

Academic and social experiences of visually impaired female students at selected Zimbabwean universities

Maruzani Nyevero and Dziva Cowen

Abstract

The study aimed at establishing academic and social experiences of visually impaired female students at two universities in Zimbabwe. A phenomenological design was used. The sample was made up of five visually impaired female students. Data were collected using interviews, participant observation and document analysis. Data were thematically analysed. Results from the study indicate that participants had positive and negative experiences. The availability of assistive technology, the presence of trained staff to cater for visually impaired female students and a specialised library housed in Disability Unit contributed to the positive experiences. The negative experiences included risks of being sexually abused, stigmatisation and under-representation in student decision making bodies, limited access to reproductive health information among others. The study recommends comprehensive, inclusive and disability-gender policies that are followed by effective disability mainstream and capacity building of university community members.