *A strategic framework for the turn of the century and after* (SU 2000). In this strategic framework, the institution acknowledged its contribution to the injustices of the past and committed itself to appropriate initiatives to address these. In subsequent strategic plans, the diversification of the student and staff complement received much attention. In the SU Institutional Plan 2012-2016, for example, “[t]he need to diversify both the staff and student corps (race and gender) is a self-evident strategic focus” (SU 2011:n.p.). Although this has not happened overnight, the student composition is slowly becoming more representative of the country’s population composition. Table 1.1 compares the composition of the student population according to population group between 2011 and 2020.

TABLE 1.1 Student population according to population group, 2011 & 2020

Population group	2011	2020
Black African	15.01%	21.79%
Coloured	15.80%	18.10%
Indian/Asian	2.10%	3.5%
White	67.09%	55.51%
Withheld		1.17%

Source: Stellenbosch University Statistical Profile

The growth in the proportion of black African students and the decline in the proportion of white students are evident from the above percentages.

The institution currently has ten Faculties, including the only Faculty of Military Sciences in the country, and five campuses. The main campus, home to eight Faculties, is in Stellenbosch, while the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences is located at Tygerberg, Cape Town, and the Faculty of Military Sciences is in Saldanha on the West Coast. A smaller campus in Bellville, Cape Town, is home to the Business School. The University sees itself as a research-intensive institution and ranks amongst the top institutions in the country as far as per capita research and postgraduate output is concerned. It also consistently ranks amongst the top 500 institutions in the world in the Times Higher, QS and Leiden rankings.

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The Stellenbosch University Statistical Profile shows that in 2020 the institution had a total of 31 540 students, making it a medium-sized university in the South African higher education sector. More than 20 000 students (almost two-thirds) are undergraduate, and more than 10 000 (about one-third) are postgraduate. There is a small number of 'occasional' students. By far the largest majority (90%) of students are South African – only 10% are international students. There are more female than male students (55.4% vs 44.5%) and the majority of students (49%) indicated that they are English speaking. The second largest language group is Afrikaans (35%) with only 5% of students who are speakers of isiXhosa and 7% of students whose mother-tongue is one of the other South African languages.

In comparison with the South African higher education system as a whole (see national contextualisation above), SU fares quite well with regard to student success, throughput and graduation. Both overall and undergraduate success rates are consistently around 87% (compared to the national average of 77%), while the 2016 throughput rate for students enrolled in three-year Science degrees was 68.8%, for students in three-year Arts and Social Science degrees it was 77.7%, and for students in three-year Economic and Management Sciences degrees the throughput rate in 2016 was 75.2% (Kistner 2020).

The institution has been cognisant of the importance of providing students with opportunities to develop holistically for their future roles in the workplace and in a democratic society for several decades. In its latest Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019-2024 documents (SU 2018), one of the core strategic themes is 'a transformative student experience'. In addition to other goals, one of the ways to achieve this is by providing "a unique, personalised student experience that serves as a catalyst for transformational change amidst opportunities for engagement and development through a first-class academic offering, which prepares graduates to lead and excel in a diverse world" (SU 2018:20). Many of the initiatives and interventions covered in the chapters of this publication revolved around such transformational student experiences.

OVERARCHING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: VINCENT TINTO'S INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

In Vincent Tinto's book *Completing college: Rethinking institutional action* (2012), two points are made that are of particular importance for this publication: firstly, that despite a multitude of research studies on student attrition, our knowledge of what the effective actions are to keep students in higher education and ensure that they are academically successful "remains fragmented and poorly organized" (Tinto 2012:5). Secondly, Tinto (2012:5) highlights the lack of coherent institutional

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frameworks to guide decision-makers' thinking about "which actions matter most and how they should be organized and successfully implemented".

Based on past research on student retention, Tinto (2012) identifies four conditions within higher education institutions that promote student success: students' (self-)expectations, support, assessment and feedback, and involvement, more commonly referred to as engagement. Tinto (2012) argues that students' self-expectations at least partly drive their success. Importantly, these self-expectations are shaped by institutional actions, amongst others the institutional and faculty expectations for student performance. Setting high expectations for students would, however, make no sense without providing the support for students to achieve them. The second condition of support includes academic, social and financial support and is particularly important during the critical first year and for students who are academically underprepared. Thirdly, Tinto's framework (2012) highlights assessment and feedback. Assessing performance and providing frequent feedback can enable students and staff to identify weaknesses in order to make adjustments to better promote student success. Lastly, what Tinto (2012:7) calls "perhaps the most important condition for student success", student involvement or engagement is emphasised. Students' academic and social engagement gives them better chances to be successful. This has convincingly been illustrated by the work of George Kuh and his associates (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie & Gonyea 2008; Pike, Kuh, McCormick, Ethington & Smart 2011; Zhao & Kuh 2004).

