



The sociopolitics of access

Deaf students in Dutch higher education

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In collaboration with:

Expertisecentrum handicap + studie
Signo Ergo Sum | Jongerencommissie





Background

- > there is research-based concern about the participation rates and study-success of disabled students in dutch FE/HE.
(OCW 2010: Onbelemmerd Studeren)
- > a national organisation, handicap+studie, is tasked with sharing expertise in relation to access arrangements in tertiary education.
- > recent research suggests serious shortcomings in the access provisions of FE/HE institutions.
(Risbo/SEOR 2009: Studeren met een functiebeperking)
- > dutch (demissionary) secretary of state for education called for inclusion of access criteria in FE/HE accreditation system.
(Marja van Bijsterveldt-Vliegenthart, letter from OCW to Parliament dated 12 March 2010)
- > **dutch FE/HE institutions do not monitor the number of disabled students.**



Deaf/hoh students themselves discussed access in terms of **empowerment**.

They called for improvements in the FE/HE support infrastructure.

SESposium, Amsterdam, January 2010

> HEB JIJ ALS DOVE STUDENT HET HEFT IN DE HAND? OF DOET JE OPLEIDING DAT?

SESPOSIUM

> ALLES OVER JOUW Plicht, RECHT EN

EMPOWERMENT

30 JANUARI '10
13.00 - 18.00 UUR
SWDA AMSTERDAM

KEN JE PLEK

JC LID 2 EURO NIET LID 5 EURO, DEUR JC LID 4 EURO NIET LID 7 EURO
OPGEVEN IN J.SIGNORICCO@GMAIL.COM NA OPGEAVE MEER INFO • BETALINGSGEGEVENS



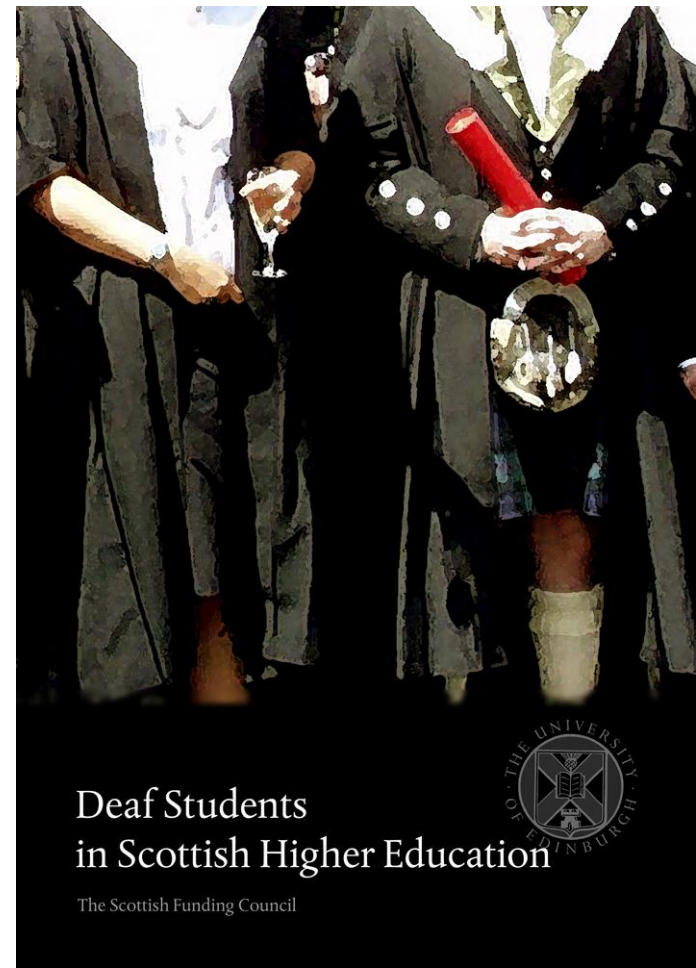
Earlier study: Scotland (2005)

Focussed on the **linguistic nature** of deaf/hoh access needs and support.

It called for the establishment of a national expertise centre for linguistic access.

The centre would benefit a diverse range of students including also dyslexic, foreign, and ethnic minority students.

