THE OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES OF

EX- GRADE 12 LEARNERS AT A SPECIAL NEEDS

SCHOOL BETWEEN 1996 - 2001

By

PRAVINA BAIJNATH

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Supervisor: Dr Z. Naidoo

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Narranjan, our children, Ramona,

Yuri, Ulishia Yzareen, my sister Lutchmee, and to our parents, whose wisdom,

kindness

and everlasting love will always be remembered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION

I, Pravina Baijnath declare that the dissertation " The Occupational Choices of Ex- Grade 12 learners at a Special Needs School between 1996 and 2001" is a result of my own investigation and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other university and that all the sources have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Baijnath .

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PRAVINA BAIJNATH

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADHD	– Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
DEC	– Department of Education and Culture
DIT	– Durban Institute of Technology
IEP	– Individualised Education Programme
ILS	– International Life Saving
ITP	– Individualised Transition Programme
IQ	– Intelligence Quotient
KZN	– Kwa- Zulu Natal
LIFO	– Last in First Out
LD	– Learning Disabilities
LSEN	– Learners with Special Education Needs
NCSS	– Number Cruncher for Social Sciences
SA	– South Africa
SAPS	– South African Police Services
SALS	– South African Life Saving
SACOL	– South African College for Open Learning
SLD	– Specific Learning Disabilities
SNS	– Special Needs School
S SAIS	– Senior South African Individual Scale
S SAIS-R	– Senior South African Individual Scale – Revised
STF	– Systems Theory Framework
USA	– United States of America
US	– United States

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ABSTRACT

This study reports on the occupational choices of 87 individuals with learning disabilities, who had successfully completed Grade 12 between 1996 and 2001 at a long-term remedial school, in a city suburb in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province of South Africa. The sample consisting of 54 males and 33 females between the ages of 18 and 26 years was divided into two age-cohort groups. The main question that guided this investigation was: What are the factors that influenced occupational choices of adults with learning disabilities?

Career development theories were used as a lens to understand the various factors that influenced their occupational choices and the systems theory was used as an overarching framework to conceptualise the occupational choices of these individuals.

In attempting to capture how individuals with learning disabilities make occupational choices, a combination of two research methods were employed in a complimentary manner. Quantitative data was gathered from individuals in the sample using a telephonic questionnaire. This data was used to provide the study with baseline information to pave the way for more in-depth data gathering. The quantitative research method using face-to-face interviews was used to develop narrative career stories. Data from narrative career stories was used with the intention of understanding the factors that influenced the occupational choices from a broad social and historical context.

Evidence from the data revealed that a significant number of participants were employed in the service sector in predominantly part-time, low-skill, low-wage positions such as waiters, waitresses, clerical workers, salespersons and secretaries. Gender differences were apparent with more females being employed than males. In recent years an increasing number of males from the younger age cohort were pursuing studies at colleges and technikons. Very few females aspired towards further education. The data also revealed that many individuals continued to live with their parents and were dependent on them for financial and emotional support.

The study concludes with recommendations to individuals with learning disabilities, parents, education departments, employers and future researchers.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 ORIENTATION TO CHAPTER ONE

This chapter serves as an entry point into identifying the occupational choices and investigating the factors that influenced the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities at a Special Needs School. It is divided into the following sub-sections:

SECTION 1: The Study in context

SECTION 2: The rationale for the study

SECTION 3: The significance of the study

SECTION 4: Outline of chapters

SECTION 1

1.1.1 THE STUDY IN CONTEXT

Seven years after the first non-racial school leaving examination in South Africa, the Grade 12 pass rate increased from 47.4% in 1997 to 68.9% for 2002. Media reports indicated that nation-wide, 75 048 learners could seek admission to universities in 2003 (Pretorius, 2003:16). Whilst some successful, young adults are usually confident about their field of work or study, for the majority, this exciting yet stressful period, after the announcement of the results, is punctuated by questions such as: "What am I going to do? Will I be able to find a job? Will I study? Will I be successful in my career path? Who will pay for my studies?"

Given the pressures on young people to make early occupational choices, many become anxious about choosing the "right" field of study and career. When one considers that:

- The Dictionary of Occupational Titles names over 20 000 jobs;

- Our school system is not designed to introduce learners to the realities of the world of work;

- Our universities are academic institutions and do not see themselves solely as job factories;

- The human being is capable of operating in a number of different fields   successfully;

- No personality, preference or aptitude tests are sophisticated enough to produce perfect pointers to specific jobs;

- "Correct" career decisions are dependent on a host of variables such as vocational maturity, accurate information about the field of study, the world of work and self-understanding, and, rely on processes rather than one-step operations,

It is understandable, that many successful young Grade 12 learners (matriculants) find it difficult to make quick, seemingly final and accurate career decisions (Gibson, 2000).

The problem of choosing a career and planning intelligently for it, is therefore, probably the most "serious" situation the successful Grade 12 learner is faced with. Making a rational career decision is based on three processes. The first process entails obtaining knowledge about oneself, one's aptitudes, abilities, interests, work values and personality. The second process entails obtaining knowledge about the world of work, the prerequisites laid down for the incumbents of the career, the training involved in the careers, as well as the benefits. The third process entails an integration of the knowledge about oneself with the knowledge about the world of work to choose the career that suits one best. A wise, realistic choice of career is only possible after careful self-analysis (interests, personalities and academic strengths) and a thorough knowledge of occupations.

A wise and realistic career choice is, however, based not only on careful self-analysis and knowledge of the world of work, but also on social (for example, parent, peer and school) and environmental - societal influences (for example, geographic location, government decisions and technological change). Furthermore, individuals who perform better on academics in the school system and find school more reinforcing are more likely to continue their education.

Experiences at school are often less positive for some individuals especially those with learning disabilities (refer to Appendix 1). Various studies have suggested that inability to achieve, lack of success and non-reinforcing experiences lead to undesirable behaviour and attitudes in individuals with Learning Disabilities (LD). These behaviours and attitudes may include poor self-perception, lower self-concept or reduced motivation. Many years of frustration in school of viewing themselves and being viewed by others as ineffective, "different," marginal and unsuccessful can cause insecurity and self-doubt in individuals with LD.

What happens to individuals with LD after they graduate from high school? What are their occupational choices? What factors influenced their occupational choices? Does gender influence their occupational choices? Do they pursue post school studies? What career fields do they pursue? Do they lead productive, independent lives? These are but some of the questions that intrigued the researcher and triggered her interest in pursuing this study.

1.1.2 The Purpose of the Study

It is the purpose of this study to identify the occupational choices of ex-Grade 12 individuals with learning disabilities at a Special Needs School between 1996 and 2001.

❖ **Critical Questions**

The critical questions that guide this study are:

- What are the factors that influenced the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities?

- Does gender impact on their occupational choices?

❖ Feasibility of Study

As an intern psychologist, permission from the school psychologist to access school records in respect of ex-Grade 12 learners who exited the school between 1996 and 2001, addresses and telephone numbers, facilitated the feasibility of this study.

❖ The Setting for the Study

The study was set at a long-term remedial school in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province of South Africa (refer to Appendix 2A and 2B). The school, being a former House of Assembly school, catered predominantly for a White population. Being the only long-term remedial school in the province, and one of approximately ten of its kind in South Africa, the school attracted learners not only from different parts of Kwa-Zulu Natal, but also, from different provinces in South Africa and its neighbouring territories. The school was staffed with multi-professional teams consisting of educators, educational psychologists, remedial, speech and occupational therapists.

❖ The Sample

The sample in this study consisted of 54 males and 33 females between the ages of 18 and 26 years. The ratio of males to females was approximately two to one. The primary language of the individuals was English. At the time of the investigation, these individuals had exited the school between 6 months and 6 years 6 months ago. They had spent between 2 and 13 years at the school.

❖ Data Collection

The data collection approaches included such methods and sources as telephonic questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, educational records, psychological records and medical records. A comprehensive database of information in respect of each individual was compiled using information from school

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records. Information of this nature provided the researcher with an in-depth understanding in respect of each individual in the study.

❖ Results

An analysis of data indicated the following points of significance:

- The rate of employment for participants in the study was 73%. This was, however, characterised by underemployment, low pay, part-time work and frequent job changes. Many of the participants lived with their parents because they were dependent on them for financial and emotional support.

- Very few females attempted post school studies. More females were employed than men as most of them went to work immediately after graduating from high school.

- Work experience arranged by the school had a major impact on the occupational choices of the participants.

- An increasing number of participants with learning disabilities especially from the younger-age cohort were entering tertiary institutions. This has important implications for the individual, parents, the community, researchers, and educators, post secondary institutions as well as for the employment market sector.

❖ Limitations of the Study

Although this study provides valuable information in respect of occupational choices and the factors that influence occupational choices, its scope is restricted to the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities from a long-term remedial school in Kwa-Zulu-Natal. As such, the results must be interpreted cautiously and should not be generalised to other such schools in South Africa. Furthermore, as this study was conducted with a sample of 87, predominantly White, ex - Grade 12

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individuals who spent an average of eight years at a Special Needs School, it is reflective of the occupational choices of those individuals

SECTION 2

1.2 THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Learning disabilities and its associated problems have been studied for the past three decades in the United States. Research into adults with LD has increased because more individuals with learning disabilities are entering college and other postsecondary institutions. Research into the occupational status of individuals with learning disabilities, who had entered the workplace immediately after graduating from high school, has also increased.

In South Africa, Special Needs Education is a sector where the ravages of apartheid remain most evident. Here the segregation of learners on the basis of race was extended to incorporate segregation on the basis of disability. Apartheid special schools were organized according to two segregating criteria, race and disability. Long-term remedial schools catering for White individuals with LD have been in existence since the 1980s.

From 1996, the long-term remedial school under study offered Grade 12, and, since then progressive numbers of learners have graduated from high school. The school had a hundred percent (100%) pass rate for a period of four years (1998 - 2001). In order to evaluate the school programme and to compare the occupational choices of past learners in an international light, it was necessary to track past learners.

Although this study, like many overseas studies, indicates that significant numbers of individuals with learning disabilities graduating from high school are entering the employment market in low-skilled, part-time positions; generally speaking, more males are employed than females; increasing numbers of individuals are entering tertiary institutions, there is little or no evidence of national studies to support this claim. As there is a paucity of research documenting the occupational trends and patterns in individuals' with learning disabilities, who have graduated from high school in South Africa, this study

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will provide important baseline data. Baseline data is necessary to provide a framework and a context for discussion, policy planning, implementation and evaluation.

SECTION 3

1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of this study have important implications for individuals with learning disabilities, parents, educators, the community, education departments, employment market sector and researchers.

The importance of understanding one's disability is particularly relevant to individuals with learning disabilities as they often limit their own educational and occupational futures as a result of poor self-concept, delayed and impaired career development or perceived inadequacies. A clear and realistic understanding of one's learning is instrumental in empowering the individual in many areas of his or her life, including social, familial, academic and vocational situations. Without an understanding and acceptance of one's abilities, individuals are not able to select appropriate goals and advocate for themselves. In addition, a lack of knowledge about one's disability can lead to a lack of acceptance of self, and an inability to communicate one's needs and abilities to others.

The task of helping individuals understand their disabilities is frequently in secondary settings and parents and special educators have, in many cases, encouraged dependency in individuals with learning disabilities by protecting, advocating and doing for them what they can be taught to do for themselves. It is essential that individuals be given the opportunity to ask for assistance and understand their strengths and weaknesses if they are to survive in the adult world. High school teachers and counsellors are in the critical position of being able to teach students about the many ways in which acquisitions of these skills will enable them to negotiate in the world. Teaching students to deal with success and failure situations by facing them, and discouraging dependency are ways to prevent recurring failure.

Education support teams need to get more involved in assisting individuals with LD. They need to obtain information on: admission policies, assistance in registration, financial assistance, academic support and the availability of other support services such as job development, placement and follow-

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up services. It is very important that the Kwa-Zulu Natal, Department of Education and Culture (KZN, DEC) improve the linkages between secondary and postsecondary education institutions. There should be a relatively straightforward "handoff" from the secondary system to postsecondary institutions for individuals with learning disabilities.

The study is also particularly valuable to the employment sector. It is essential for employers to become aware of hidden disabilities in adults. Several implications for the employment of this population follow from this study. The match between the expectations of the job and the needs of the individual are crucial for employment success. Since it takes extra patience and time to integrate and retain an employee with special needs, the on-site supervisor makes a critical contribution to satisfactory job performance and job retention.

This study will also be of significance to researchers in the field of learning disabilities, as it will provide important baseline data for future research in other such schools in South Africa.

1.4 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

1.4.1 **Chapter One** provides an introduction to the study and outlines its purpose and importance.

1.4.2 In **Chapter Two** the theoretical perspectives and the subtleties and complexities of occupational choices will be discussed.

1.4.3 In **Chapter Three** a literature survey of the occupational choices of learning disabled adults who graduated from high school both internationally and locally will be studied

1.4.4 **Chapter Four** provides a description of the research methodology, research instrument and procedures employed to analyse the data. In this study the survey method was employed. A telephonic questionnaire was used to reach as many of the respondents as possible. Further to this, a personal interview was held with eight past learners. Information from other sources, such as case-history files, school newsletters and magazines, parents, educators, therapists and past learners helped to create an intricate web site.

1.4.5 In **Chapter Five**, data presentation and analysis for data findings, analysis and discussion will be presented.

1.4.6 In **Chapter Six**, discussion of findings, limitations and recommendations for discussion, recommendations and limitations of the research will be presented.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 ORIENTATION TO CHAPTER TWO

The preceding chapter formed an important backdrop towards understanding the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities, who graduated from a Special Needs School.

This chapter aims to clarify the terminology used in the study and to survey theories of occupational choice. A survey of relevant theories will provide a lens towards understanding the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities and towards providing the answers to the purpose and the critical questions in this study. The purpose of this study is to identify the occupational choices of ex-Grade 12 individuals from a Special Needs School between 1996 and 2001 and the critical questions are:

- What are the factors that influence the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities?

- Does gender impact on the occupational choice of individuals with learning disabilities?

Chapter two will be divided into three sections:

SECTION ONE: Clarification of Terminology
SECTION TWO: Theories of Occupational Choice relevant to this study
SECTION THREE: Comments

SECTION 1

2.1 CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

2.1.1 Career, Vocation, Work and Occupation

From the time of Parsons (1909), the terms *career, vocation, work* and *occupation* have been used synonymously (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992). Traditional definitions restricted career to a professional work life that included advancement and several researchers have proposed broadening this conceptual definition. For example in the definition proposed by Super (1976:20), career implied:

"The sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout his or her pre-occupational, occupational and post-occupational life; includes work related roles such as those of student, employee and pensioner together with complimentary vocational, familial and civil roles."

Collin and Watts (1996:393), proposed a more flexible approach to defining career. They defined career as *"a lifelong process in which patterns and relationships between work and other areas in life are constructed within the learner in an ongoing way."*

A more concise definition, that of Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989:9), described career as *"the evolving sequence of a persons work experiences over time,"* emphasising the centrality of the themes of work and time. They were emphatic that, *"everyone who works has a career,"* indicating that the term career can be a neutral descriptive term applied to all occupations.

Richardson (1993, 1996) suggested that career is a limited and irrelevant concept. She proposed that theoreticians and practitioners focus on how people create their own definitions of work in their lives and suggested the use of the terms: *work, jobs, occupations* and *careers* in the discussion of work and career.

According to Brown and Brooks (1996:213), *"this lack of conceptual clarity maintains ambiguity and continues to prevents the development of a common ground of thinking in this area."* As the terms

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career, *vocation*, *work* and *occupation* are variously understood, they will be used interchangeably in this study.

SECTION 2

2.2 THEORIES OF OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

The career theories presented below are those that accompany explanations of occupational choice and development. The structural theories match personality and abilities with occupation and environment. The development theories explain career development in chronological stages. Other theories, such as the expectancy theory, assume that people develop expectancies regarding the likelihood that they could successfully enter an occupation, if they put forth sufficient effort. As no single theory is comprehensive enough to account for the complexities of human behaviour, the Systems Theory Framework (STF) will be used as a vehicle to conceptualise the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities for the following reasons:

- The Systems Theory is "eclectic" in nature.

- It is broadly based and is able to take into account the diversity and complexity of the influences on career development.

The theories to be discussed fall into the following categories:

2.2.1 Occupational Choice as a matching process

2.2.2 Occupational Choice as a developmental process

2.2.3 Occupational Choice as a decision making process

2.2.4 Systems Theory Framework (STF)

2.2.1 Occupational Choice as a matching process

2.2.1.1 Trait and Factor Theory

Most theories of occupational choice contend that a person, consciously or unconsciously, chooses an occupation that "matches" his/her unique set of needs, motives, values and talents. One of the earliest approaches to occupational choice, the so–called trait and factor theory, is perhaps most explicit in this regard. According to this viewpoint,

"confronted with the necessity of choosing an occupation, an individual consciously proceeds to make an analysis of his/her vocational assets and liabilities, accumulates information about occupations, and arrives at a decision" (Crites, 1969: 17).

Consistent with this view, a person would be expected to identify his/her abilities, needs, values, select appropriate career goals, and then choose an occupation thought to be most compatible with these goals. The theory assumed that choice was available for everyone. Career choice was viewed as a single, static, point-in-time event, for which there was a single right answer.

These assumptions invite criticism. For example, it has been questioned whether people actually use reasoning in all career choices and whether all people actually have a reasoned choice in relation to career. It can also be questioned whether occupational choice is a single event, whether single types of people are found in each type of job, or whether there is a single right goal for each career decision maker. Issacson and Brown (1993) claimed that the trait factor theory does not account for the broad range of individual differences in every occupational group. In addition it has been acknowledged that people make several career choices in a lifetime (Patton & McMahon, 1999; Greenhaus, 1996).