This publication does not purport to propose an overall institutional framework for student success at SU as we acknowledge that there are many actions taken to enhance student success, particularly in classrooms across all campuses, that are not covered in this collection of studies. Yet, this publication is an attempt towards enhancing the institutional self-knowledge of SU in the realm of student success. In moving from a 'student deficit discourse' towards a focus on institutional responsibility to create conditions that promote student success, this collection of studies could be a starting point.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Even after more than 25 years of democracy in South Africa, universities in this country are still grappling with multifarious social justice issues, hence this was a particular focus of this publication. In conceptualising the publication, the editor requested authors to rethink the data that they had collected and the findings of their research studies from a social justice perspective. Several publications, mainly by local authors, were helpful in this process, particularly a book chapter by Vivienne Bozalek and Brenda Leibowitz proposing an evaluative framework for a socially just

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institution (Bozalek & Leibowitz 2012). Their evaluative framework combined three contemporary normative frameworks: the capabilities approach of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, the social justice normative framework of Nancy Fraser and the political ethic of care approach of Joan Tronto. This evaluative framework and its three constitutive normative frameworks were discussed at an author workshop in 2018. Subsequently, when conceptualising their book chapters, authors could then determine which of the frameworks (if at all) they considered most appropriate for re-interpreting the data that they had gathered. A short synopsis of the frameworks adopted by authors is provided below:

- ***The capabilities approach:*** Developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, this normative framework, also known as the human development approach, takes as its starting point the well-being of the individual and considers the extent to which individuals are able to be and do what they have reason to value being and doing, i.e. their quality of life (Wilson-Strydom 2015). Nussbaum (2011:20) explains that capabilities are “a set of (usually interrelated) opportunities to choose and to act”, in other words, opportunity freedoms or what Sen calls ‘substantial freedoms’. Capabilities can be translated into functionings which are described as “to be and to do what a person has reason to value” (Bozalek & Leibowitz 2012:61). People differ in many ways and these differences affect the extent to which they can convert opportunities into achievements (functionings), i.e. their agency. While differences do not inherently imply inequality, differences become inequalities when they impact on capabilities (opportunity freedoms) (Nussbaum 2003). Walker (2009:n.p.) relates the capabilities approach to social justice in educational institutions in the following manner: “The capability approach shifts the space for evaluating equality in education from examination results or relying on what people say they want from schools and colleges to whether each person has the substantive freedom to be and do in ways that they value being and doing.” It is mainly in this sense that the capabilities approach was applied in some studies in this publication. The capabilities approach emphasises the role of individual agency and choice, yet the agency freedom individuals have is qualified and constrained by social, political and economic factors and opportunities, including the social arrangements of institutional condition. This interplay between the individual student’s agency and institutional conditions can enable or hamper student success.
- ***The social justice normative framework:*** Nancy Fraser’s earlier work introduced the notion of ‘a politics of needs interpretation’, which according to Hölscher and Bozalek (2020:4), provides an analytical tool “for ascertaining how *needs* are interpreted, and *who*, on behalf of *which* institutions are seen to be authoritative in interpreting whose needs” (italics in original). A politics of needs interpretation helps us in higher education to understand that students’ needs are not necessarily manifest, but are socially constructed and open to interpretation (Hölscher & Bozalek 2020:6).

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Key to Fraser's framework is the understanding that social justice is achieved when all are able to participate as equals in social interactions, when there is, in other words, 'participatory parity' (Fraser 2009). Parity of participation requires social arrangements that would afford people the opportunity to interact as peers on equal footing.

Fraser identifies three distinct dimensions that influence participatory parity: economic, cultural and political (Bozalek & Boughey 2012:688). In the economic dimension, the (re)distribution of resources to afford equal access to resources may be required for participatory parity. The cultural dimension relates to recognition, i.e. how people are regarded in relation to the social markers or distinctive attributes that are ascribed to them (Fraser 2009). Misrecognition prevents people from interacting as full partners or in an equitable manner with others. The political dimension relates to politics of representation or belonging which provides a frame for determining who counts as a social member, whose voice will be heard as legitimate and who thus has a right to access structural arrangements for support and care (Fraser 2009). The complementarity of the three dimensions is necessary for participatory parity to occur.

While Fraser does not focus specifically on students or higher education in her theorising, her ideas are increasingly being employed by scholars, including South African scholars (Bozalek, Hölscher & Zembylas 2020), to reflect on social justice in higher education, the extent to which students experience participatory parity on campuses and how various practices may facilitate or undermine the equalities or inequalities in students' university life (Shefer, Clowes & Ngabaza 2020).