(Brennan, Grimes and Thoutenhoofd 2005: Deaf students in Scottish Higher Education; The Scottish Funding Council)



Deaf Students
in Scottish Higher Education

The Scottish Funding Council





Current study: Netherlands

Working assumptions

- > **persistent underachievement in primary/secondary**
- > at-risk work-transition and relative under-employment
- > **habitual risk of social exclusion in- and outside education**
- > universities offer minimal proactive support
 - school results contra-indicate tertiary education
 - new educational measures punish institutions for study delays
 - unwilling to be a magnet for sub-optimal students
 - negligible legal imperative or grass-roots activism
 - contextual data collection is culturally unpopular
 - comparatively modest public awareness or disquiet
- > **significant under-representation is anticipated**



Objectives

- > network deaf/hoh students during their study
- > research practice through practical interventions or **probes**
- > distribute and publicly discuss results
- > embed the network in FE/HE
- > encourage professionalisation of access support
- > **improve successful participation rates among deaf/hoh students**



Method

Approach

- > establish a participatory action-research network of **students**
 - build on successful national network of cochlear-implanted pupils in secondary education
(Jet Isarin 2006, 2008)
 - include FE/HE support professionals
 - host frequent learning conversations
- > train deaf/hoh students in collaborative action-research
- > support the network with research skills and resources
- > host annual surveys
- > publicly report intentions, activities and findings
- > **national network-building scheduled to start 2010-2011**



The target population

- > incidence of deaf/hoh youth = **2.16 per 1,000** population
(these are UK research figures; there are no reliable incidence data for the Netherlands)
- > deduced incidence per dutch education sector
 - \approx 3,354 deaf/hoh in 1,553,000 pupils in primary
 - \approx 2,032 deaf/hoh in 941,000 pupils in secondary
(total figures based on CBS jaarboek 2009)
 - \approx **810 deaf/hoh** in 375,000 students in FE
 - \approx **462 deaf/hoh** in 213,900 students in HE
(total figures based on OCW kerncijfers 2008)



Baseline questionnaire

First-round survey

- > inventory of study success and experiences of deaf/hoh students
- > five themes
 - study information
 - registration issues and contact for support
 - obtained and desired support
 - social acceptance/motivation
 - expectations
- > in the first trial 27 out of 45 students (60%) responded



General information

- > 16 (62%) of respondents are in higher professional training
- > 6 (23%) are in university
- > 4 (15%) have dropped out

- > 17 (65%) of respondents are >5 yrs into their study
 - 11 (41%) are 1 year delayed in their study
 - 3 (11%) are 2 years delayed in their study

- > Relation between delay in studies and deafness/hoh
 - Cramer's $V = .65, p = 0.005$ -> strong significant relation

 - In near future: compare to hearing students



Registration and advice

- > 16 (n=23, 70%) of respondents could not specify their deaf/hoh status during registration
- > 17 (n=22, 77%) has no objection to this

BUT

- > 13 (n=24, 54%) of students explicitly declined to specify their deaf/hoh status, because they
 - do not think it necessary (2)
 - do not see themselves as functionally impaired (2)
 - did not know that this was possible (8)
 - left registration to previous institution (1)
- > Most respondents did have a meeting with an advisor or coach



Available support

Deaf / hoh students may follow lectures using a Dutch sign language (NGT) interpreter and/or a speech-to-text interpreter



Interpreter bookings 2010

type of education	number
primary	7
secondary	20
MBO	48
LLL/Placement	26
Higher education	46
unknown	15
Total	162