Criticism has also been levelled at trait-and-factor theory for failing to *"adequately consider and define the universe of variables that impinge on the occupational choice making process and define causal relations among traits and variables (such as socio-economic status),"* (Brown, 1990:346). Zunker (1994) was critical of the failure to account for growth and change in traits such as interests, values, aptitudes, achievements and personality characteristics. Brown (1996b: 347) claimed that *" in its current state, trait and factor theory cannot stand alone as an explanatory system for occupational*

choice making and has even less validity as an explanatory system for the career development process". Thus it would be fair to say that trait-and-factor theory is not a theory of career development but rather a collection of theories based on influences that contribute to career development.

2.2.1.2 Holland's Theory/ Process of Matching

The work of Holland (1966,1985a, 1987a,) also views occupational choice as a process of matching occupations and people. One of Holland's major assumptions is that
" people search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles" (Spokane, 1996:38). His theory has been described as *"primarily descriptive"* and has been criticized for not adequately addressing the needs of women and of racial, ethnic and other groupings.

2.2.1.3 Dawis and Lofquist – Theory of Work Adjustment

Dawis and Lofquist's (1976), Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) has received attention in the vocational field, particularly as it relates to job satisfaction for individuals with learning disabilities. TWA *"provides a model for conceptualising the interaction between individual and work environment,"* (Dawis & Lofquist, 1976:55). According to this theory, an individual has requirements or needs of a work environment, and a work environment in turn has needs or requirements of a worker. It is assumed that a person can be described in certain terms and if the environment can be similarly described, as in Holland's theory, then matching can occur. The needs of the work environment and the needs of the worker are, however, not static. Change in either may lead to dissatisfaction. Work adjustment, therefore is a dynamic and on-going process between the individual and the environment, both of which are continually trying to satisfy and be satisfied. Discorrespondence occurs when correspondence is not reached. During times of discorrespondence, individuals may adjust in one of two ways. They might try to change the environment or they may try to change themselves. When the adjustment fails, the worker may leave the work environment (an outcome described by Holland, 1996), as a result of *"incongruent interactions"* (Witte, Philips & Kakela, 1998).

According to TWA, *"job satisfaction represents the individual worker's subjective evaluation of the degree to which his or her requirements are met by the work environment"* (Patton & McMahon, 1999:25). The fit between the employee and the work setting generates and facilitates job satisfaction. Long-term employment can be viewed as a significant indicator of a good match between an employee and the work environment. Finding the right niche, or a goodness of fit, for individuals with learning disabilities could help ensure positive adult outcomes. Fitzgerald, Fassinger & Betz (1995) contended that according to TWA, individuals who *"fit"* the work conditions and requirements should, over time, achieve higher levels of success.

2.2.1.4 Super's Theory: Person - Occupation Fit

Super's extensive work (1957, 1963, 1990) is also based on the notion of match between individuals and occupations. The key concept in his model is the person's self-concept. Our self-concept, in other words, consists of attributes we think we possess: our abilities, personality traits, needs, interests and values. Super believes that an occupational choice enables a person to play a role appropriate to the self-concept. A person *"implements"* his/her self-concept in developing an occupational choice; that is, he/she selects an occupation that is compatible with significant parts of the self-concept. In effect, people develop a self-concept, develop images or beliefs about a series of occupations, and take steps to enter the occupation that is most compatible with their self-concept (Greenhaus, 1996).

2.2.2 Occupational Choice as a Developmental Process

Although evidence indicates that people match or implement their self-concept in choosing an occupation, one's selection of an occupation does not take place at a single point in time. The choice of an occupation can be considered a developmental process that evolves over time and the decision to pursue a particular occupation is really a series of decisions that span a significant portion of one's life. The developmental approach takes into account that career choice is not just a single static decision, but, rather a dynamic development process, involving a series of decisions made over time. In common with other theories are the assumptions that *"career choice is a developmental process beginning in childhood; occupational aspirations reflect people's efforts to implement their self-concepts; and satisfaction with career choice depends on how well the choice fits the self-concept,"* (Super, 1992:59).

2.2.2.1 Super's Theory of Career Development

According to Super's theory (Super, Savickas & Super, 1996) people move through five stages relevant to career development: *growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance* and *decline* or *disengagement* which correspond with the life stages of childhood, adolescence, adulthood, middle adulthood and old age and their approximate ages. The order of these stages is not fixed, and the age at which these transitions are made are also flexible. This theory has two primary dimensions, that is, time and space. Individuals develop over time through psycho - social maturation and cultural adaptation. The pattern of career development is therefore determined by individual characteristics in relation to social opportunities and constraints. People select occupations that best express their identities and satisfaction.

2.2.2.2 Gottfredson's Developmental Model

Gottfredson (1981) presented a developmental model of four stages beginning in early childhood and ending in late adolescence. The first three stages involve the elimination of undesirable options. This process is known as circumscription, which involves a narrowing down of occupational alternatives. The final stage is characterized by compromise, which is a modification of aspirations to adapt to reality constraints.

During these stages, individuals become more self-aware and narrow in their occupational options by eliminating those that are no longer acceptable. This theory views not only an individual's self-concept, but also, societal barriers as predictors of occupational choice. Self-concept compromises many elements, including those that are vocationally relevant, such as *"gender, social class background, intelligence, and vocational interests, competencies and values"* (Gottfredson, 1981: 548). Self-concept is defined as ones view of ones self, including physical appearance, abilities, personality, values and place in society. Self-conceptions determine the occupations that people choose. Individuals prefer occupations that fit with their self-concept. People also compromise due to anticipated barriers. The range of acceptable occupations is termed the social space, which reflects where people want to fit into society (Greenhaus, 1996; Patton & McMahon, 1999).

2.2.3 Occupational Choice as a Decision Making Task

We have seen how occupational choice can be viewed essentially as a developmental process in which experiences and increasing maturity enables a person to develop, modify and clarify the self–concept, gain further insights into the world of work, and attain a match between a chosen occupation and one's self–perceived interests, abilities, needs and values. Given a set of alternative occupations, how does one choose which occupation to pursue?

According to the expectancy theory, it is assumed that people approach an occupational choice situation with a fairly well established set of desired outcomes or rewards. Next, expectancy theory assumes people examine a number of occupations and determine the likelihood that each occupation will provide them with each job outcome. These beliefs are called instrumentality perceptions since they refer to one's perception of how instrumental an occupation will be in attaining each job outcome. One's instrumentality perceptions are assumed to be mentally rated on a scale. (Greenhaus, 1996).

Expectancy theory assumes that individuals will mentally multiply the value of each outcome by the instrumentality for that outcome to obtain a total attraction score. A person is predicted to be most attracted to the occupation with the highest score. However, finding an occupation attractive is not the same as choosing to enter an occupation. There may be many attractive options (for example, professional athlete, brain surgeon, rock star) that we ultimately reject for one reason or the other. According to the expectancy theory, people develop expectancies regarding the likelihood that they could successfully enter a particular occupation if they put forth sufficient effort. Expectancy theory assumes that people mentally multiply the attractiveness of an occupation by their expectancy to enter the occupation. They then chose the occupation with the highest expected attractiveness. In other words we are most likely to pursue an occupation that we not only find attractive but also have a decent chance of entering.

Do people really choose occupations in such a rational, calculative manner? Do people compare occupations on a long list of potential job outcomes, multiply the value of each outcome by its perceived instrumentality, and choose occupations that maximise the likelihood that they will obtain desirable outcomes and avoid undesirable outcomes? A growing body of research indicates that our

occupational preferences and decisions do seem to be guided by our desire to seek maximum rewards from work (Greenhaus, 1996).

2.2.4 The Systems Theory Framework (STF)

In acknowledgement of the fact that no single theory is comprehensive enough to account for the complexities of human behaviour, an eclectic or a systems approach will be used to conceptualise the occupational choices of individuals in this study.

The STF identifies two broad components of career theory: content and process. The content influences in the framework are the individual system and the contextual system. Under content, the framework identifies variables applicable to the individual and to the context, thereby outlining key influences on career development. Under process, the framework identifies the existence of interactive processes within the individual and within the context. This recursive interaction contributes to the micro-process of decision-making and the macro-process of change over time. Finally the process component of the framework identifies the relevance and importance of chance. The framework is presented according to these elements to demonstrate the components of a system theory perspective on career development, their inter-relationship and their contributions to wholeness (Patton & McMahon, 1999).

2.2.4.1 The Individual System

The individual is the centre of the career choice and development process. Several developments encouraged the active involvement of the self. These included the practical work of Holland (1973) in developing the "self-directed search" which encouraged individual involvement in the career decision-making process. The theoretical work of Bandura (1986) in developing the concept of self-efficacy emphasized an individual's ability to act on his or her environment rather than merely responding to environmental experiences. This perspective has been mirrored in the work of Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg (1986), who emphasized the uniqueness of the individual and his or her context and the resultant uniqueness of the interaction between each individual and that context. Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) extended the view of individuals as constructors of their own lives, asserting that *"life-career"* or what Hall (1996) called the *"protean career"* needs only to make sense to the individual.

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In his Archway model, Super (1990) identified the person as the central component, or *"keystone."* Super used the term self in his model. The STF prefers to use the term individual to suggest the uniqueness of a person and his or her situation. Thus the centre of the STF is a circle representing the individual. The circle contains a range of intra-personal features influencing career development that are possessed by all individuals but are different for each individual.
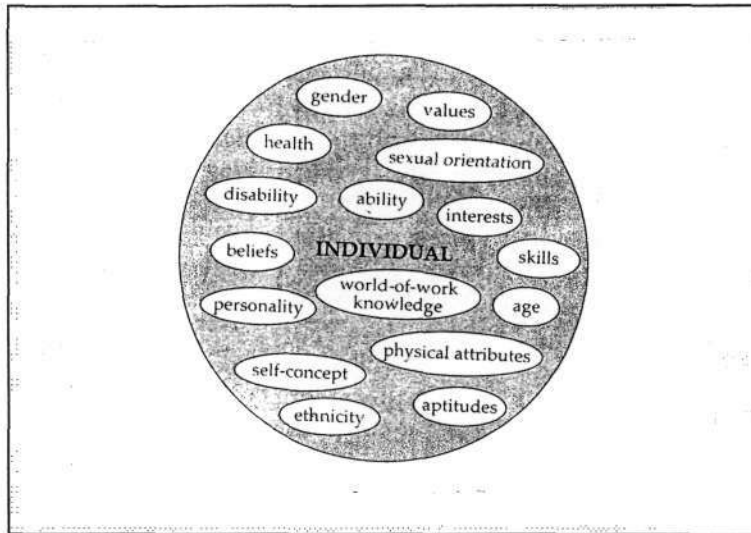
Figure 1: The Individual System: Intra-personal Content Influences (Patton & McMahon, 1999:157)

The individual system is composed of several intra-personal content influences, including gender, age, self-concept, health, ability, disability, physical attributes, beliefs, personality, interests, values, aptitudes, skills, world-of-work knowledge, sexual orientation and ethnicity. Many of the influences represented in the individual system are represented in existing career theories. In this study, the following intra-personal content influences will be explored: age, gender, ability, disability, health, interests, aptitudes and self-knowledge.

2.2.4.2 The Contextual system

An individual as a system does not live in isolation, but rather as part of a much larger system. Thus the individual as part of a larger system coexists with a broad contextual system that is itself composed of smaller subsystems. This broader system is broken into two subsystems, the social contextual system

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(the other people systems with which the individual interacts) and the environmental/societal contextual system - the environment and society.

2.2.4.3   The Social System

Influences representing the content of the social system include peers, family, media, community groups, the work place and education institutions. Each of these social structures is also the source of values, beliefs and attitudes that may be conveyed to the individual in a variety of ways. The influence of these groups can be long lasting and can vary over time.
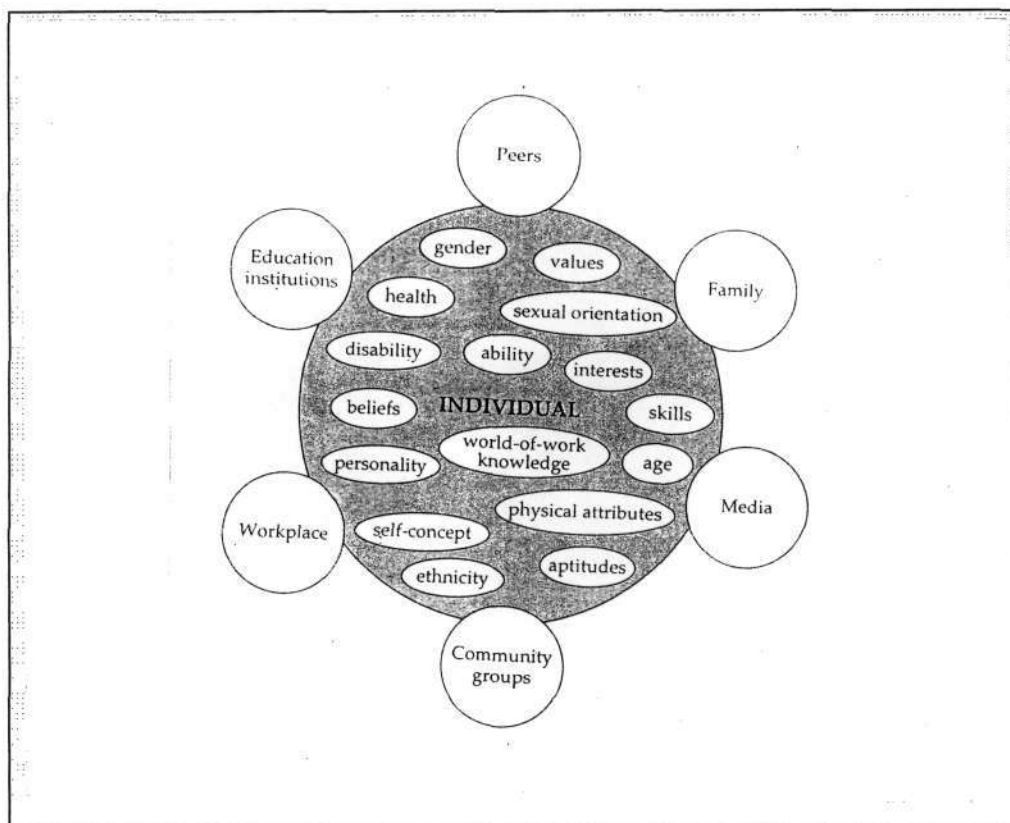
Figure 2: The Social System (Patton &McMahon, 1999:159).

The composition of the social system will change throughout life as the individual moves into and out of groups- for example changing schools or jobs or moving to a new town Thus, it is essential in

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considering the social system of an individual, to explore the exact nature of the systems within which he/she exists (Patton & McMahon, 1999).

2.2.4.4. The Environmental-Societal System
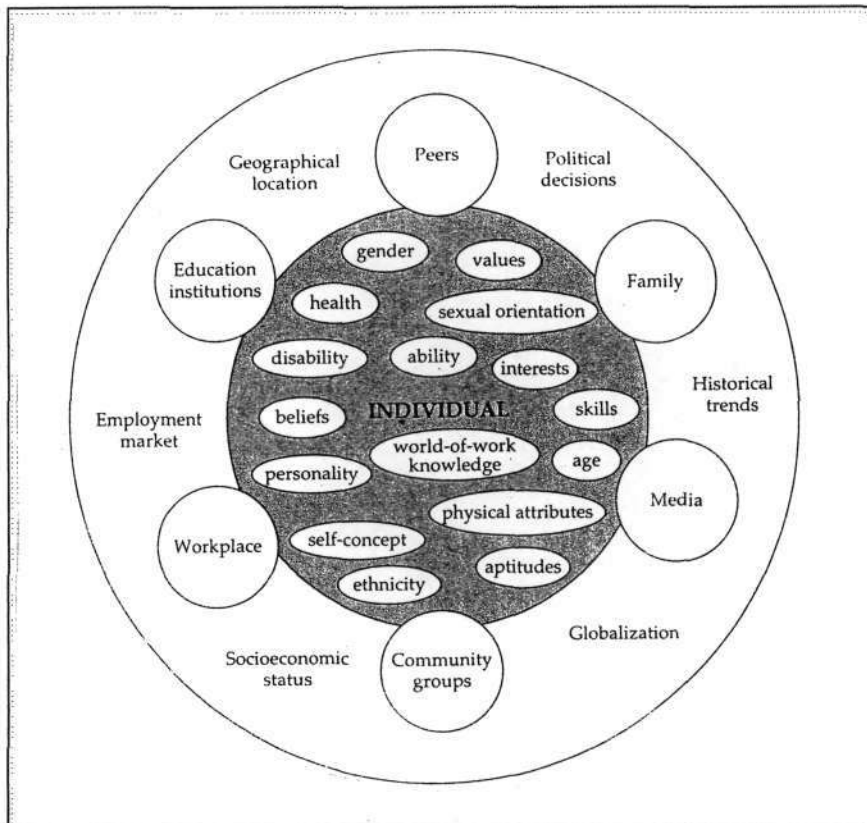
Figure 3: The Environmental - Societal System ((Patton & McMahon, 1999:160).

The individual lives within a broader system, that of society or the environment. Environmental/societal system influences include: political decisions, historical trends, globalisation, socio-economic status, the employment market and geographic location. These influences may seem less directly related to the individual, yet their influences can be profound. Many of these influences have been highlighted in the work of a number of career theorists (for example, Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990; Roe & Lunneborg, 1990).