These normative frameworks were adopted by the different authors as fresh lenses through which they reinterpreted their data in order to come to new conclusions about the way that an HEI can not only create conditions for student success but do so in a socially just manner. When reading the chapters, it is important to keep in mind that "...not all authors within a part interpret a theory in exactly the same way, which is a significant point: theories are not unitary bodies of thought, but more like clusters of consonant ideas that build upon another" (Leibowitz, Bozalek & Kahn 2017:6).

Whereas single theoretical frameworks were mostly adopted in individual chapters, reading the publication as a whole confronts the reader with different ways of seeing which, according to Hannon, Garraway, Peseta and Winberg (2017:208), can "build reflexivity and critique to conceptualise research and analysing data". In addition, by making their theoretical frameworks explicit, the authors "identify and surface what is and what is not important in reality" (Trowler 2012, cited by Hannon, Garraway, Peseta & Winberg 2017:208).

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The publication is arranged into four parts. Part 1 covers *Access and the first year*. In this section, Chapter 2 by Lourens sheds light on the journeys of seven students from an access programme of SU. These students can be typified as ‘first-generation’ or underserved students and Lourens’s study shows that the students experienced the social arrangements and institutional culture as alienating and foreign. Yet, their strengths and resilience enabled them to persevere and be successful in a hostile environment. This chapter underscores the importance of creating welcoming social and academic environments for a diversity of students, including those that may be regarded as ‘non-traditional’.

Chapter 3 evaluates a peer mentoring programme for first-year students in terms of the adjustment of participants and non-participants. McConney’s quantitative investigation revealed no statistically significant difference in the adjustment of the two groups. However, her follow-up qualitative examination surfaced the intensity of peer mentoring as the deciding factor in the effectiveness of the mentorship programme and its consequent effect on student adjustment. In Chapter 4, Esté du Plessis examines the effect of Advanced Programme Mathematics (APM) on first-year students’ transition from school to university Mathematics and demonstrates how students were empowered not only by the academic knowledge that they gained in AdMaths, but, maybe more importantly, by the development of crucial capabilities such as perseverance, emotional integrity and self-confidence.

Part 2 focuses on *In-class experiences*, with three chapters exploring various aspects of educational technology and the last chapter considering the importance of communication skills in multilingual healthcare contexts. Using five case studies in Chapter 5, Faasen’s research on the use of audience response activities in university classrooms leads her to identify guidelines for the effective application of this type of technology. It furthermore emphasises the importance of the pedagogic relationship in the empowerment of learners. Adult learners are the focus of Chapter 6 by Davidse. She explains how, through a process of design-based research, the voices of adult learners in a Nursing education programme emerged and how empowering educational technology can be when offerings are tailored for the specific needs of the target population. Strydom shifts the focus in Chapter 7 to academics and their use of educational technology. She concludes that the interplay amongst agency, institutional context and the nature of knowledge influences the choices that academics make to integrate technology (or not) into the curriculum. Chapter 8 by Madelé du Plessis addresses the challenges of preparing healthcare students

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to function effectively in multilingual contexts, particularly in establishing patient-centredness when interacting with patients who speak a different language.

Out-of-class experiences are the focus of Part 3. Chapter 9 considers students' living arrangements. Dunn-Coetzee and Fourie-Malherbe reflect on the Listen, Live and Learn senior student housing initiative and the manner in which this initiative promoted social change amongst students. The important role of student residences and the role of the residence head are under the spotlight in Chapter 10 by Groenewald, whereas commuter students, their needs and challenges are explored by Van Zyl in Chapter 11. The role that the cluster and hub initiative play in establishing a sense of belonging amongst commuter students is convincingly demonstrated. The last chapter in the section (Chapter 12) by Sinclair contemplates a social justice perspective of student counseling services by analysing student responses to the question of how they see the role of counseling services in a future university.

Part 4 includes chapters on *Student engagement, graduate attributes and employability*. Schreiber in Chapter 13 analyses an extract of the SU results of the South African Survey of Student Engagement and draws important links between diversity and student success. Chapters 14 and 15 both relate to the international experience. In Chapter 14, Boshoff expounds how international experience could contribute to the development of graduate attributes, while De Wit in Chapter 15 argues that a study abroad experience in South Africa has the potential of developing a wider range of intercultural competencies than similar experiences in the developed world. Graduate employability is examined in the last chapter by Lourens in her analysis of the journeys of first-time entrants into the labour market.

These fifteen chapters provide a small but diverse set of insights into the work that one institution is doing to create conditions for student success. More work needs to be done, but we present these studies and the insights we gleaned from them in the hope that they reflect the following sentiment of Connell (2019:22): "However small the contribution of a particular project, it is *this* piece of work that gives the knowledge formation as a whole its distinctive capacity to grow. This is the moment when a new reality, a new state of knowledge, comes into being" (*italics in original*).

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