Available support

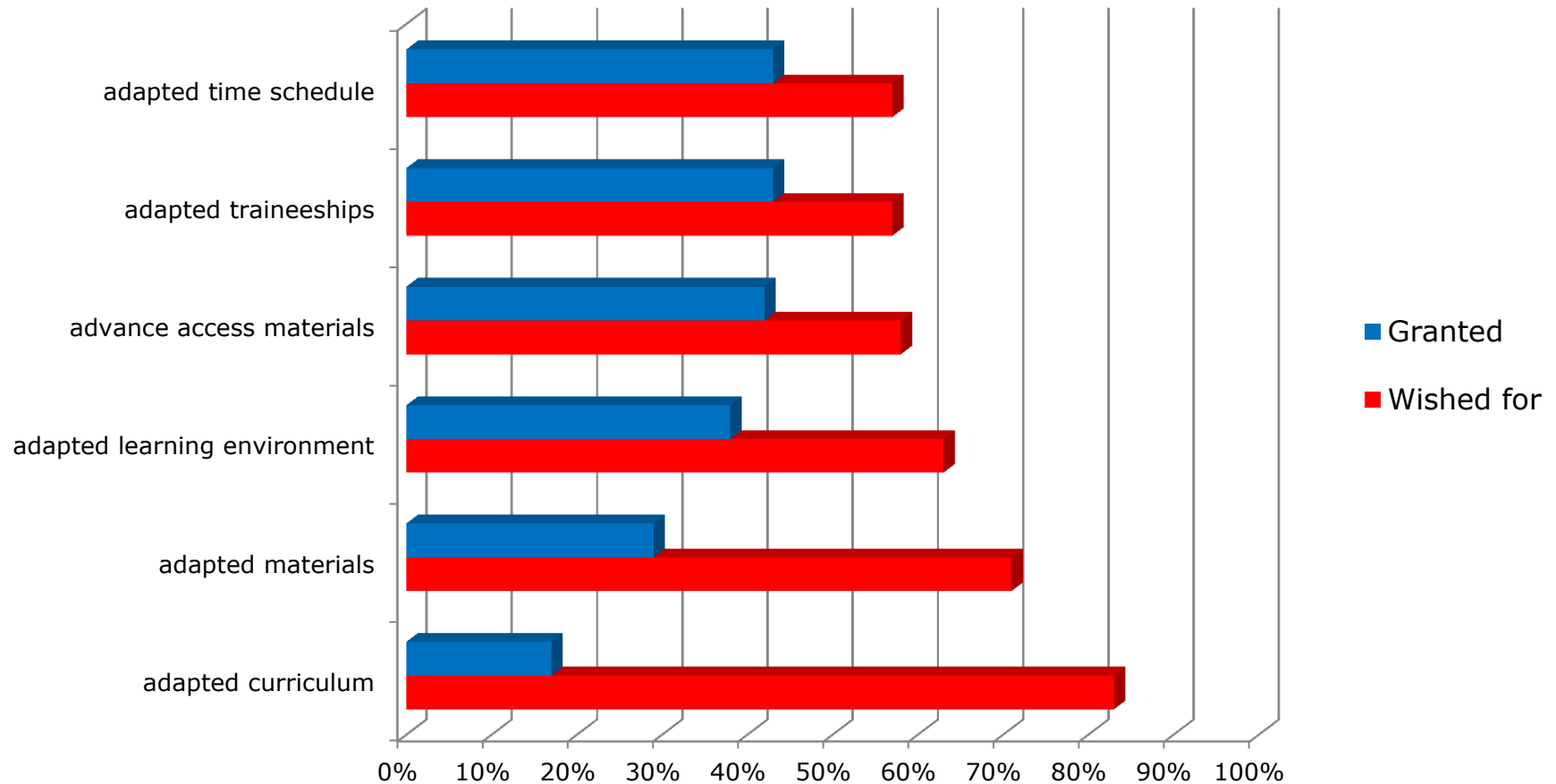
- > extra preparation time / extra facilities
- > extra examination time
- > extra support time from advisor/coach

BUT

- > students are invisible / unidentified
- > the initiative is left to the students themselves
- > students do not ask for support
- > advisors / coaches can be unknowingly incompetent
- > students themselves can be unknowingly incompetent
- > is the concept of able-ism relevant in this context?