2.2.4.5 Chance

Chance is defined as - *" an unplanned event that measurably alters one's behaviour "* (Miller, 1983:17) and can be referred to as luck, fortune, accident or happenstance. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990) included genetic endowments as an occurrence of chance. Chance can affect any part or combination of parts of the system. For example, an accident or illness may produce a disability, a chance meeting may open up new employment prospects, and a " man-made " or natural disaster may reduce or increase job opportunities.

2.2.4.6 Change over time

Career development is a lifelong phenomenon (Super, 1990; Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986) that involves ongoing decision- making. Thus, change over time refers to decision- making processes and accounts of change over time. The path of career development is one of constant evolution and may incorporate forward and backward movements. This evolution is referred to in the extant theory as *"emergent career decision making"* by Super (Freeman, 1993), *"successive approximations"* by Holland (Freeman, 1993), and *"mini-decisions"* (Patton & McMahon, 1999).

2.2.4.7 Recursiveness

The emphasis on the systems theory is on the recursiveness, or ongoing relationships, between elements or subsystems of the system and the changes that occur over time as a result of these continual interactions (Patton & McMahon, 1999).

2.3 SECTION 3

COMMENTS

Given the diverse and complex range of influences and theoretical perspectives on career development, it is probable that no single theory can be comprehensive enough to adequately account for the career development of all individuals in all epochs. Corey (1991: 426) claimed that, *"eclecticism should be*

thought of as a way to harmoniously blend theoretical concepts and methods into a congruent framework." Systems theory is well established in other fields such as family therapy, but is relatively new to career development theory. The application of the systems theory to career development allows the disparate concepts addressed in the literature to be drawn together into one theoretical framework. As the important contributions of all career theories can be recognized, this study uses a systems theory framework to explore the factors that influenced the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LITERATURE

3.0 ORIENTATION TO CHAPTER THREE

In the previous chapter career theories provided a lens through which occupational choices of the individuals' under study could be placed into perspective.

The purpose of this chapter is to review selected international and national literature relating to the occupational choices of adults with learning disabilities. The focus of the review is related to aspects of literature salient to the purpose and critical questions of the study. The purpose of this study is to identify the occupational choices of successful Grade 12 individuals with learning disabilities between the years 1996-2001. The critical questions are:

- What are the factors that influenced these occupational choices?

- Does gender impact on these choices?

This **Chapter** will be divided into three sections:

3.1 In SECTION 1 a literature review on the occupational choices of adults with learning disabilities in overseas countries will be reviewed. The rationale is to make comparisons with the status of provisions for adults with learning disabilities in South Africa.

3.2 In SECTION 2 the status of provisions for and research into adults with learning disabilities in South Africa will be discussed. The rationale for this is to investigate occupational choices made by individuals who successfully passed the Grade 12 examination at a special needs school between 1996-2001 and to make comparisons with overseas studies.

3.3 SECTION 3 crystallizes the main ideas expressed in the literature review.

3.1   SECTION 1: INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

This section of the literature review examines international research that bears relevance to the occupational choices of adults with learning disabilities. While the majority of studies pertain to the United States of America (Scuccimarra & Speece, 1990;Greenbaum, Graham & Scales, 1996; Rojewski, 1999), an attempt has been made to create a balanced perspective by including studies from other regions (da Fronseca, 1996;Okyere, 1994; Chapman, 1992).

The general perception of a disability in Ghana is equated with deafness, blindness and severe mental retardation. The general belief is that educating a disabled child or an adult is a waste of time and resources. There are no specific special education legislations in place and the disabled are not provided with adequate education and training. Although existing programmes for the visually and hearing impaired are rigid in nature, learners are assisted up to university level. Those who graduate from university often obtain more stable and well paying employment. Individuals with hidden handicaps are however, not recognized and therefore not catered for. They are usually enrolled in regular schools where they do not receive any expert help. As a result many are not able to cope with schoolwork and are usually branded as lazy and stupid by their teachers. Due to the lack of educational and parental support many drop out of school. The employment prospects for these individuals are bleak, and, if employed at all, the progression is seldom beyond that of unskilled labourers (Okyere, 1994).

In other parts of Africa such as Botswana, Tanzania and Ethiopia, the situation is very much the same as it is in Ghana. In these countries the negative attitudes of the public, including the policy makers, towards the disabled, stem from the traditional beliefs about exceptional individuals. Although there are classes in regular schools for individuals who are mentally retarded or have severe learning disabilities, visual and hearing impairments, the majority of the black children with special education needs, remain in the regular classroom. As in Ghana, the majority of these individuals drop out of school and are in the main employed if at all as unskilled labourers (Engelbrecht, Kriegler & Booysen, 1996).

Like in most parts of Africa, the Portuguese education system too makes no provisions for individuals with learning disabilities. Although the school failure rate is the highest of any of the European countries, the Portuguese believe that children grow out of their learning disabilities when they become adults. Many individuals never complete high school because of learning disabilities. As high school (or primary school) dropouts, they are usually employed in low-skilled, low-paying, part-time positions such as waiters, waitresses and janitors (da Fonseca, 1996).

Learning disabilities (LD) in New Zealand, and in Australia have never been officially recognized as a category of special education either for children or for adults. As with general education, the development of special education in these countries have been influenced by ideas and practices imported from other countries, especially Britain and the United States. The general trend in New Zealand special education is towards mainstreaming or inclusion. The policy of inclusion applies mainly to learners with intellectual or physical disabilities who have received schooling in segregated facilities. For individuals with learning disabilities whose needs have barely been met, inclusion in the mainstream seems like exclusion from remedial assistance. Provisions for adults and children with learning disabilities are struggling to get off the ground in these countries (Chapman, 1992).

Although school-age children with learning disabilities are relatively well provided for in Canada, serious gaps in service exist for pre-school children and adults. Services for adults with learning disabilities are at a preliminary stage in most of Canada. Although many universities and community colleges have special needs offices, until recently the focus has been to provide accommodation for students with sensory and physical handicaps. Similarly, it is only the most progressive of employers who have become aware of the problem of learning disabilities in employees and the need to accommodate appropriately. Services for adults with learning disabilities however, are developing, partly as a result of the development of the field in the literature and partly due to the passage of the Federal Charter of Human Rights and Freedom in 1982 and provincial rights codes (Weiner, & Siegal, 1992; Cox & Klas, 1996).

In American society, education has traditionally been viewed as a means to advancement and opportunity (Boorstin, 1974), particularly in current times when many of the available jobs require technologically advanced skills and knowledge. Berliner (1992), explained that the American school system and curricula (as opposed to the Japanese system, for example) are designed with the idea in

mind that a large portion of youth will continue with post secondary schooling. Higher education is viewed as a critical stepping - stone via which people can improve their status in life. Furthermore, post-secondary graduation and credentials may be indicators, not of current status or activity, but of future potential. The wage gap between employed people who have attained varying educational levels is growing wider each year (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Murphy &Welch, 1989). In American society, it is more likely that individuals with degrees from 4-year colleges and universities will obtain higher paying jobs that provide opportunities for upward socio- economic mobility.

Prior to 1970s, only a few American tertiary institutions had specific programmes of support for individuals with disabilities. These programmes provided services primarily for individuals with sensory disabilities (Henderson, 1995; McCay & Laflace – Landers, 1993). During the past three decades, through such legislation as Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1990 (IDEA: Public Law 101 – 476) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), individuals with diverse disabilities have been increasingly empowered to enter the higher education system. In addition, persons with disabilities have become more knowledgeable about their legal rights and have become advocates for their own full inclusion into post- secondary programmes. As secondary transition planning for all individuals with disabilities has become prominent (a requirement of IDEA) in the high school, even more emphasis has been placed on transitioning individuals with LD to post secondary education programmes. Since the 1970s the percentage of college freshmen reporting has tripled.

3.1.1 Significant studies on adults with learning disabilities

Although many of the studies addressing the participation of graduates of special education programmes in post secondary institutions focused on single categories of disability, primarily deafness and hearing impaired or specific programmes such as vocational training, there are however, several studies that provide insight into LD. In this study, data from 3 frequently referenced follow-up studies regarding post-school outcomes, postsecondary education and employment, with attention to gender differences for youth with disabilities, who were served by and graduated from special education programmes nationwide in America, will be reviewed.

In the studies that follow various findings on the occupational choices of adults with learning disabilities are discussed. Absolute categorization of these aspects on the basis of the questions is difficult, as studies generally include more than one variable, and furthermore, overlapping of issues is inevitable.

3.1.1.1 Scuccimarra and Speece (1990)

In their study of 65 individuals with mild disabilities, 56 (86%) with learning disabilities, who graduated or left school in the metropolitan District of Columbia area, Scuccimarra and Speece (1990) found an overall employment rate of 79%. Gender differences were apparent, with 91% of the men employed versus 52% of the women. In addition, whereas 88% of the men were employed full-time, only 55% of the women were. The authors reported that 2% of the men claimed they were not in the labour force compared to 24% of the women. They also reported differences in wages between men and women, with an hourly wage of $5 or more earned by 25% and 9% respectively. The authors said that their data set was insufficient to determine which factors contributed to the gender-related differences, but that the data suggested that the former special education students with learning disabilities were beset by financial instability and dependence on the family.

In an analysis of job skills across gender, the Scuccimarra and Speece (1990) study showed that 60.8% of the participants were employed in unskilled capacities, 31.4% in semi-skilled capacities and 7.8% in skilled positions. On the basis of definitions from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (U.S. employment Service, 1965), the highest percentage of individuals was employed in clerical/sales positions (22.4%), service occupations (22.4%) and structural occupations (18.4%).

In this study Scuccimarra and Speece (1990) found that over half of the respondents (53.8%) reported relying on themselves to find employment, with parents and friends listed less frequently, 27.7% and 13.8% respectively. Teachers ranked highly with 38.8% of the respondents indicating that teachers had been helpful when respondents were seeking employment. Just over half the respondents (52.3%) indicated that they had received assistance from agencies. If these variables were collapsed into two categories of finding work, the "self-family-friend" and more institutional means such as job agencies and school personnel, the majority (84%) of the respondents found jobs through the self-family-friend network.

Seventy-two percent (72%) of the respondents in the Scuccimarra and Speece (1990) study reported that they had at least one summer job while in high school, these jobs were usually unsubsidised positions. Respondents generally did not pursue training after high school; 60% reported that they had not enrolled in coursework after high school. 16.9% attended classes at job training programmes; 7.7% at private agencies specializing in job training; 6.2% at community colleges; 4.6% on apprentice programmes.

The high rate of unemployment for women in this study was not due to marital status as very few of the respondents were married. Most respondents lived at home due to financial constraints though they preferred to live independently. Most of the respondents in this study were for the most part, able to obtain and maintain a job with which they were pleased. The reason for this is that the respondents were members of work-study programmes in special education. The assumption is that, the high school curriculum to which they were exposed, was at least adequate in preparing the students for work. Although increased variability of training programmes may be an obvious conclusion, there is a need for research efforts to specify the skills that require development in unemployed and underemployed young adults with mild handicaps.

3.1.1.2   Greenbaum, Graham and Scales (1996)

In their study on Adults with LD: Occupational and Social Status after College, Greenbaum et al reported that 71% of the 49 participants were employed. The occupations of these participants were quite varied and included customer service representative, bartender, medical researcher, reporter, camp director, bank teller, salesperson, mechanical engineer, artist, botanist, corporate vice-president, teacher, embryologist, investment banker, paramedic, social worker, securities broker, line cook' office manager, and so forth. Using the classification system in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (U.S. Department of Labour, 1991), 71% of the employed participants were in professional, technical or managerial positions; 23% were in clerical and sales occupations; and 6% were in service occupations.

Forty-six percent (46%) of the employed participants found their jobs via employment agencies or want ads, 29% through friends, 23% through their families, and 2% or 1 participant by himself. Gender did not appear to be a factor in the employment patterns. Slightly more than 60% of the employed and unemployed participants were males. Of those unemployed, one participant had lost her job because of

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insubordination, another indicated that she wasn't " interested in working right now," but was looking for a job anyway. Two other young men had just moved to a different city and had not found jobs at the time of the interview. Only one participant had completed a college education programme.

Eighty percent (80%) of the employed participants indicated that their current jobs offered opportunities for advancement. 62% of the employed participants received job benefits such as paid vacation and sick leave, medical insurance and retirement fund. One of the participants was provided with a company car and another received a membership in a health club.

Ninety-four percent (94%) were satisfied with their current jobs. One of the unsatisfied participants, a customer service representative in an insurance company, indicated that she did not enjoy her job because it was not what she " really wanted to do." Even though most of the participants liked their current jobs, 21% indicated that they would like a different job. The two primary reasons for wanting a different job were to make more money and to have a more interesting and challenging occupation.

The average number of jobs held by the participants after leaving college was 2.6. One participant, who was unemployed at the time of the interview and living in a halfway house, had held 20 different jobs. Three of the participants had never held a job.

Only 20% of the participants who were employed at some time or the other indicated that they had never disclosed their learning disability when applying for a job. This was usually done during the initial application interview. 80% of the participants did not disclose their disabilities. The primary reasons for nondisclosure included fear of discrimination and stigmatisation. Since most of the participants did not disclose their disabilities either before or after being hired, work place accommodations were relatively rare. Only 10% indicated that accommodations or adjustments had been made. Accommodations included a Dictaphone; lightened work load; writing assistance in the form of a word processor, spell checker or another employee to proof read written work.

At the time of the interview 43% of the participants lived with their parents. Another 41% lived in an apartment or a house with room - mates, the remaining 16% were married and lived with their spouses. The most common reasons for living at home centred on the high cost of living independently and the desire to save money. Whether living at home or independently, the participants' parents played an

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important role in their lives. 61% of the participants received monetary contributions from their parents. Fifty three percent (53%) indicated that their parents provided emotional support and that they were always there for them.

Eighty percent (80%) of the participants indicated that their LD affected them either at work or in other facets of their lives, including difficulties in reading, writing, mathematics and memory. They also indicated that it seemed to take them longer to *"do things"*. One participant noted, *" The LD keeps me from being the person I want to be and it limits me in many ways."*

3.1.1.3. Rojewski (1993, 1996a, 1999)

In a longitudinal study on the occupational and educational aspirations and attainment of young adults with and without LD 2 years after high school completion, Rojewski (1993, 1996a, 1999), described generally disappointing levels of educational and occupational attainment for young adults with LD.

In his study Rojewski (1999) found that individuals with LD were more likely to be employed in the workforce (especially men) and only half as likely to be enrolled in some type of postsecondary education programme (especially women) when compared to non-disabled respondents. A number of possible explanations have been suggested for lower enrolment rates of individuals with LD in post secondary education, including limited knowledge about the types of programme opportunities or the possible academic accommodations available to students with LD in many postsecondary educational programmes, poor self-advocacy skills, low self efficacy, lack of adequate secondary academic preparation and effects of bias, discrimination, or low expectation by teachers, parents or community. Problems with delayed or impaired career development and lowered academic performance of individuals with LD during early adolescence may contribute to lower rates of eventual enrolment in postsecondary education programmes (for example, 2-year vocational or 4-yearcollege/ university programmes), lowered levels of employment and less overall satisfaction in employment than found for non-disabled peers.

Women with LD were as likely to report being unemployed or out of the workforce (24.5%) as they were to report participation in postsecondary education (24.6%). Greater unemployment for individuals with LD especially for women, is consistent with past studies (Sitlington & Frank, 1990; Adelman &

Vogel, 1993; Scuccimarra & Speece, 1990, Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). The influence of gender on career development patterns has been consistently demonstrated in the literature (Betz & Fritzgerald, 1994; Sitlington & Frank, 1990) leading to the conclusion that gender is a powerful and persistent influence on occupational behaviour. The prominent role of gender has been attributed in part, to the unique experiences of women, such as concern for balancing career and family relationships (Fitzgerald, Fassinger & Betz, 1995). The combined effects of being a woman and experiencing LD had a substantial negative effect on career choice and attainment (Rojewski, 1999).

According to Patton and Polloway (1992) the scenario for many adults with learning disabilities is "characterized by unemployment and /or underemployment, low pay, part-time work, frequent job changes, non-engagement with the community, limitations in independent functioning and limited social lives." Several investigators have noted, however, that many persons with learning disabilities adjust well to the demands and complexities of adulthood (Gerber, 1994; Patton & Polloway, 1992). Rogan and Hartman (1996, 1990), for example, found that a number of adults with learning disabilities in their study were employed in white-collar jobs (for example, lawyer, real estate investor). Similarly, 37% of the adults with LD studied by Raskind, Gerber, Goldberg, Higgins & Herman (1998), were classified as highly successful on the basis of their job, eminence within their occupation, earned income, job satisfaction and education (Rogan & Hartman, 1990).

Problems with career choice and development experienced during adolescence are reflected in the reported higher rates of unemployment and underemployment of adults with LD. Several possibilities exist to explain this. The role of chance or unforeseen events in career choice and attainment is generally not well understood, but could be considerable for individuals with LD who may possess limited problem solving or reasoning skills. It may also be possible that poor hit rates simply reflect the degree of turbulence and uncertainty experienced as young people make the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Undoubtedly, other variables such as self-appraisal ability, work ethic and motivation or orientation to and knowledge about the world of work, also influence adult outcomes. Future investigations should consider these as well as other variables that might have an impact on educational and career behaviour.

One factor that may be particularly important to the ultimate success of adults with learning disabilities is level of education. Persons with mild disabilities who drop out of school for instance, are often

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employed at lower rates than persons with mild disabilities who graduate. Likewise, persons with learning disabilities who graduate from college are much more likely to hold professional and managerial positions than persons with learning disabilities who graduate from high school (Rogan & Hartman, 1990). Gerber, Reiff & Ginsberg (1992) also highlighted the importance of post-secondary schooling for the successful adult functioning of persons with LD. Most of the highly and moderately successful persons with LD they studied had some college experience, with 89% obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher.