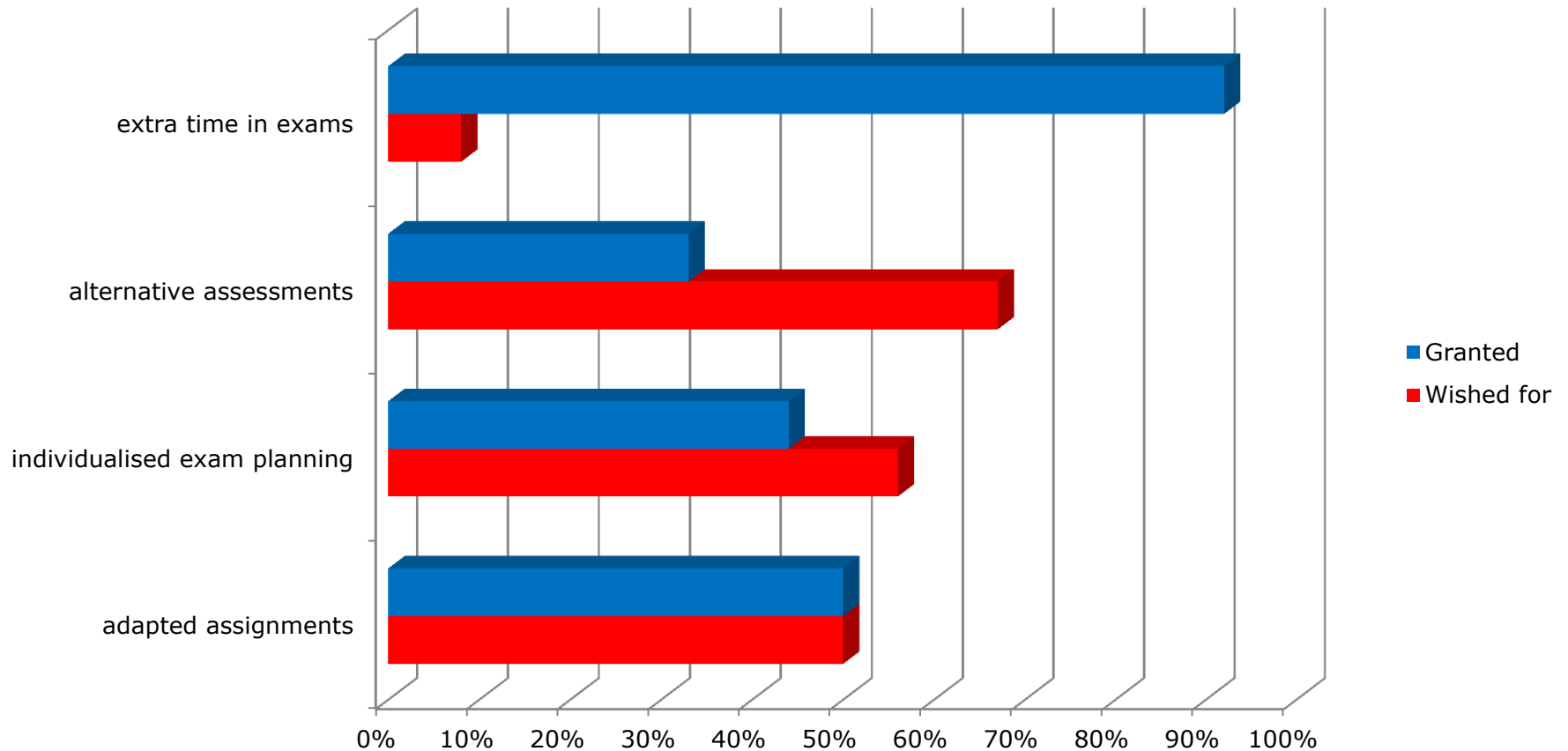


Course adaptations



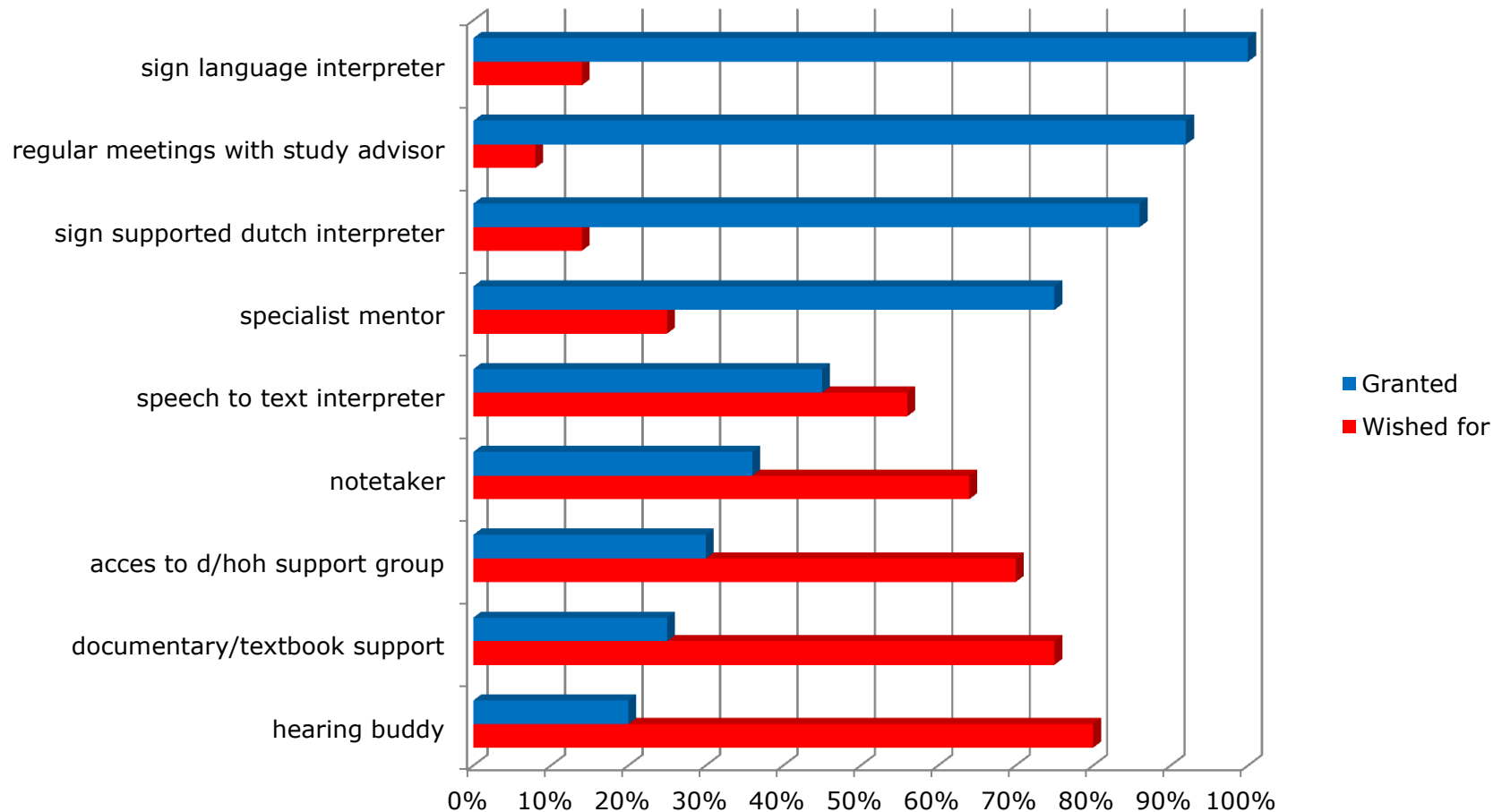


Assessment adaptations



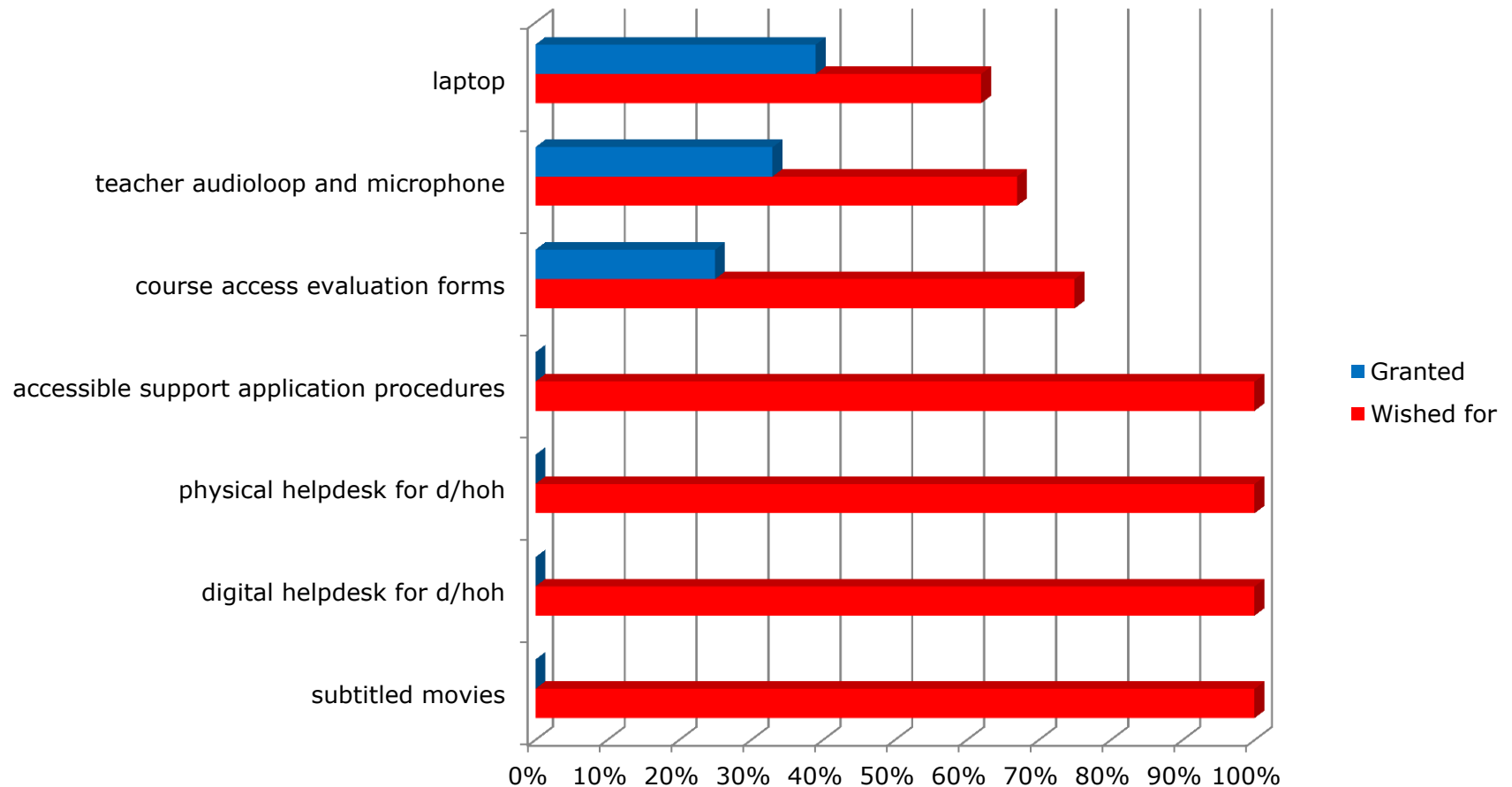


Human and material support





Technical and general support



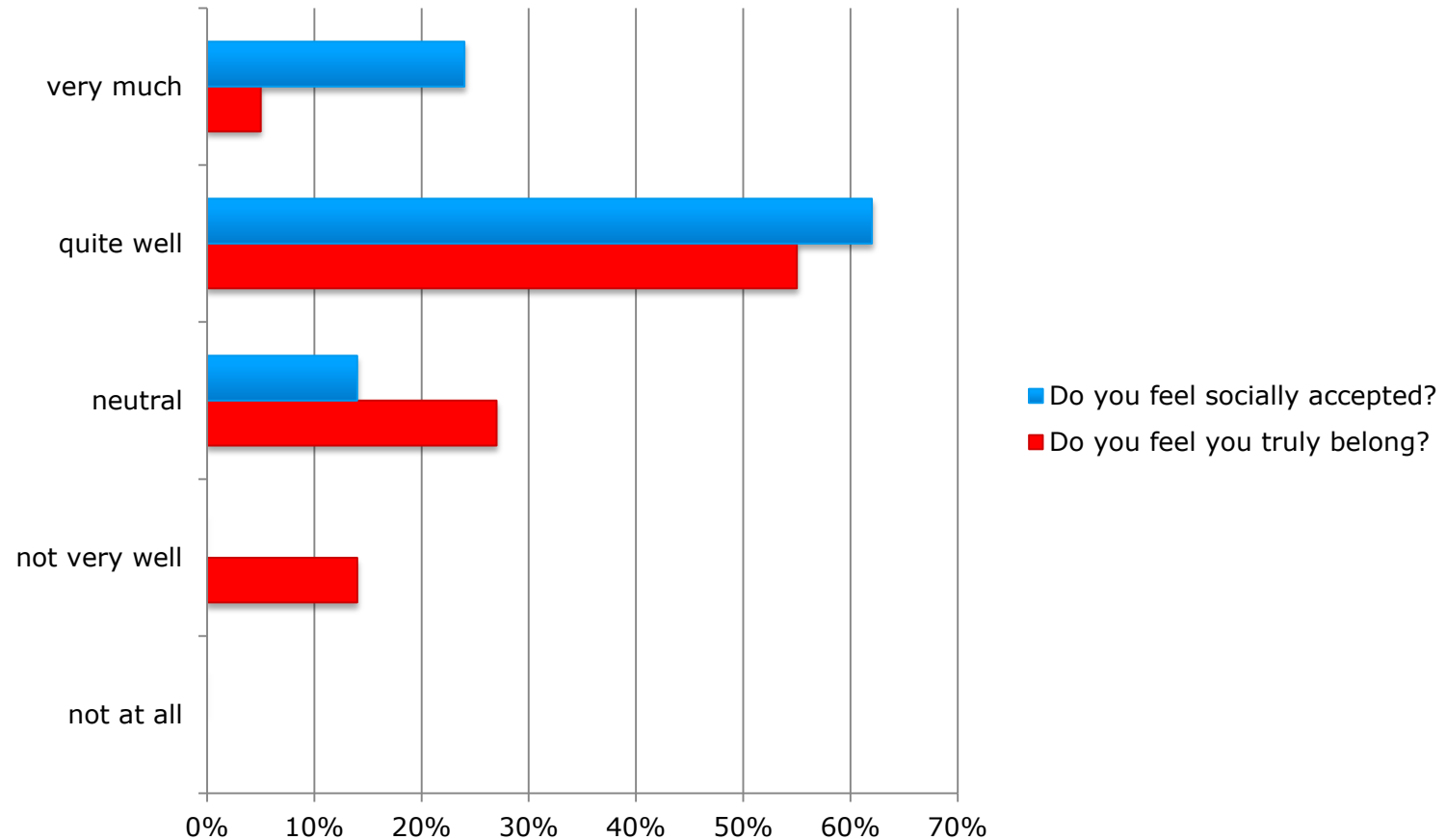


Additional forms of support

- > facebook and other 'web-02' facilities
- > instant message networking
- > smartphone communications
- > interpreter to correct language of written assignments
- > audio-recorders during contact hours and
- > speech-to-text interpreter for text-transcription
- > **"special glasses that can change speech into subtitling on the lenses..."**



Social acceptance & motivation





Conclusions

- > there is cause to suppose considerable under-participation of deaf/hoh students in dutch FE/HE
- > deaf/hoh students get general support, but wish for specific support
- > with respect to assessments, deaf/hoh students benefit from adjustments already in place for dyslectic students (e.g. extra time, adapted assignments)
- > deaf/hoh students wish for cutting edge technical support, of which there is very little provided



Recommendations

- > public agencies might collect incidence data
- > institutions might proactively engage at-risk populations
- > deaf/hoh students might actively circulate solutions
- > this calls for a change in access culture with respect to
 - co-owning issues
 - generating relevant data
 - establishing self-critical dialogue
 - collectively intervene in current practice



References

- Isarin, Jet. 2006 Hoor hen! [Hear them! Participation study: virtual and real life]. Twello: Van Tricht *uitgeverij*
- Isarin, Jet. 2008 Zo hoort het. [Deaf children in the CI era: a participation study]. Twello: Van Tricht *uitgeverij*

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