Three studies have examined occupations of adults with learning disabilities who had graduated from college (Adelman & Vogel, 1990; Rogan & Hartman, 1990). Approximately 80% of the adults with LD in these studies were employed full time, mostly in professional and managerial positions.

Differences appear to exist in the types of employment held by persons with and without LD. Adults with LD tend to have jobs that hold fewer opportunities for advancement, require lower levels of skill, are more likely to be only part-time, provide lower pay, and are concentrated in lower prestige occupations including service, sales and managerial fields (Patton & Polloway, 1992).

Curnow (1999) noted that negative cultural perceptions and social expectations tend to impose lower status and a devalued role for persons with disabilities. Teachers or parents may be influential by limiting job or career choices, restricting opportunities and access to training programmes, or suggesting narrow stereotypical employment possibilities. Persons with LD may also limit their own educational and occupational futures as a result of poor self-concept, delayed and impaired career development or perceived inadequacies (Rojewski, 1999).

3.1.1.4 Other Studies

A number of studies conducted between 1985 and 1993 specifically examined the relationship between vocational education programmes and adult employment opportunities for students with mild disabilities. A significant relationship was found between taking vocational classes or having a job while still enrolled at high school and post-school employment rates.

Humes and Brammer (1985), found that 100% of students who took vocational education were employed. Evers (1996), found that 78% of vocational programme graduates with learning disabilities were employed. Frank, Sitlington & Carson (1995), found a significant relationship between part-time high school job and adult employment. In summary, the results from this group of studies suggest that students with learning disabilities who received some training in vocational education or worked during high school are more successful in the job market than those who had no vocational or work experience.

The findings of studies conducted by Hasazi, Gorden and Roe (1998); Sitlington and Frank (1990); Affleck, Edgar, Levine & Kotering (1990); Nisbet and Lichtenstein (1998) and Blackorby and Wagner (1996), with learning disabled high school and college graduates indicate that compared to their non-disabled peers, individuals with learning disabilities experience:

- a higher unemployment rate and/or underemployment rate. The employment rate for LD participants ranged between 55% and 77%, and 65% to 80% for their non-disabled peers. Comparing men with learning disabilities to women with LD resulted in consistently lower employment rates for the latter.

- lower pay - according to these researchers individuals with LD generally worked in low-status jobs mainly in the service and sales sectors. The salaries were generally so low that it precluded a truly independent living situation. This resulted on more dependency on parents or others.

- more dissatisfaction with employment, with frequent job changes.

- higher academic failure rates in post secondary settings.

These studies confirm many of the findings of the Scuccimarra and Speece (1990), Greenbaum, Graham and Scales, (1996) and Rojewski (1999) investigations discussed in the literature.

3.2   NATIONAL RESEARCH

3.2.1   South Africa

The status quo in South Africa (SA) might best be described as special education for whites, while services and resources for black learners are vastly inadequate and even non-existent in some areas. According to the Government White Paper 6 (2001), only 20% of learners with special education needs, representing 64 603 learners are accommodated in 380 special schools throughout the country. In Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN), 58 special schools accommodate 7 631 learners. Many of these schools are located in the previously 'advantaged' ex-education departments.

Nationally, there are approximately 24 Special Needs Schools (SNS) that cater for (LSEN) Learners with Special Education Needs (blind, deaf and learning disabled) where individuals can sit for the Grade 12 (LSEN) examination. Of the 24 SNS, approximately ten cater specifically for the long-term needs of individuals with learning disabilities. An internet search indicated that whilst research on the blind, deaf and physically disabled individual have been undertaken in South Africa, there was a paucity of research on the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities. The paucity of research may be attributed to the fact that the first non-racial Grade 12 examination (mainstream and LSEN) was written only 7 years ago in 1994. Data in respect of these individuals was only available from that point in time.

Attempts (telephonic) were made by the researcher to obtain information in respect of the occupational choices of individuals with LD from long-term remedial schools located in other provinces. Information in this respect was not easily or readily available as many schools indicated that they had not kept a track record of past learners.

Having failed to obtain information specifically from these schools, the researcher attempted to secure information in respect of individuals with disabilities in KZN. In the KZN, Department of Education and Culture (DEC), 6 schools prepare individuals with learning disabilities and/or other disabilities to sit for the Grade 12 LSEN examination. Three of these schools cater for the educational needs of the hearing impaired, one for the visually impaired, one for physically- challenged individuals and one for individuals with severe learning disabilities.

The researcher was successful in obtaining information, in respect of, the occupational choices of blind and hearing disabled individuals with learning disabilities, after making telephonic and faxed written requests to these schools. The information received will be used as national literature in this study.

3.2.2 Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN)

3.2.2.1 Schools for the visually impaired

Between the years 1996 to 2001, 89% (51) visually impaired individuals successfully completed the Grade 12 examination (refer to Appendix 3). This sample consisted of 23 males and 28 females. Fifty one percent (51%) or 26 of these learners pursued post secondary school education. According to records, the career directions included: law, religious studies, cosmetology, social science, physiotherapy, nursing, sports science, information technology and secretarial courses. Some of the visually impaired learners who successfully completed their studies were employed within the school. Others found employment with the assistance of educators and social workers. As their disabilities were visible, employers found little difficulty in accommodating them in the work situation.

3.2.2.2 Schools for the Hearing Impaired

A significant number of successful ex- Grade 12 learners from the schools for the hearing impaired in KZN have pursued post secondary studies at colleges and technikons. Between 2000-2001 at least 20 deaf individuals gained admission to teacher training colleges. These highly motivated individuals successfully completed teacher-training diplomas. Many of them have been employed by the KZN – DEC in schools for the hearing impaired. They enjoy the same benefits (job security, pension fund, medical aid and housing allowance) as their non-disabled colleagues. After completing a 3-year teaching diploma, many of these teacher graduates are pursuing further education within the field.

Beside the teaching field, several individuals from the schools for the visually and hearing impaired have also enrolled to study for Information Technology Diplomas at technikons. Many of them are currently in their final year of study. According to information from schools for the hearing impaired a successful high school graduate was accepted for training at a police training college. The successful

graduate was accommodated within the administration section of the South African Police Services (SAPS).

3.2.2.3   Success in studies and in the workplace

According to sources, these individuals are coping well with their studies due to several reasons:

- they are highly motivated and determined to succeed.

- educators, parents and social workers support, encourage and mentor them during their studies and when they are employed. They are provided with necessary accommodations such as sign language, Braille, typed and taped notes are provided to ensure their success at post secondary institutions.
- schools for the hearing and visually impaired, are actively involved in the process of transition education, and enrolment with colleges and technikons are a more of a handover.

- employees are more sympathetic towards disabilities that can be seen. Accordingly, individuals are accommodated in situations that suit their needs within the work situation.

3.2.2.4   Status of school-leavers

Whilst the above scenario may appear to be rosy, they represent only a portion of the individuals who were successful in gaining admission to post secondary institutions. Not much is known of what happens to other individuals who do not gain admission into tertiary institutions. There are several reasons for this:

- many school-leavers retain no contact with their alma mater. Previously, schools for the hearing and visually impaired were able to find sheltered employment for their learners, but this is no longer possible.

- Alternative education for individuals who did not gain admission to colleges and technikons is not in place.

- Parents are not empowered to seek employment for their disabled children or to access further training.

- There is a measure of apathy among those who receive a Disability Grant.

- Individuals are not motivated to succeed, have poor self-concepts and are dependent on others for support.

3.2.2.5   School for the physically challenged

Data in respect of the occupational choices of past learners from the school for the physically challenged in Kwa-Zulu Natal was not available at the time of the study. However, sources from within the school confirmed that individuals from this school who gained admission to post secondary institutions in the main, receive the necessary support in the form of accommodations and mentoring from parents and significant others. Those who do not gain admission to post secondary institutions obtained sheltered employment. Because of the increased public awareness of the needs of people with physical disabilities, employers have become more open towards employing them. However, despite obtaining sheltered employment, many of these individuals are dependent on their families for financial and emotional support.

3.2.2.6   School for the Learning Disabled

Whilst there are several educational institutions for visually and hearing impaired individuals in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province of South Africa, where individuals can sit for the Grade 12 examination, there is only one long-term remedial school that caters specifically for the needs of individuals with severe learning disabilities. The school is staffed with a multi-professional team of psychologists, educators, occupational, speech and remedial therapists who are suitably qualified to teach learners with specific learning disabilities. Although the school population is predominantly white, since 1994

blacks have been admitted. The school boast a hundred percent (100%) pass rate for Grade 12 learners for the past 5 years (1998 – 2002). Between 1996 and 2001, 103 learners wrote the Grade 12 examination. The school has a 95% pass rate for this period.

3.3 SECTION 3

CONCLUSION

Nationally, there was a paucity of information in respect of individuals with learning disabilities. In order to provide base-line data in respect of individuals with disabilities the researcher had to investigate the occupational choices of individuals from other schools in KZN (multiple disabilities such as learning disabilities, visual impairment, hearing impairment, physically challenged) who wrote the Grade 12 LSEN examination since 1996. National literature revealed that in the case of individuals whose disabilities were visible, the necessary support at high school and post-secondary school level was provided (parents, educators, significant others). A significant number of well motivated individuals with a desire to succeed, from these schools completed post-secondary studies and were employed in stable, well-paying jobs.

International literature reveals that despite the proliferation of studies in the past three decades, the immediate and long-term post school lives of individuals with learning disabilities, who were served in special education, is not well known. Little is known of the quality of life these individuals experience, how they manage (or do not manage) to fit into their communities, how satisfied they are with their lives and how their life adjustment compares to that of individuals not identified as requiring special education services.

As more recent sets of data have become available, the profession has been able to ascertain certain outcomes, such types of jobs, employment rate, the finding that few high school graduates with LD attend college or other forms of post secondary school education programmes, and, generally speaking, that individuals with LD do less well than their peers without disabilities. Another claim that has been generally accepted by the professional community is that, gender is a major factor related to outcomes, with females doing less well than males. These sets of data will provide the direction needed to identify

the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities in this study and to answer the critical questions. The critical questions are:

- What factors influenced the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities from a SNS in KZN?

- Does gender impact on occupational choices?

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 ORIENTATION TO CHAPTER FOUR

The previous chapter surveyed literature both internationally and nationally in order to gain insight into the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities.

This chapter unfolds the research methodology used to identify the occupational choices of ex – Grade 12 learners from a Special Needs School between 1996 and 2001, and, to answer the critical questions of this study. The critical questions being:

- What are the factors that influenced the occupational choices of individuals with LD?

- Does gender impact on their occupational choices?

This process involves probing into the individual, social and environmental-societal influences on occupational choice. The information generated from the data collection process was used to draw insights into occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities. The processes involved in the research methodology will be discussed in the following sections:

SECTION ONE: Research approach
SECTION TWO: Data Collection
SECTION THREE: Data Analysis `

4.1 SECTION 1

RESEARCH APPROACH

The nature of the problem under investigation demanded a multi-method approach because the various methods give totally different kinds of information that can supplement each other. Data was collected from different contexts (for example, home, school) and from multiple data sources (for example, the subject, family, educators, therapists and school records). The data collection approaches included such methods and sources as face-to-face interviews, telephonic questionnaires, standardized assessment, educational records, medical records and psychological records. This study is therefore a combination of two research methods, that is, the quantitative and qualitative methods. The rationale for the use of each research method is detailed below.

4.1.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative data was collected to provide the study with base-line information to uncover general trends. This was made possible through a telephonic questionnaire (see Appendix 3). The use of this method was a means of making tentative inroads into the occupational choices of past learners and to pave the way for more in-depth data gathering. It helped to establish connections with the collection of open-ended information in the questionnaire.

The numerical data provided hard evidence of the collective occupational choices of ex-learners. As such, combined with qualitative data, it has produced results that are more credible and arguably more authentic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.1.2 Qualitative Research

The face-to-face interview used in this study aimed to understand ex-learners occupational choices in a broad social and historical context. In this methodology, the ex-learners life is viewed as a story. This study, therefore, presents the ex-learners career experiences in story form, built through face-to-face interviews and supplemented with information from school records. The qualitative research method

formed an important foundation to arrive at the overall picture that emerges in this study. It has added insight and momentum to the research in the form of plausible explanations.

4.2 SECTION 2

DATA COLLECTION, CONTEXTS, DOMAINS AND SOURCES

Research findings are affected by the nature of data collection methods used. According to Nachmias & Nachmias (1987), in order to minimize the risk of erroneous conclusions, a researcher can use two or more methods of data collection. Consistent findings from different data collection methods increase the credibility of research findings.

4.2.1 Setting

This study was conducted at a predominantly white Special Needs School (SNS) in a city suburb in the Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) province of South Africa (SA) – (refer to Appendix 2A; 2B). The school catered for 103 Grade 12 learners between 1996 and 2001 and had a pass rate of 95% for that period. All the participants in the study were identified as severely learning disabled. Some of the learners had an additional diagnosis of Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). As the participants in this study were no longer learners at the school, and were between 18 and 26 years, their participation in the study was voluntary.

At the time of the study South Africa was in its ninth year of democracy. The unemployment rate for South Africans between the ages of 15 and 65 was 38% in 1996. It was predicted to exceed 40% by the year 2001 (Stats in Brief, 2000).

4.2.2 Research Sample

The total research sample consisted of 98 ex-Grade 12 learners who exited the school between 1996 and 2001. Ethnically, 96% of the sample was White and 4% was Indian. The primary language of all the participants in the study was English.

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The participants were identified through a review of existing school records. Telephone calls were made to former learners in order to confirm their participation in the study. Approximately one third of the telephone numbers had changed since past learners had left school. In these cases, attempts were made to locate the individuals with the assistance of teachers, therapists, administrators and participants in the study.

Approximately 11% (11/98) of the total sample of 98 individuals had emigrated. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the total sample was located and they agreed to participate in this study. Of the eighty-seven participants, 62% (54) were males and 38% (33) were females. The ratio of males to females was 1.6:1. The sample included triplets and twins. On an average, participants spent 8 years at school with a range of between 2 to 13 years (information obtained from school records).

The sample was divided into age cohort groups. Cohort 1 consisted of younger adults up to age 21, and Cohort 2 of older adults of 22 years and above. The Cohort 1 sample consists of 43 individuals from the age range of 18 years up to the age of 21 years; the average age being 20 years. The Cohort 2 sample consisted of 44 individuals with learning disabilities from the age of 22 years and above; the average age at the time of the interview being 25 years, and the range being between 22 years and 26 years. The division was arbitrary and was based on the fact that young adults with disabilities are involved in the transition from secondary to post secondary settings, while older adults with LD experience transition periods and problem areas at various times throughout their life span.

School records were used to compile comprehensive reports in respect of every participant in the study. The reports contained information relating to: age, intelligence quotient (IQ), date of admission to the school, grades passed/failed, medical reports/medications prescribed, therapies received, LD hereditary links, LD co-morbid conditions, outstanding achievements, positions occupied in school (for example, head prefect), work-experience and any other pertinent information relevant to the study.

School records indicated that the participants in the study had been diagnosed by certified psychologists and met the criteria for the diagnostic category of learning disabilities and/or ADHD. By definition, they had at least average intelligence as measured by the Senior South African Individual

Scale (S SAIS) or the Senior South African Individual Scale – Revised (S SAIS). The Intelligence Quotient (IQ) for the different cohorts is as follows:

Table 4.1 IQ: Cohort 1 and Cohort 2

IQ	Full Scale IQ	Range	Verbal IQ	Range	Performance IQ	Range
Cohort 1	105	92-121	101	89-117	103	81-125
Cohort 2	102	82-123	102	83-120	108	72-134
Total	104	82-123	102	83-120	106	72-134

* Criteria for admission to the school: Verbal IQ of at least 90.

The participants from both cohorts demonstrated deficits in specific academic skills as measured by achievement tests such as the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability, Schonell's Comprehensive Maths Tests and the Gapadol Reading and Comprehension tests. All the participants from both cohorts experienced severe reading difficulties and a significant number of them were diagnosed as being dyslexic. Between 1996 and 2001, 43% (37/87) of the individuals in this study, qualified for accommodations in respect of the Grade 12 examination.

From the school records, it was ascertained that, 45% of all the participants reported having a dual diagnosis of learning disabilities as well as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). In addition, all the participants had received remedial, speech, occupational and psychotherapy in various combinations while attending the school.

School records indicated that the participants came from middle to upper middle class socio-economic backgrounds (salary above R 5 000 per month – categorisation agreed on by participants during the piloting of the questionnaire). An analysis of information from school records also revealed that 43% of the sample came from families who had a history of learning disabilities and 24% from single parent homes.

4.2.3 Missing Sample

The researcher was unsuccessful in making direct contact with 11% (11/98) of the sample. The missing sample consisted of 1 white females (3%) and 10 white males (19%). Nine individuals from the Cohort 1 sample and 2 from the Cohort 2 sample had emigrated. Five individuals relocated to the United Kingdom, four to Australia and two to New Zealand. The information in respect of the whereabouts of these individuals was obtained from their parents.

4.2.4 Time

The participants in this study exited school between 1996 and 2001 and were between the ages 18 to 26 at the time of the study. The first few post high school years which have been referred to as the *"floundering period"* (Rojewski, 1999; 546), is a period to be considered separately from later years, as the outcomes for young adults who are in their mid- twenties, and, who have been out of school for 4 to 6 years are different from those who are between 18 and 21 years old. Combining the data for persons in this group and reporting one outcome can result in misleading and distorted data. As serious interpretation problems can arise when outcome data for participants who are of different ages or have been out of school for different periods of time are combined, this study employs age group cohorts. The Cohort 1 sample consisted of individuals up to 21 years and   the Cohort 2 sample of individuals 22 years of age and above (Gajar, 1992).

4.2.5 Communication

Specific learning disabilities may interfere with communicating with subjects and negatively affect the data collection process. For example, a reading disability may interfere with, and possibly invalidate, the responses to a questionnaire; a receptive language problem might result in misunderstanding an interview question; an expressive language disability might "obscure" the answer to an interview question; a memory problem may make it difficult for a subject to remember pertinent information from childhood; an attention problem might make it hard to stay on an interview topic; and maths difficulties might negatively affect responses to a rating scale. Whether communicating orally or in writing, researchers must have a thorough understanding of each individual's specific difficulties.

Bearing the above in mind, the same questionnaire was used for both the telephonic and the face-to-face interviews. Whereas the telephonic interview merely provided narrow answers to questions, the face-to-face interview allowed for greater interaction between the interviewer (researcher) and the interviewee. The interviewer (researcher) could probe and pose further questions in order to gain clarity and the interviewee could ask for questions to be explained or repeated. Information from face-to-face interviews was used to compile narrative stories.

Communication difficulties in this study were addressed by providing written material at "readable language levels" and conducting interviews at ability- appropriate language levels, using interview protocols that allow participants to have some control over the interview's direction (for attention deficit, for example, repeating interview questions as necessary), maintaining sensitivity to subjects' non-verbal communication and speaking at rates consistent with the subjects ability to process oral language (Raskind, Gerber, Goldberg, Higgins, & Herman 1998).

4.2.6 Instrument

Two data collection techniques were combined in this study:

4.2.6.1 Telephonic Questionnaire
4.2.6.2 Face-to-face Questionnaire/interview

The use of two different data collection techniques yielded inter-related sets of data that have served to increase the study's authenticity. The face-to-face questionnaire clarified and amplified answers, even though the person responded to the questionnaire. This kind of data triangulation according to Patton (1990) is also a means by which the weakness of one data collection could be compensated for by the strengths of another technique.

In this study the telephonic questionnaire was used as a baseline to draw a profile of the occupational choices of ex-learners. This information was further categorized to draw conclusions on aspects such as gender, age and race. The data from the face-to-face interviews was used to add flesh and insight to the concerns that were hinted at in the telephonic questionnaire responses. The telephonic questionnaire

yielded statistical data, which was given meaning and depth through the stories obtained from the face-to-face interviews and open-ended questions.

4.2.6.1 Questionnaire

Survey research typically requires co-operation from the participant under study, in the form of either written answers to a questionnaire or verbal responses to questions asked by interviewers (over the telephone or face to face). Since all the respondents in this study had graduated from high school between one to six years ago and because many of them had relocated to different provinces in South Africa, the most efficient way to contact them was to do so telephonically. Furthermore, response rates from telephone interviews are generally greater than those obtained through mailed surveys (Raskind, Gerber, Goldberg, Higgins, & Herman 1998).

Telephonic questionnaires were conducted between June and August 2002. It took an average of ten weeks to contact participants (and parents of missing participants) in the study. As information was taken directly from the participants (and not from parents and other family members), very often the researcher had to telephone participants several times in order to make an appointment to speak with them at a time that was convenient to them. Information in respect of individuals who had immigrated was not used for purposes of this study.

4.2.6.1.1 Components of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire (refer to Appendix 3) that was administered formed the quantitative aspect of this study and was divided into four sections. The first section (A) requested biographical data. Information on age, gender, race, marital status and first language was gathered.

The second section (B) requested academic details such as subjects studied for the Senior Certificate Examination. The section also contained an open-ended question relating to subject choice. Section (C) targeted family profiles. Information relating to parent age, educational levels, occupations and income brackets was gathered. This section also contained open-ended questions.

The fourth section (D) gathered information relating to individual, social and socio-environmental factors that influenced occupational choices. Open- ended questions were used to obtain qualitative types of data. The questionnaire included a section that allowed for additional information.

4.2.6.2 Face-to-Face interviews

Face-to-face interviews were used as a means of generating qualitative data. For this study to be useful, it had to portray the voice of the ex-learner through narrative career stories. The idea was to provide a dynamic framework so that potentially disconnected events become coherent to form a flow in the stories. Eight respondents (four from each cohort) were selected for the interview process using the purposive sampling technique. The idea was to select 'information rich cases' to illuminate the question under study (Patton, 1990). Those individuals, who consented to being interviewed, were in the main, prefects (head boy/girl, deputy head boy/girl) at the school between 1996 and 2001.

All interviewees were contacted directly by the researcher and interviews were arranged for a time and place acceptable to both parties (typically the place was near the interviewees home). The interviews were audio taped with the permission of the participant and ranged in length from 20-30 minutes. Seven participants agreed to the interviews being audio-taped.

Following each interview, the audiotapes were transcribed. The narrative career stories were supplemented with information from school history files and were used as a means to substantiate emerging issues arising from the quantitative data generated from the questionnaire and the qualitative data generated from responses to open-ended questions.

4.2.7 Informed Consent

Before beginning the study the researcher must get the informed consent of the subjects (refer to Appendix 4). Acquiring informed consent suggests that all potential or satisfactory information on the objective of the study, the course of the study, the potential advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which subjects might be susceptible, and the trustworthiness of the researcher be shown to possible subjects. The subjects should be informed objectively and candidly about the aim of the proposed research. They should be free to ask questions about anything that they are unsure of and these should be answered. The respondents in this study were accordingly informed that all information will be confidential and that anonymity would be respected. All information pertaining to participants was to remain the property of the researcher and was not to be used for any other purpose except for the

execution of this study. Students' names were not to be used other than for the organization of the raw data (De Vos et al., 1998; Palys, 1997).

4.2.8 Piloting the questionnaire

A pilot study was conducted as a starting point to the data collection process. The questionnaire was initially piloted with two respondents. The intention of the pilot was to evaluate whether:

- Any questions were ambiguous or confusing.

- The data being generated had any substance.

- The respondents considered the questions to be lengthy and time consuming

- The respondents considered the questions to be valid and appropriate

The following aspects emerged from the pilot study:

- Question 13 in the Family Details section which required learners to state the approximate family income, was considered to be problematic as respondents either did not know or did not want to divulge this information. They preferred to use the terms low, average and high-income brackets. Further discussion with the pilot group led to the categorization of low income as earning a salary of between R 3 000 and R 5 000; middle income, R5 000 and R 7 000, and high income as being above R9 000.

- Question 18 in Section D: A table indicating the factors influencing occupational choices was listed using single words and short phrases. This appeared to be unclear to the respondents and the researcher had to explain each factor in detail in order to elicit a response. As this was essentially a telephonic questionnaire, it was both, time consuming and costly for the researcher

and confusing for the respondents. The researcher had to rephrase and refine this category of questions.

The researcher took note of the time taken to complete the questionnaire and was satisfied that 15 to 20 minutes would be adequate for completion. The difficulties that emerged in the pilot study were rectified and the necessary revisions were effected in the final instrument. A second pilot study was undertaken with two respondents in a face-to-face situation to determine areas of possible difficulties in respect of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was smooth flowing and the respondents did not experience any problems in answering the questionnaire within fifteen minutes.

4.2.9 Face Validity of the Instrument

The clarity, completeness, difficulty, sequencing and value of each question was analysed by three educational psychologists. Feedback from this analysis was used to modify the questions.

4.3 SECTION 3

4.3.1 Data Analysis

Analysis is a procedure that takes a complex whole and separates it into its parts. Analysis of the data was done in several stages. These stages amounted to several phases of data reduction in order to identify key themes and sub - themes that characterized the rich descriptions collected in the interviews and from the open – ended questions in the questionnaire. The findings from the qualitative interview data met Guba and Lincoln's (1981) four criteria of validity, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Information from Occupational Theories, local research, research from overseas countries, responses from the questionnaire and interviews will be analysed and synthesized in the next chapter. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) will be calculated for all questions. Binomial tests using the computer programme Number Cruncher for Social Sciences (NCSS) was used to analyse data. Binomial tests, were used to illustrate differences between age cohorts and between male and female

participants where appropriate. All the findings will be reported in terms of the 95% level of confidence ($p < 0.05$). Percentages in tables will be rounded off to whole numbers in the discussion of results.

4.3.2 Conclusion

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the entire process involved in conducting this research from its conception. This included the research approach, data collection and data analysis. A detailed gathering process had to be used because this study is on an under researched area in South Africa.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.0 ORIENTATION TO CHAPTER FIVE

The previous chapter provided a detailed explanation of the processes involved in the research methodology. These included the research approach, data collection and data analysis.

This chapter aims to summate the data findings and draw warranted and justified conclusions in accordance with the purpose and the critical questions that underpin this study. The purpose of the study is to identify the occupational choices of ex-Grade 12 individuals from a Special Needs School between 1996 and 2001, and, the critical questions are:

- What factors influence the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities?

- Does gender impact on occupational choice?

The chapter is divided into four sections:

SECTION ONE:	Quantitative Analysis
SECTION TWO:	Qualitative Analysis
SECTION THREE:	Substantiating emerging data
SECTION FOUR:	Synthesis of recurrent issues arising from the data

SECTION 1 will present the analysis of Quantitative data gathered from the telephonic questionnaire. This data is used as a starting point to unveil the collective voice of the respondents. In the presentation of the data, cross - references will be made between tables in order to substantiate pertinent aspects of the study.

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SECTION 2 utilizes:

- Open-ended questions from the questionnaire to explore possible reasons for the participants' occupational choices, and,

- Career narratives to add meaning to the questionnaire.

In **SECTION 3** information rich qualitative data from the narrative career stories, developed from face-to-face interviews, and open-ended questions will be used to substantiate emerging dominant influences from the quantitative analysis of the questionnaire.

SECTION 4 reports on the synthesis of recurrent issues arising from the data.

5.1 SECTION ONE: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

5.1.1 Biographical patterns

Table 5.2 Biographical patterns

COHORT	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL
1 – age up to 21 years	26	60%	17	40%	43
2 – age 22 years +	28	64%	16	36%	44
TOTAL	**54**	**62%**	**33**	**38%**	**87**
RACE	**WHITE**		**INDIAN**		**TOTAL**
	95%		5%		100%
MARITAL STATUS	**SINGLE**		**MARRIED**		**OTHER**
	97%		2%		1%
LANGUAGE	**ENGLISH**		**AFRIKAANS**		**ISIZULU**
	100%		-		-

The sample consisted of 87 English - speaking individuals. It was divided into two age-cohort groups. Of the 43 participants in Cohort 1, 60% were males and 40% were females. In Cohort 2, of the 44 participants, 64% were males and 36% were females. An in-depth analysis of the biographical details revealed that:

- Ethnically, the sample consisted of 95% White and 5% Indian individuals with learning disabilities. The high number of White participants in the sample is due to the fact that the school was a former House of Assembly school.

- Ninety-seven percent (97%) of all participants were single.

- Sixty-two percent (62%) of all participants were males and 38% were females. The ratio of the male and female sample was approximately 1.6:1. A possible reason for the predominance of males in the study could be attributed to the fact that more males are diagnosed ADHD than are females (Klein & Mannuzza, 1991; Reid, Maag, Vasa & Wright, 1994).

5.1.2 Academic Details: Subject selection

Figure 4 Profile of the sample according to subject selection
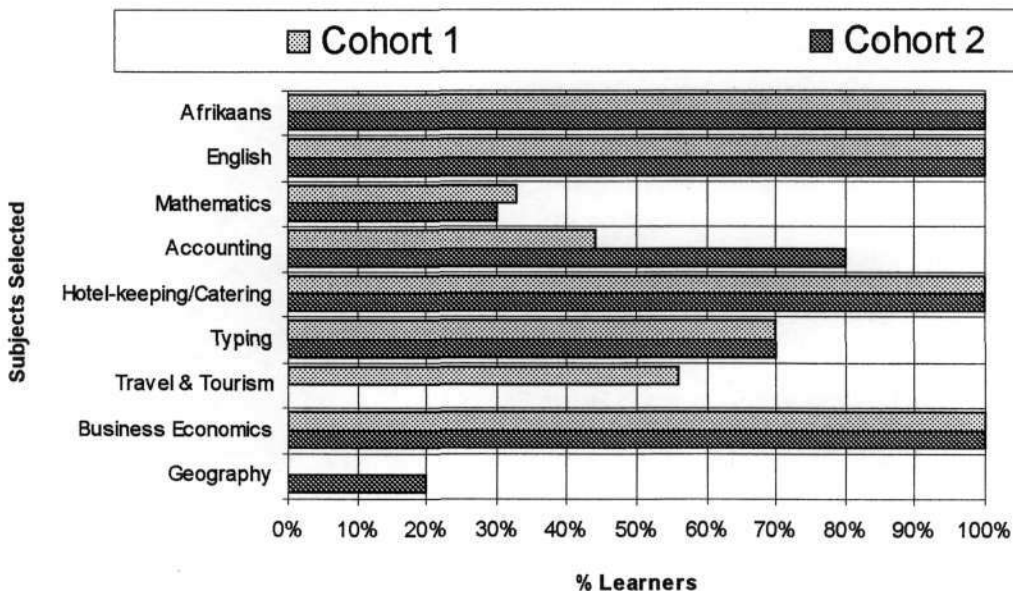
Figure 4 indicates that all the participants in this investigation studied Afrikaans, English, Hotel-Keeping and Catering and Business Economics. An analysis of data indicated that 76% of the participants were of the opinion that the choice of subjects influenced their occupational choice (refer to Table 5.8). Data analysis indicated that Hotel-Keeping and Catering, as a subject had the greatest impact on occupational choices as 32% of the participants in this study were employed in the hotel industry (refer to Table 5.9).

Thirty-one percent (31%) of the participants from both cohorts studied Mathematics. In the Cohort 1 sample, 14 individuals, comprising 42% of the male sample and 18% of the female sample, studied mathematics. In the Cohort 2 sample, 13 participants, comprising 29% of the male sample and 31% of the female sample, studied mathematics. One of the reasons for fewer participants studying mathematics is that individuals' with learning disabilities often experience failure and so avoid studying the subject (Gadbow & Du Bois, 1998).

Whilst this may be the status quo in respect of mathematics, it is important to note that 25% of the student population from the 2001 Grade 12 class (Cohort 1), pursued careers at colleges that required mathematics as a prerequisite.

5.1.3 Factors influencing occupational choice

In order to get a holistic picture in respect of the factors that influenced the occupational choices of the sample under study, data was analysed, as per questionnaire (refer to Appendix 7) and rated from the most to the least influential (refer to Table 5.3). Binomial tests using the computer programme, NCSS was used to make inter and intra correlations between gender and cohort.

The factors listed in Table 5.3 were clustered and data was reported in terms of:

- **The Individual System** – In this cluster factors such as personality type, interests, abilities, gender, health, disabilities and self-determination were explored and reported on.

- **The Social System** – Family, school, peer-group and media factors were explored and reported on.

- **The Environmental - Societal System** – Influences such as demand for jobs, government decisions, geographic locations and technological changes were explored and reported on.

Table 5.3 Factors influencing occupational choice according to cohort and gender

Factors influencing occupational choices	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total		N=87
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Self – knowledge	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Technological change	96%	94%	96%	100%	96%	97%	97%
Learning Disabilities	88%	65%	100%	100%	94%	83%	89%
Geographic location	69%	71%	79%	75%	74%	73%	76%
Subject choice	81%	65%	64%	69%	72%	79%	76%
Choice	58%	59%	54%	69%	56%	64%	60%
Chance factors	42%	59%	57%	69%	50%	64%	57%
Media	50%	47%	57%	43%	53%	45%	49%
Demand for jobs	42%	29%	68%	44%	55%	36%	48%
Health	42%	35%	61%	50%	51%	43%	47%
Government/decisions	46%	47%	50%	38%	48%	43%	46%
Gender	35%	24%	57%	19%	46%	21%	34%
Self-determination	38%	18%	21%	25%	30%	22%	26%
Fathers' influence	46%	19%	11%	6%	29%	13%	21%
Mothers' influence	0%	23%	0%	6%	0%	14%	7%

5.1.4 The Individual system

Table 5.4 The influence of the Individual System on occupational choice

Influence	Cohort 1				Cohort 2				Total	Total
Personality	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%	Yes-%	No- %
Reserved	22	51%	21	49%	17	39%	27	61%	45%	55%
Outgoing	21	49%	23	51%	27	61%	17	39%	55%	45%
Interests	**Cohort 1**				**Cohort 2**				**Total**	**Total**
Sports	27	63%	16	37%	35	80%	9	20%	72%	28%
Abilities	**Cohort 1**				**Cohort 2**				**Total**	**Total**
Verbal	22	51%	21	49%	29	66%	15	34%	59%	41%
N/Verbal	23	53%	20	47%	23	52%	21	48%	53%	47%
Creative	7	17%	36	83%	25	57%	19	43%	37%	63%
Gender	13	30%	30	70%	19	38%	25	57%	34%	66%
Health	19	44%	24	56%	22	50%	22	50%	47%	53%
LD	34	79%	9	21%	44	100%	0	0%	90%	10%
S/Determination	13	30%	30	70%	10	23%	34	67%	27%	74%

*S/Determination = Self Determination

- **Self – knowledge**

An analysis of the data revealed that all the participants were in agreement that knowledge of one's aptitudes, interests and abilities, influence one's occupational choice (refer to Table 5.3). Identified interests, aptitudes, values and opportunities provide a basis for tentative occupational decisions.

From Table 5.4, it can be deduced that 61% of the participants from Cohorts 2 were outgoing; 72% actively participated in sporting activities; 66% had good verbal abilities and 57% were creative.

When compared to the Cohort 2 sample, the Cohort 1 sample indicated that 51% were reserved, 63% participated in extra-curricular activities and 53% had good non-verbal skills. In this group there were

more students. Thirty four percent (34%) of the individuals in the Cohort 1 sample were post-secondary education learners (50% males and 18% females; refer to Table 5.9) as compared to 10% of the Cohort 2 sample.

According to international research, involvement in extra-curricular activities is a major indicator of participation in post secondary education (Miller, Snider & Rzonca, 1990). Successful integration into the extra-curricular activities in the high school is vehicle for individuals with LD to increase their perceived feelings of belonging with regard to the school, as well as a way to increase acceptance by their non-disabled peers. Sixty eight percent (68%) of the individuals in this study were actively involved in sporting activities such as cycling, athletics, swimming and surfing.

- **Gender**

Gender is a socially constructed variable. Female participants who entered the employment market in the hospitality industry as chefs (a male dominated field) indicated that gender did not influence their occupational choice. However, females who were employed in occupations such as crèche teachers and day- care workers were of the opinion that this type of a job was solely for women. Likewise, male participants too, indicated that certain occupations, like lifesaving and hotel management were especially for men as they were difficult and required "the stamina only a man has." Gender influenced the occupational choices of 34% of the participants (30% - Cohort 1; 38% - Cohort 2). Binomial tests indicate that this result was statistically not significant at the 5% level ($z = -1.25$ and $p = 0.21$).

Binomial tests, however, indicated that the influence of gender on the occupational choices between the males in Cohort 1 and 2 was statistically significant. Statistically significant results were also indicated between the male and female sample in the study.

- **Health**

A holistic view of the individual, needs to emphasise physical and mental health, in relation to career choice and development. The Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis and Lofquist, 1984), in particular drew attention to the potential relationship between job satisfaction and physical and mental health.

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In this study, health influenced the occupational choice of 47% of the participants (44%- Cohort 1; 50% - Cohort 2). This result, however, has to be interpreted cautiously as the question appeared to be ambiguous, and, participants responded by simply stating that they were fine or that they did not have any health problems

- **Learning disabilities**

It is important to note that most of the participants continued to experience considerable difficulties, both in the workplace and in colleges, as a result of their learning disabilities. The statistics indicate that LD influenced the occupational choice of 90% of the individuals The impact of learning disabilities on occupational choice is clearly evident in the Cohort 2 sample as 85% of the individuals went to work immediately after graduating from high school, whilst, only 10% pursued tertiary studies (refer to Table 5.9). Binominal tests indicated that this result was statistically significant at the 5% level ($z = -3.20$ and $p = 0.00$).

The current study adds to a growing body of work indicating that a learning disability is a persistent problem that does not "go away" with maturity. The impact of LD on occupational choice is evident in the career narratives of all the participants (refer to Appendix 5).

- **Self-determination**

The role of the individual in their own career development is becoming more important due to the changes in the workplace. According to Hall (1996:xvi), *"This would call for frequent change and self-invention and would be propelled by the desire for psychological success rather than externally determined measures of success."*

Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the participants (30% - Cohort 1; 23% - Cohort 2) indicated that they chose their occupations because they were goal orientated and determined to succeed in their chosen field. Goal directedness is evident in Mervin's career narrative (refer to Appendix 5).

5.1.5   The Social System

Table 5.5 The influence of the Social System on occupational choice

Social Influence	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total
Family	Yes	%	Yes	%	N=87
Income R5 000 - R 9 000	33	91%	41	93%	92%
*Living arrangements	30	70%	23	52%	61%
Education level (M1-3)	32/86	37%	11/88	13%	25%
Father's Influence	14	33%	4	9%	21%
Mother's influence	6	14%	1	2%	8%
School (subject choice)	33	77%	32	73%	75%
Media	21	49%	21	48%	49%

*Living with both parents, mother or father.

The family, school, peer group and the media form elements of the social system and play an influential role in the occupational choice of individuals with learning disabilities.
Table 6 indicates:

- **Family income level**

The statistics indicate that 92% of the participants in this study who graduated from high school between 1996 and 2001 came from homes where parents earned an income of R 5 000 and above.

Parents' occupation and income level can influence occupational choice. A wealthy family can provide the resources to pursue special hobbies and perhaps develop some latent interest and skill. Financial resources also make it easier for individuals to attend college. Parents' occupation and income can also influence the type of neighbourhood in which a family lives. A place of residence is influential because it determines whom we meet and interact with in our daily lives. Because of their residents' background and values, neighbourhoods differ in their emphasis on athletic achievements, academic achievements and occupational success

- **Living arrangements**

According to the literature, a significant number of individuals with LD are employed in part-time, low paying positions that preclude independent living. Many are dependent on their parents for financial and emotional support.

Of the 87 participants in this study, 61% continue to live with their parents. 52% of the individuals from the older cohort (Cohort 2) lived with their parents as compared to 70% from the younger cohort (Cohort 1). Binomial tests indicate that this result was statistically not significant at the 5% level ($z = 1.67$ and $p = 0.09$).

- **Parents' education level**

Post secondary attendance is highly associated with family background, therefore the lower rate of education among heads of household of youth with disabilities, the lower their involvement in post secondary programmes (Mader & Cox, 1991).

In this study, 25% of the parents (both parents, mother/father) had an educational qualification level of M+ (for example, matric plus I year/2 years/3 years, of post secondary training = M 1/ M 2/ M 3). Parental education level has impacted on 22% of the participants in this sample who are students at colleges and technikons (refer to Table 5.9). Binomial tests indicate a statistically significant result at the 5% level ($z = 3.78$ and $p = 0.00$).

- **Parents' Occupation**

A parent's occupation can influence one's occupational choice. For one, it can determine the kind of people met and admired during childhood. Growing up as the child of a physician is likely to expose one to different role models than growing up as a child of a fire fighter – not better or worse, but different. Selective exposure to different adults can stimulate widely different occupational aspirations. Social class can also affect the values one hopes to attain at work. A college professor or scientist may encourage a life of study and research, a social worker or physician, a life of service and an

entreprenuer a life of competition. This is not to say that a child automatically adopts a parent's work values, but that the opportunity to identify with parents and to internalize their values is certainly present (Greenhaus, 1996).

In this study (refer to Table 5.9) approximately 50% of the mothers were employed in the service sector as secretaries, receptionists, clerks and salespersons. Their influence is evident especially in the Cohort 1 sample where 49% of the female participants were employed in the service sector. In this sample (Cohort 1) fewer females engaged in male dominated fields in occupations such as chefs.

Figure 5: Influence of parent's occupation

Influence of parent's occupation
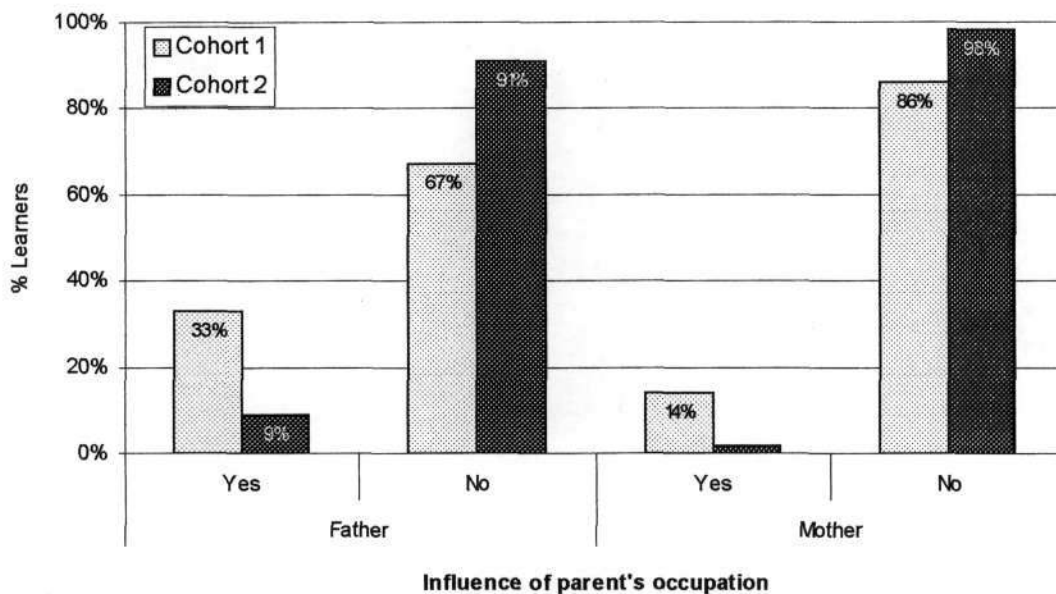
- **Influence of fathers' occupation**

According to Figure 5, the influence of the fathers' occupation is evident on 21% of all the participants. The occupational choices of 33% and 9% of the participants from the Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 sample respectively was influenced by the fathers' occupational choices. This result was statistically significant at the 5% level ($z = 2.70$ and $p = 0.00$).

- **Influence of mothers' occupational choices**

The mothers' occupation influenced the occupational choices of 8% of all participants. The occupational choices of 14% and 2% of the participants from Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 respectively, were influenced by the occupational choices of their mothers'. This result was statistically significant at the 5% level ($z = 2.00$ and $p = 0.05$).

- **Influence of school**

The school influenced the occupational choices of 75% of all participants. The choice of school subjects is seen to have influenced the occupational choices of 77% and 73% of the individuals from the Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 sample respectively.

- **Influence of Media**

Career theorists such as Hall (1996), recently recognised the media as a socialising influence. They are significant as a filter of information in terms of what they report and how they report. The influence of the media on occupational choices is evident in 49% of the participants.

5.1.6   The Environmental – Social System

Table 5.6 Environmental-Societal Influences on Occupational Choices

ENVIRONMENTAL/SOCIETAL INFLUENCES	Cohort 1				Cohort 2				Total
	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%	%
Demand for jobs	15	36	28	64	25	56	19	44	46%
Government Decisions	20	47	23	53	20	45	44	55	46%
Geographic Location	31	72	12	28	35	80	9	20	76%
Technological Changes	42	98	1	2	44	100	0	0	99%

The individual lives within a broader system, that of the society or the environment. Demand for jobs, geographic location, government decisions and technological change are some of the environmental-societal factors that influence occupational choice.

- **Demand for jobs**

Changes to the employment market such as enterprise agreement, the increasing proportion of contract positions versus tenured positions and workplace based education and training brought about largely by political influences should be noted as significant influences on career development. Increasing unemployment, especially for specific groups, such as young people and the middle aged is also an important influence in the environmental societal system. These employment market influences increase the need for ongoing career planning and lifelong learning. The study indicates that the occupational choice of 46% of the participants was influenced by the demand for jobs (employment market trends).

- **Decision of governments**

Decisions of government on issues such as social and security benefits, funding for schools and universities, industrial agreements and workplace restructuring may have a profound influence on individuals or the members of their immediate social system. Political and historical influences may also account for the beliefs, values and attitudes held by age cohorts such as the values held by school leavers at the time of high employment compared with those with times of high unemployment. In this study, 46% of the participants indicated that government decisions influenced their occupational choices.

- **Geographic location**

Geographical isolation has been under-rated as an influence in career choice and development. Rural isolation may influence the nature of schooling received, employment opportunities, the availability of role models and access to information. The influence of geographic location can also be experienced within cities, where the better "name" of some suburbs than others affects the employment

opportunities of residents. Seventy six percent (76%) of the participants in this study indicated that geographic location influenced their occupational choices.

- **Technological change**

The effects of globalisation are far-reaching, for example in areas about the world of work, provision of jobs in particular areas and the importance of the transferability of skills. Globalisation and technology continue to have unimagined and far-reaching effects in our lives in relation to access to information, communication and the process of applying for jobs through the facilities of the inter-net. Ninety nine percent (90%) of the participants in this study indicated that technological change influenced their occupational choice.

5.1.7 Chance factors

Table 5.7 The impact of chance on occupational choices

Other Influences	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total
	Yes (N)	%	Yes (N)	%	Yes
Chance	21	49	27	61	55%

Table 5.7 indicates that chance factors influenced the occupational choices of 55% of the participants in the study.

The influence of "accidents" in career decision-making must not be ignored, for example, if Mervin's father (refer to Appendix 5 – Mervin's career narrative) had not been transferred to an area close to the beach, Mervin may not have had the opportunities he did. "These kind of random accidental events can occur all the time and easily influence the course of our lives" (Greenhaus, 1996:119).

5.1.8 Dominant influences according to gender

A quantitative analysis of the factors that influenced the occupational choices of participants, according to gender and per cohort, resulted in the emergence of the following five dominant factors (refer to Table 5.3 for a comprehensive list): self – knowledge, technological change, learning disabilities, geographic location and subject choice.

Table 5.8 Dominant emerging influences according to cohort and gender

Dominant Influence	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total		N=87
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Self – knowledge	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Technological change	96%	94%	96%	100%	96%	97%	97%
Learning Disabilities	88%	65%	100%	100%	94%	83%	89%
Geographic location	69%	71%	79%	75%	74%	73%	76%
Subject choice	81%	65%	64%	69%	72%	79%	76%

Self – knowledge

A hundred percent (100%) of the participants in this study acknowledged the importance of self-knowledge with regard to their occupational choice.

Technological change

In this study, technological change influenced the occupational choices of 97% of the participants as follows:

- Ninety-six percent (96%) of the males and 94% of the females in the Cohort 1 sample. Binomial tests indicate that the results were statistically not significant at the 5% level ($z = 0.65$ and $p = 0.52$).

- Ninety-six percent (96%) of the males and 100% of the females in the Cohort 2 sample. This result was statistically significant at the 5% level ($z = -2.02$ and $p = 0.04$).

- Ninety-six percent (96%) of all males and 97% of all females in the sample. This result was statistically not significant at the 5% level ($z = -0.38$ and $p = 0.70$).

Learning disabilities

Learning disabilities impacted on the occupational choices of 89% of the participants as follows:

- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the male and 65% of the female sample in Cohort 1. Binomial tests indicate that this result was statistically significant at the 5% level ($z = 3.84$ and $p = 0.00$).

- Eighty-eight percent (88%) and 100% of the males in the Cohort 1 and 2 samples. The results were statistically significant at the 5% level ($z = -3.57$ and $p = 0.00$).

- Sixty-five percent (65%) and 100% of females in Cohort 1 and 2 respectively. The results were statistically significant at the 5% level ($z = -6.51$ and $p = 0.00$).

- Ninety-four percent (94%) of all the males and 83% of all females in the study. Binomial tests indicated that the results were statistically significant at the 5% level ($z = 2.44$ and $p = 0.01$).

Geographic location

- The occupational choices of 74% of the participants (74% males and 73% females) were influenced by geographic location.
  This result was statistically not significant at the 5% level ($z = 0.16$ and $p = 0.87$).

Subject choice

- The choice of school subjects influenced the occupational choices of 76% of the participants.

- The occupational choice of 73% of the participants in Cohort 1 (81% - male; 65% - female) was influenced by subject choice. This result was statistically significant at the 5% level (z = 2.55 and p = 0.01).

5.2 SECTION 2

5.2.1 Qualitative analysis of open-ended questions

Table 5.9   Main themes from analysis of open-ended questions

The following main themes emerged from an analysis of the open-ended questions:

Strengths	Hardworking, motivated to succeed, dedicated, conscientious, technically minded, patient, hands on person, enjoy working with people.
Limitations	Boredom, poor concentration, reading and spelling difficulties, bossy and aggressive, impatient, reserved, poor self-concept, sensitive, "different."
Aspects of work Enjoyed	Lifestyle – freedom to pursue interests, meeting new people, travelling, sales talk, working with hands, working with children, being creative.
Choice to change career	"Sixty percent (60%) of the participants indicated that they would change their occupational choice, if they got a better job.
Mothers' occupation	Forty-eight percent (48%) secretaries, clerks, receptionists, salesladies, 23% housewives, 11% managers, 9% self-employed, 4% educators, 5% nurses and therapists (refer to Appendix 6).

Fathers' occupation	Twenty-one percent (21%) managers; 26% technicians; 11% self-employed; 6% engineers, 8% builders, 7% clerks, salespersons; 15% unknown, unemployed, retired, 4% medical, 2% educators (refer to Appendix 6).
Occupation – Cohort 1	**Males:** Fifty percent (50%) students, 38% employed (27% - hospitality trade; 11% salespersons and artisans, family business), 12% unemployed. **Females:** Eighteen percent (18%) students, 82% employed (11% hospitality industry; 28% secretaries, receptionists, clerks; 21%sales-persons; 17% child-care; 5% sports and beauty), 0% unemployed (refer to Appendix 14 for a complete list in respect of all participants). **Employed: 60%; Students: 34%; Unemployed: 6%**
Occupations – Cohort 2	**Males:** Seven percent (7%) students, 89% employed (38% hospitality trade; 11% law enforcement; 10 managers; 8% technicians; 11% salespersons; 11% artisans, builders, motor mechanics, drivers), 4% unemployed. **Females:** Thirteen percent (13%) students, 81% employed (50% hospitality trade; 13% clerks, receptionists, secretaries; 18% child-care), 6% unemployed **Employed: 85%; Students: 10%; Unemployed; 2%;**

Table 5.10 Profile of interviewees

The stories are presented in descending order according to the number of years away from school.

NAME	GENDER	Grade12Year	Occupation	Work-History
Bob	Male	1996 - H.B.	Manager of a Pub and Grill	6th job
Pam	Female	1996 - H.G	Bar-lady, waitress	6th job
Gerry	Male	1996 - P.	Co-Manager of a Company	5th job
Mervin	Male	1996 - D.H.B.	Area Manager: Life- Saving	1st job
Carry	Female	1999 - H.G.	Chef: Contract work	4th job
Terry	Female	1999 - P.	Chef: Part-time work	3rd job
Eve	Female	2001 - H.G	Receptionist	2nd job
Wayne	Male	2001 - P.	Barman, waiter	2nd job

*H.B. = Head Boy; H.G. = Head Girl; D.H.B. = Deputy Head Boy; P. = Prefect

5.2.2 Narrative career stories

Narrative accounts of eight biographies, (refer to appendix 5), have been presented in an attempt to understand the factors that influenced the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities. Data from the career narrative stories will be used to add flesh to dominant influences that emerged as a result of data analysis from the questionnaire and qualitative data from open-ended questions.

5.3 SECTION THREE

5.3.1 Using career narratives to substantiate emerging data

A quantitative analysis of the questionnaire (refer to Table 5.8) revealed that the following emerged as the dominant factors influencing the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities: self-knowledge, technological change, learning disabilities, geographic location and subject choice.

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Career narratives (refer to appendix 5) will be used to substantiate the emerging dominant influences. Although several dominant influences can be located in each career narrative, this study highlighted emerging influences using different career narrative where possible.

Table 5.11 Emerging influences / substantiating data

EMERGING INFLUENCES	SUBSTANTIATING DATA
1.Self-knowledge Self-knowledge – Participants acknowledged that a clear understanding of themselves in respect of their aptitudes, interests, abilities, interests, resources and limitations was necessary in order to implement career decisions. People learn about themselves through educational experiences. Part-time and summer job employment can provide substantial opportunity for reality testing – a first-hand look at themselves. By waitressing, clerking, selling or repairing one can not only test one's talents and interests, but one can also learn what it is like to work outside the home. In the absence of a deep understanding of one's talents, values and preferred lifestyle, one would require considerable luck to fall into a compatible occupation. Lack of relevant work experience, stereotypes of occupations and unfamiliarity with certain occupational fields all detract from the development of a solid base of occupational information.	1.1 Mervin was always goal orientated and had a desire to succeed in his chosen field. The following factors enabled him to realize his ambition: his intense interest in swimming - he was the school freestyle champion since he was 10 years old and that he lived close to the sea. He joined a life saving club and he was able to achieve this goal in his Grade 9 year. He is affiliated to International Life Saving, and as such can get a job in the field anywhere in the world. His dedication in the field was rewarded by several promotions in the field from Grade 9 onwards. When he completed Grade 12, he was offered a permanent job with fringe benefits. He is now an area manager for ten North Coast Beaches in KZN.

2. Technological change

One of the most significant trends, affecting not only the environmental-societal system but also the social and individual systems, is the growth of technology. Technology has opened up possibilities for marketing, service delivery, self-help resources and research amongst others. These possibilities are examples of globalisation at work. Globalisation and technology have unimagined and far- reaching effects on our lives in relation to access to information, communication and the process of applying for jobs through the facilities of the internet. In the areas of information of the world of work, for example, information in respect of provision of jobs in particular areas and the importance of transferability of skills become available via the internet. Technology has made it possible for individuals in remote areas to access information previously unavailable to them.

2.1 When Pam started working for an overseas company, booking holidays for tourists from all around the world, she had to become computer literate as her job depended on it. Her job entailed making reservations, planning meals and tours, internet banking, E-mailing, faxing and generally ensuring that the tourists needs were attended. She was able to hold her job for several years before she returned to South Africa. Having made international contacts and having acquired the expertise to begin her own business, Pam intends luring international guests to tourist destinations in South Africa. In this way she hopes to create employment for others.

3. Learning disabilities

The problems related to LD (refer to Appendix 1) during the school years persist into adulthood. In fact, as these individuals become older, their problems may become more magnified or manifest themselves differently as the demands of work, home, school and community living increase and become more complex. LD are seen as a "hidden disability" that are invisible to most employers, supervisors

3.1 Terry spent a total of 12 years at the school. She was diagnosed ADHD (predominantly inattentive type) and SLD. At school she received speech, occupational, remedial and psychotherapy. From her Grade 7 year onwards, all her test and examinations were conducted using tapes.

After she graduated from high school, she enrolled with a hotel training school to pursue a

and co-workers. LD has impacted on the occupational choices of 89% of the individual in this study. In Cohort 1, the occupational choices of 79% of all participants, compared with 100% in Cohort 2, was influenced by learning disabilities. In Cohort 1, 33% of the participants engaged in post secondary studies whereas in Cohort 2, 9% of the participants did so. A significant number of participants in this study, especially from the cohort 2 participants were reluctant to pursue postsecondary studies because of persistent failure and low morale in the school years.

career as a chef. With great difficulty she was able to cope with the practical aspects of the course but she could not manage studying for tests and examinations. She was easily distracted, had poor concentration and was dyslexic. She is reluctant to disclose her disability to her training school because she does not want others to know that she's "different." Terry becomes frustrated when her employees place her in lower serving positions within the hospitality trade because she feels that she is being discriminated against. All her jobs are short lived.

4. Geographic location

Geographical isolation has been underrated as an influence in career choice and development. Rural isolation may influence the nature of schooling received, employment opportunities, the availability of role models and access to information. The influence of geographic location can also be experienced within cities, where the better "name" of some suburbs than others affects the employment opportunities of residents. Seventy six percent (76%) of the participants in this study indicated that geographic location influenced their occupational choices. Participants were also of the opinion that living in the city was advantageous as more jobs were generally available.

4.1 Bob has lived in the city for most of his life. His home is located close to shopping malls and restaurants. Work experience organized by the school, enabled Bob to access jobs close to home. Living in the city meant that Bob could: gain easy access to places of study; look around for jobs that offered better salaries and other benefits; access transport easily and he could continue to live with his mother and grandmother as they were dependent on each other.

5. Subject choice 76% of the participants in the study (77% male and 76% female) claimed that the choice of a school subject (and therefore, the school and educators) influenced their occupational choice. Hotel keeping and catering influenced the occupational choice of 27% of the males and 11% of the females from Cohort 1. In Cohort 2, Hotel-keeping and catering influenced the occupational choice of 38% of the males and 50% of the females. In Cohort 1, 11% of the participants work in the hospitality industry as compared to 50% in Cohort 2. The inclusion of subjects such as business economics and compu-typing appears to have influenced more females to take up positions as secretaries, clerks and receptionists (Cohort 1- 28%; Cohort 2-13%).	5.1 The choice of subjects has influenced the occupational choice 7/8 of the participants whose career stories are being scrutinized in this study. All the participants studied Hotel-Keeping and Catering as a subject. Participants Bob, Pam, Gerry, Carry, Terry, Eve and Wayne either work or have worked in the hospitality industry. Work experience arranged by the school prepared them for the world of work. This resulted in these participants earning a salary from the time they were 16 years old. Work experience exposed them to different employers and enabled them to develop a network of work contact persons. Furthermore, as a result of work experience, individuals in this study had no difficulty in securing jobs immediately after they had graduated from high school.

SECTION 4

5.4 Synthesis of recurrent issues arising from the data

This exploratory study was successful in identifying the occupational choices of the individuals with learning disabilities under study, as well as, a number of emerging influential factors that impacted on the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities at a special needs school. In order to identify the dominant factors, quantitative and qualitative data were used.

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In the main the data indicated that the occupational choices of the participants included those of secretaries, receptionists, clerks, salespersons, childcare workers, waiters, waitresses, barmen, barladies, technicians, law enforcement offices, managers and artisans, amongst others (refer to Appendix 6).

The dominant emerging factors (refer to Tables 5.3 and 5.8) influencing occupational choices were as follows:

Self-knowledge – All the participants in this study acknowledged that a clear understanding of themselves in respect of their aptitudes, interests, abilities, interests, resources and limitations was necessary in order to implement career decisions.

Technological change – One of the most significant trends, affecting not only the environmental-societal system but also the social and individual systems, is the growth of technology. Technology has opened up possibilities for marketing, service delivery, self-help resources and research amongst others. These possibilities are examples of globalisation at work. Technology has made it possible for individuals in remote areas to access information previously unavailable to them. Ninety seven percent of the participants indicated that technological change impacted on their career choices. The impact of technological change is highlighted in several of the career narratives (refer to Appendix 5).

Learning disabilities – Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the participants indicated that LD influenced their occupational choices. Having endured years of frustration and failure in the secure school environment very few individuals venture to pursue post school studies. For far too many years of their lives these individuals were made to feel "different." They attended a special school, were separated from their friends, studied different subjects and wrote different Grade 12 examinations, that it was difficult to feel "normal" again (refer to Bob's career narrative in Appendix 5).

In recent years however a growing number of individuals, especially from the younger age cohort, are enrolling for further studies at colleges. The influence of the peer group is very evident here. Others who are employed have learned to work around their disability (refer to career narratives, Appendix 5).

Geographic location – Participants indicated that the closeness to places of work and study were major influencing factors impacting on their occupational choices. However, if necessary, individuals were prepared to move to areas where a job could be secured (Carry's career narrative, Appendix 5).

Subject choice – The school played a major role in ensuring that its learners entered the job market after completing Grade12. Hotel - keeping and catering emerged as the most influential subject impacting on occupational choice. Its influence can be seen in the significant number of participants (32%) employed by the hospitality industry. Furthermore, work experience arranged by the school facilitated entry into the job market.

The data reveals that numerous other factors also influenced the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities and that each factor impacted on individuals in different ways. A significant number of individuals indicated that, the media, demand for jobs, health and government decisions such as affirmative action influenced their occupational choices.

Gender influenced the occupational choices of 34% of the participants (30% - Cohort 1; 38% Cohort 2). Although binomial tests indicated that that this result was statistically not significant at the 5% level ($z = -1.25$ and $p = 0.12$), career narratives (refer to Appendix 5) indicated the existence of distinct stereotypes demarcating suitability of jobs for the different sexes. Male participants were adamant that certain jobs such as managing a restaurant or being a life - saver was a man's job, whilst female participants indicated that jobs such as that of a crèche teacher and a day care worker fell specifically in the female domain. Binomial tests indicate statistically significant results when the responses of the males in Cohort 1 were compared with those from Cohort 2. A comparison of responses between the males and the females in the sample also indicated a statistically significant result. When responses from females in both cohorts were compared, binomial tests indicated results that were statistically not significant.

In summary the data indicated that a significant number of participants were employed in the service sector with more females being employed than males. The most significant factors influencing occupational choices were: self-knowledge, technological change, learning disabilities, geographical location and subject choice. Binomial tests indicated that although the impact of gender on

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occupational choice was not significant in respect of the total sample, statistically significant results were evident between males and females and between male and male in the sample.

The factor of opportunity for post-secondary education, which surfaced in the literature reviewed, was particularly not significant, for the subject sample under study mainly because many of the subjects were still pursuing post-secondary education. For this reason it would not have been possible to discover the impact of post-secondary on their occupational choices.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.0 ORIENTAION TO CHAPTER SIX

In Chapter Five the data was analysed to arrive at an understanding of the factors that influenced the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities. The data was analysed from two perspectives, namely, a quantitative analysis of data gathered by the questionnaire and a qualitative analysis of data gathered by the open-ended questions. Thereafter, narrative career stories were used to substantiate dominant influences emerging from the analysis.

In this chapter, a discussion of findings, limitations and recommendations for discussion, recommendations and the limitations with reference to the purpose and critical questions of this study will be presented.

The chapter is divided into three sections:

SECTION 1: Discussion

SECTION 2: Recommendations

SECTION 3: Limitations

Section 1 presents a discussion of the emerging constructs that have arisen in the research as a whole. It serves as a basis for understanding the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities.

Section 2 deals with the recommendations that are suggested at two levels: broad and specific recommendations.

Section 3 concludes by focusing on possible limitations. It also presents the closing comments of this dissertation.

6.1 SECTION 1

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to identify the occupational choices of ex-grade 12 learners from a Special Needs School (SNS) between 1996 and 2001. The critical questions that provided the framework to guide the research and to achieve the purpose of the study were:

1. What are the factors that influenced the occupational choices of ex-grade 12 learners from a SNS between 1996 and 2001?

2. Does gender impact on their occupational choices?

A review of literature, theories of occupational choice, as well as, the data clearly revealed that occupational choice cannot be viewed in isolation. It cannot be separated from the social, political and historical context in which individuals live. In order to understand the occupational choices and the factors that influenced those choices, it was important to see these within broad societal events and trends.

The unemployment rate in South Africa for individuals between 15 and 65 was 38% in 1996 (Statistics South Africa, 2000). This was set to exceed 40% by the year 2000. However, despite their LD, most of the participants in the current study who were between the ages 18 to 26, adjusted well to the demands and complexities of adulthood.

At the time of the interview, 73% of the participants were employed in occupations such as that of secretaries, clerks, receptionists, law enforcement officers, waiters, waitresses, chefs and managers (refer to Appendix 6). These occupations were similar to the occupational choices of the participants in the Sitlington and Frank (1990) and the Greenbaum, Graham and Scales (1996) studies.

The employment statistics in this study were similar to previous investigations in which just college graduates with LD were studied. In those investigations however, 70% - 80% of the participants were employed mostly in professional and management positions (Adelman & Vogel, 1990; Rogan &

Hartman, 1990, Rojewski, 1999). A college education appears to have a positive impact on the employment status of young adults with LD. Those who attended college typically obtained better paying and higher status jobs than those who do not.

Recent years have seen an increasing number of individuals with LD entering tertiary institutions both locally and internationally. There are many reasons for post secondary participation among youth with LD. Post secondary attendance is highly associated with family background. In this study, 51% of fathers and 23% of mothers in the Cohort 1 sample received tertiary education (refer to Table 5.5). Parental educational level appears to have influenced 50% of the males and 18% of the females in the Cohort 1 sample to pursue tertiary studies (refer to Table 5.9). In the Cohort 2 sample, 10% of fathers and 13% of mothers received tertiary education (refer to Table 5.5). Their educational level influenced 7% of the males and 7% of the females in the Cohort 2 sample who pursued tertiary studies (refer to Table 5.9). Furthermore, more high school graduates with LD are pursuing tertiary studies in the hope of securing better paying and secure jobs. In the present study, there was a growing awareness especially among the male participants in the 2001 sample, that a college education was essential. This saw 50% of the males gravitating towards studies in the natural science fields, pursuing studies in electrical engineering and Information Technology.

Those who were not college bound were often employed in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs mainly in the service sector. These jobs were predominantly low skilled, low-wage positions such as retail salespersons, waiters, waitresses, janitors, orderlies, cashiers, clerical workers, secretaries and guards. A salary earned from any unskilled or part time position would preclude any worker from earning an income that would allow him or her to live independently. Medical benefits and health insurances would be difficult to earn because of this. Opportunities for jobs that provide personal growth and a chance for promotion would be scarce (Sitlington & Frank, 1990; Affleck et al, 1990).

Sixty-one percent (61%) of the participants in the current study continued to live with their parents compared to the Rogan and Hartman (1990) investigation in which only 18% still live with parents or relatives. This difference is likely due to the age of the participants in the two studies. In the Rogan and Hartman (1990) investigation, respondents were between the ages of 30 and 40. In the current study, the participants were younger (between 18 and 26 years old), unmarried and to a large degree financially dependent on their parents for their upkeep. Other reasons as to why participants in this

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study depended on their parents was: the high cost of living, as under-employment, low-paying, part-time jobs precluded independent living; the desire to save money; many of them had become accustomed to having decisions made for them by parents and educators and could not advocate for themselves.

Findings with regard to critical question number one: What factors influenced their occupational choices?

Although several factors influenced the occupational choices of this subject sample, the dominant factors were; self-knowledge, technological change, learning disabilities, geographic location and subject choice. Other factors included: the impact of chance on occupational choices, influence of the media, demand for jobs, health factors, government decisions, opportunity for post-secondary studies and parental decisions (refer to Appendix 7).

Self-awareness is the cornerstone of effective occupational decision-making. All the participants in this study (100%) were in total agreement that a clear understanding of themselves in respect of their aptitudes, interests, abilities, resources and limitations was necessary in order to implement occupational decisions.

One of the most significant trends, affecting not only the environmental-societal system but also the social and individual systems, is the growth of technology. Technology has opened up possibilities for marketing, service delivery, self-help resources and research amongst others. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the subject sample was aware of the far-reaching effects of globalisation in relation to aspects such as access to information, communication and the process of applying for jobs.

Internationally as well as nationally, the literature on individuals with LD, confirm that they continue to experience considerable difficulties in places of work and study, as a result of their LD. According to the literature, many individuals with LD find difficulty remaining in a job and generally speaking move from job to job (refer to Table5.10) in search of a niche area. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the participants in this study, indicated that their LD adversely affected work and other facets of their lives. As in the Adelman and Vogel (1990) study, the most common problems centred on processing language and maths difficulties (refer to career narratives, Appendix 5). The current study adds to a

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growing body of research indicating that a learning disability is a persistent problem that does not "go away" with maturity (Adelman & Vogel, 1990; Gerber, Reiff & Ginzberg, 1992).

Although the closeness of places of work and study influenced the occupational choices of 76% of the subject sample, participants in this study were prepared to relocate to areas where jobs were available. Such moves were considered of a temporary nature since 60% of the subject sample indicated that they would leave one job for another if a more stable and a better paying option arose.

The choice of a school subject and exposure to work situations whilst still at school influenced the occupational choices of 76% of the subject sample. Hotel - keeping and catering was the most influential school subject offered, impacting on occupational choices of 32% of the subject sample. A significant number of the female subject sample in this study found employment within the hospitality sector immediately after graduating from high school.

Although the factor of opportunity presented itself in the literature, it was not possible to comment on its impact on the occupational choices of the subject sample as many of them were still pursuing studies.

Findings with regard to critical question number two: Does gender impact on their occupational choices?

In this study gender differences were apparent with more females being employed than males (82% females and 62% males). This represents a major shift from the studies of Scuccimarra and Speece (1990), Sitlington & Frank (1990), Blackorby &Wagner (1996) and Rojewski, (1999), who found that more males were employed than females. This shift in emphasis can be explained by the fact that a significant number of male subjects, in comparison to female subjects, in this study had in recent years (2000, 2001) engaged in post-secondary education. Data analysis revealed that a significant number of females found employment immediately after graduating from high school.

A significant number of female subjects were employed in the hospitality sector in male dominated fields such as that of being employed as chefs. Those who took up such occupations (refer to Appendix 6) were of the opinion that females could anything they wanted - there was no stopping them. Male subjects in the study, however, were adamant that certain occupations were for males only.

6.1.1 Methodical consideration

The method of inquiry influences the nature of the data and the analysis. Keeping this in mind, the current study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. The narrative developed from face-to-face interviews that were used to complement and flesh out the quantitative data.

The data was interrogated in different ways in order to yield rich and insightful information. This included:

- Quantitative analysis – Questionnaire

- Qualitative analysis via Open-ended questions

- Using career narratives to substantiate data arising from quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis.

The idea was to get an intersection of information through the use of different methods of analysis. Using this varied technique meant that certain key themes emerged across participants to lend clarity to personal choices, experiences and interpersonal relations in a changing educational context. These themes were interconnected to develop an understanding of the occupational choices of individuals with learning disabilities.

6.1.2 Review of literature

6.1.2.1   Differences between South Africa and other countries

A review of literature in comparison to the data findings clearly reveals the following distinctive differences between South Africa and other countries:

- In the present study the unemployment rate by gender and age cohort was 3% for females and, 8% for males between the ages of 18 to 26years. Internationally the unemployment rate by

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gender was approximately 23% for women and 7% for men. This is consistent with past studies (Adelman & Vogel, 1990; Sitlington &Frank, 1990; Scuccimarra & Speece, 1990). Internationally, however, there was a greater unemployment rate for women. In this study, more females were employed than males. One of the reasons why more females were employed is that the school required its learners to complete a specified numbers of hours of work experience, between the Grade 10 and 12 years. During this period, female participants like their male counterparts, acquired work experience and ethics, as well as a strong network of work contact people. They had become accustomed to earning a salary while still at school, and, jobs were easily available (even if they were low-paying and part time). Furthermore, the desire to pursue further studies was lacking.

- Sixty percent of the individuals in this study as compared to 20% internationally (Greenbaum et al., 1996), stated that they would leave their current jobs as often as necessary, even though they liked it, if they got a better paying job or a more challenging or interesting one. In addition, according to the literature, individuals change jobs frequently because they are continually searching for their niche area in employment. Another reason for frequent job changes peculiar to the individuals in this study, is that, over 40% of the participants were diagnosed ADHD. Due to the nature of the disorder, many ADHD adults experience various problems within the workplace. It is, however, not within the scope of this study, to explore the difficulties experienced by the ADHD adult in the workplace.

- Transition services are in a developmental stage for individuals with LD in South Africa. Internationally, individuals were empowered in respect of their learning disabilities. They received appropriate transition services from high school to post secondary institutions and to the workplace (Dunn,1996; Durlak, Rose & Bursuck, 1994).

- In South Africa, support structures for adults with learning disabilities are still in a developmental stage. Internationally, these are well established and have been functional for several decades.

- Life skills education, which is an important aspect of career development, is to be introduced into the South African education system from the year 2003. Internationally this has been put into effect for the past two decades.

6.1.2.2 Commonalities with other countries

Although every country has its unique circumstances, it is important to explore and critically evaluate commonalities that this study has with other countries. The following recurrent commonalities emerged:

- The scenario for many adults with LD was characterised by unemployment and /or underemployment, low pay, part time work, frequent job changes, non engagement with the community, limitations in independent functioning and limited social lives. The career narratives presented in this study confirmed many of these characteristics.

- Very few high school graduates attended post-secondary institutions and generally speaking individuals with learning disabilities did less well than their non-disabled peers. Many individuals with LD did not pursue further studies because of persistent failure and poor self-concept. Those who did embark on post secondary education generally took a year or two longer to conclude their studies. In this study 22% of the individuals pursued studies at tertiary institutions. Eight percent of the students who completed their studies were employed in stable jobs as managers, with benefits such as medical aid, housing, car and cell-phone allowance.

- Females were at risk for limiting their occupational aspirations and were less likely to aspire to high prestige occupations than their non-disabled peers. Very few women with LD continued with and completed post secondary studies. In this study, 12% (4/33) of the female participants pursued tertiary studies. Fifty percent of them completed 1year diplomas, but were not employed in the field they trained for. The other fifty percent are struggling to complete three-year diplomas and are already in their fourth year of study. Those females who were pursuing studies were motivated to do so by their parents, who themselves had a tertiary qualification.

- A significant relationship was found between taking vocational classes and / or having a job while still enrolled at school and post school employment. In this study, it was a school requirement that participants should complete a specified number of hours of work experience before graduating from high school. The statistics indicate that, as a result of vocational classes and work experience, 84% the participants (86% male; 82% female), were employed immediately after graduating from high school.

- Types of employment – individuals with learning disabilities were generally employed in unskilled capacities such as waiters, waitresses, barmen, clerks, secretaries, child-care workers and in sales positions. International research indicated that individuals who receive a college education are employed mostly in professional and managerial positions (Adelman & Vogel, 1990; Rogan & Hartman, 1990, Rojewski, 1999) In this study, participants who completed college diplomas were also employed in similar positions.

- Dependence on parents – because of part-time, low paying positions most individuals with learning disabilities continued to live at home with their families. They depended on their parents for financial and emotional support. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the participants in the current study continued to live with their parents.

- Learning disabilities – It is important to note that most of the participants in this study continued to experience considerable difficulties as a result of their LD. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the participants in this study, indicated that their LD adversely affected work and other facets of their lives. Having endured years of frustration and failure at school, it is no wonder that these individuals are fearful of pursuing any further studies.

- Method of finding employment – more than half of the respondents in various studies found employment mainly through the "self-family-friend" network.

6.2 SECTION 2

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are presented at two levels. They are not presented rigidly, but broadly and critically within a changing South Africa.

- Broad recommendations - stakeholders in education

- Specific recommendations - individuals with learning disabilities.

6.2.1 Broad recommendations

6.2.1.1 Educators, counsellors, parents and the community

The following list of skills/competencies should be the focus in both the classroom and the community and should be an integral part of the learner's Individualised Education Programme (IEP) / Individualised Transition Programme (ITP), during his or her final years at high school.

- Life skills education. This should be part of the transition plan and should be taught throughout the entire school programme from Grades 0 to 12. Programmes that successfully combine life skills instruction and vocational content that provide individuals with opportunities to learn academics in applied situations, practice those day-to-day skills in the natural environment (in the community) and receive on-the-job training in community businesses with job-related academic instruction in the classroom on related job skills (for example, job related vocabulary) gives individuals a more completed picture of expected adult skills and responsibilities.

- Foster self-determination. Individuals with LD must be empowered with skills to advocate for themselves. Ideally parents, high school educators and guidance personnel should prepare individuals with LD for adulthood by teaching them self-determination skills. This training would focus on helping individuals to set goals for themselves and to actively develop and implement a plan to attain these goals.

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- Career exploration. Young adults with LD may need assistance from parents, teachers and guidance personnel to develop their understanding of the world of work, differences between the work and school environment, individual strengths and weaknesses, ways to maximise strengths and minimise weaknesses and short and long-term goals.

- Assistance in respect of career guidance, information on admission policies, registration, financial assistance, academic support, and availability of other support services, such as job development, placement and follow-up services should be provided for individuals with learning disabilities.

Parents, educators and community members need to become aware that negative cultural perceptions and social expectations impose lower status and a devalued role for persons with learning disabilities. It is essential that they become aware of the fact that they may be influential by limiting job or career choices, restricting opportunities or access to training programmes, or suggesting narrow stereotypical employment possibilities. They need to be more supportive of individuals with learning disabilities by assisting them to build on their strength (Miller, Snider & Rzonca, 1990; Cronin, 1996; Curnow, 1999).

6.2.1.2   Adult support groups

Support groups can help adults with LD overcome their frustration and lack of confidence resulting from years of academic failure in the school and the workplace by:

- Assisting them in understanding and accepting their disabilities and becoming their own self-advocates.

- Becoming knowledgeable about their legal rights.

6.2.1.3 The Department of Education and Culture (DEC)

The DEC should note the following:

- Transition planning for these individuals is essential and should include a careful, general education course selection in addition to strong special education support in these classes. Individuals, who will not attend college/technikon after graduating from school, may require vocational training and on-the-job experience to attain post-school employment goals. Transition for these students will be very different than it is for college/technikon bound students, and must provide increased access to vocational courses as well as requiring increased time spent in community-based activities.

- **College and University Programmes**

Transition planning and life skills content should also be infused into the college and university programmes preparing teachers to work with individuals with LD of all ages.

- **Post secondary education support.**

Post secondary education institutions have rich environments in which to support individuals with LD. Campus human resources, such as student affairs, service professionals and faculty members familiar with LD can act as important consultants in the establishment of services and programmes. Senior students in social work and graduate students in education represent important resources that can be assessed to provide support, tutoring groups and mentors to these individuals. In addition, current services for students with other types of disabilities (for example, note-taking) can be modified for individuals with LD.

- **High school and Post secondary education support**

Bridging the gap in transition services requires that both high school and post secondary service providers jointly plan for, program for, and evaluate the unique needs of individuals with learning

disabilities. It is only with continued contact, mutual problem solving and open discussions that suggestions for improvement can occur.

- **Introductory course in LD**

Every school superintendent and all primary and secondary school personnel should attend at least an introductory course in LD. Too many administrators who are in a position to make decisions regarding placement and curricula do not understand the complexity of LD. They do not have any training in this national problem (Basset & Smith, 1996; Miller, Snider & Rzonca, 1990; Dunn, 1996; Durlak et al., 1994).

6.2.1.4 Employers

Although research indicates that an estimated 10% to15% of the employees in any large company or business have learning disabilities, many employees do not understand cognitive handicaps such as LD as these are not readily apparent. Much can be done to improve awareness and understanding of the characteristics of this population:

- Public programmes and activities by business organizations can emphasise the potential contribution of people with special needs in the workplace and to society in general. Individuals with LD, who are educationally and occupationally successful such as some participants in this study, can participate in these programmes, as their voices are likely to be respected and influential.

- Human resources, personnel and training departments in the business and corporate world should offer more services to employees with LD and to their supervisors.

- Employers should become more knowledgeable about the rights of persons with LD.

- Ongoing task modification in the form of written step-by-step instructions reinforced verbally and/or by demonstrations can provide clarification of job expectations from the outset. Self-

monitoring checklists can engender a sense of mastery as completed tasks are checked off (Reisman &Reisman, 1993; Durlak et al., 1994; Gadbow, 1998).

6.2.2 Specific recommendations

6.2.2.1 Individuals with LD

The importance of understanding one's disability is particularly relevant to individuals with learning disabilities as they often limit their own educational and occupational futures as a result of poor self-concept, delayed and impaired career development or perceived inadequacies. A clear and realistic understanding of one's learning is instrumental in empowering the individual in many areas of his or her life, including social, familial, academic and vocational situations. Without an understanding and acceptance of one's abilities, individuals are not able to select appropriate goals and advocate for themselves. In addition, a lack of knowledge about one's disability can lead to a lack of acceptance of self, and an inability to communicate one's needs and abilities to others.

It is important for individuals with LD in postsecondary education need to become knowledgeable about the types of programme opportunities and possible academic accommodations that are available in many postsecondary education programmes. Because previous college experience seems to significantly enhance individuals' chances of academic success, individuals' with learning disabilities (LD) should visit college campuses, talk to college students with LD, and experience, first hand, the demands of college courses by participating in special bridging programmes. In such programmes, they can experience the contrast between high school and college life with regard to frequency of exams, availability of instructors, frequency of feedback, and can develop effective strategies and improved study skills. There is also a need for them to become more knowledgeable about their legal rights and become advocates for their own full inclusion into postsecondary education.

The individual must want to succeed. One needs the desire to excel in order to excel. This decision is the starting point to achieving success. To be successful one needs to consciously set goals that are closely related to the decision concerning desire. Once minimal goals are achieved, the feelings of success are bred and this becomes the basis for more challenging goals in the future. To ensure success, one needs to reinterpret one's learning disability in a more positive manner.

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The successful adult with learning disabilities works very hard and never stops trying. Highly successful adults with learning disabilities use modern conveniences/technology as a means of adapting to their environment. For example those who have problems with reading and writing rely on spell checkers, word processors, tape recorders and dicta-phones.

Individuals with LD should continue career exploration through participation in extra-curricular activities, hobbies and a variety of work experiences. Identified interests, aptitudes, values and opportunities provide a basis for tentative occupational decisions.

Openness with employers about the specific nature of one's learning disability is encouraged; self-disclosure regarding one's disability contributes to success at work as difficulties due to learning problems tend to arise and need to be addressed at one time or another on the job. Disclosure allows students/workers to become self-advocates and enables them to communicate their personal and professional strengths as well as their methods for compensating for their weaknesses (Gerber et al., 1992; Adelman & Vogel, 1990 Durlak et al., 1994).

6.2.3 Implications for future research

In any research study new data is generated, and in doing this one realizes that so many more areas have unanswered questions. Time frames however create barriers and thus leaves the door open for new areas of research. The following are possible areas of future research:

- To explore the extent to which the LSEN Grade 12 examination prepares individuals for post high school life.

- To explore and to compare occupational choices of individuals with LD from educational institutions in Kwa-Zulu Natal with those from other provinces in South Africa.

- To determine the level of job satisfaction among individuals with LD in South African Special Needs Schools

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- To determine the role of the National Education Ministry in transition education for individuals with learning disabilities.

- To investigate the level of career preparation in long-term remedial schools.

- To investigate the extent to which individuals with LD disclose their disability at post-secondary institutions and the workplace.

- To investigate the success rate of individuals with LD who pursued post-secondary studies at colleges and technikons.

- To investigate labour market discrimination against adults with LD.

6.3 SECTION THREE

6.3.1 Acknowledging limitations

The findings from the current study must be interpreted cautiously as the participants are not representatives of former high school and/or college students with learning disabilities in general. All the participants in this study were identified as learning disabled and received intensive educational support for an average of 8 years at a long – term remedial school. Furthermore, as the scope of the study was limited to a long-term remedial school in Kwa-Zulu Natal, it does not lend itself to generalization in respect of other such schools in South Africa.

Although the study hoped to sample individuals from other race groups, this was not possible mainly because the school was a former Whites Only school, and the influx of learners of colour is very slow due to socio-economic factors, lack of knowledge in respect of the existence and purpose of the school, geographic factors and the stringent school admission requirements. As the majority of the respondents were white, the views reflected are from that group.

Furthermore, although it was desirable, it was not possible to explore all the factors that influenced occupational choice of individuals with LD, given the scope and depth of this study.

For the study to be useful, data is needed on comparison groups of participants from other schools of the same type. Adelman and Vogel (1990:163) noted that *"without appropriate or comparison groups, it is impossible to determine the effects of learning disabilities on adult adjustment and attainment."*

6.3.2 Closing Remarks

The purpose of this study was to identify the occupational choices of individuals with LD. Data analysis indicated that in the main, most of the participants in this study were employed in the service sector as waiters, waitresses, secretaries, clerks, receptionists and salespersons. Gender differences were apparent with more females being employed than males. Various factors influenced the occupational choices of the participants under study, the most dominant factors being self-knowledge, technological change, learning disabilities, geographic location and subject choice. Binomial tests indicated that although the impact of gender on the occupational choices of the total sample was not significant, statistically significant results were evident between the male and female sample and between the male sample in the younger age cohort and the older age cohort. Furthermore, although the factor of opportunity for post-secondary education emerged in the literature, it was not possible to comment on its impact as many subject participants were still engaged in pursuing their studies.

The results of this particular investigation may contribute to the literature in several ways. This information can be used to improve theoretical explanations, guidance and counseling activities, the development and sequencing of academic and occupational courses and programmes and transition planning efforts for adolescents and young adults.

Finally, this research is an exploratory study in that it has delved into an area that has been poorly researched in the South African context. Although it focuses on predominantly White individuals with learning disabilities from the only long-term remedial school in Kwa-Zulu Natal, the results add to the growing mosaic of data emerging from other studies of high school and college graduates with LD. Furthermore, as the study allows one to view the occupational attainments of young adults with LD

between 1 and 6 years after school, one can expand one's understanding of adolescent transition to adult life. Focusing on a period of development when adolescents begin to adopt adult roles can be particularly helpful in identifying the short-term influence on LD and in clarifying how the presence of LD affects career decision- making and career circumscription and compromise processes.

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APPENDIX 1:   **ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

Is excessively active (hyperactive)	

Has poor co-ordination

Has problems understanding verbal directions

Has problems understanding written directions

Performs inconsistently

Has difficulty reading

Has difficulty beginning and/or completing tasks

Is frequently impulsive

Is easily distracted

Has short attention span

Adult with learning disabilities

Is slow in completing work

Has poor listening skills

Has a negative self-concept

Frequently has emotional and behavioral problems due to frustration

Has difficulty speaking correctly

Has difficulty writing correctly

Displays a great difference between ability level and performance level

Is unable to discriminate between objects and symbols

Has average or above average intelligence

Has poor fine and/or gross motor skills

Has difficulty understanding and completing math problems

Has frequent mood changes

(Gadbow & Du Bois, 1998)

APPENDIX 2A: MAP 0F KWA-ZULU NATAL.

RESEARCH SITE: DURBAN
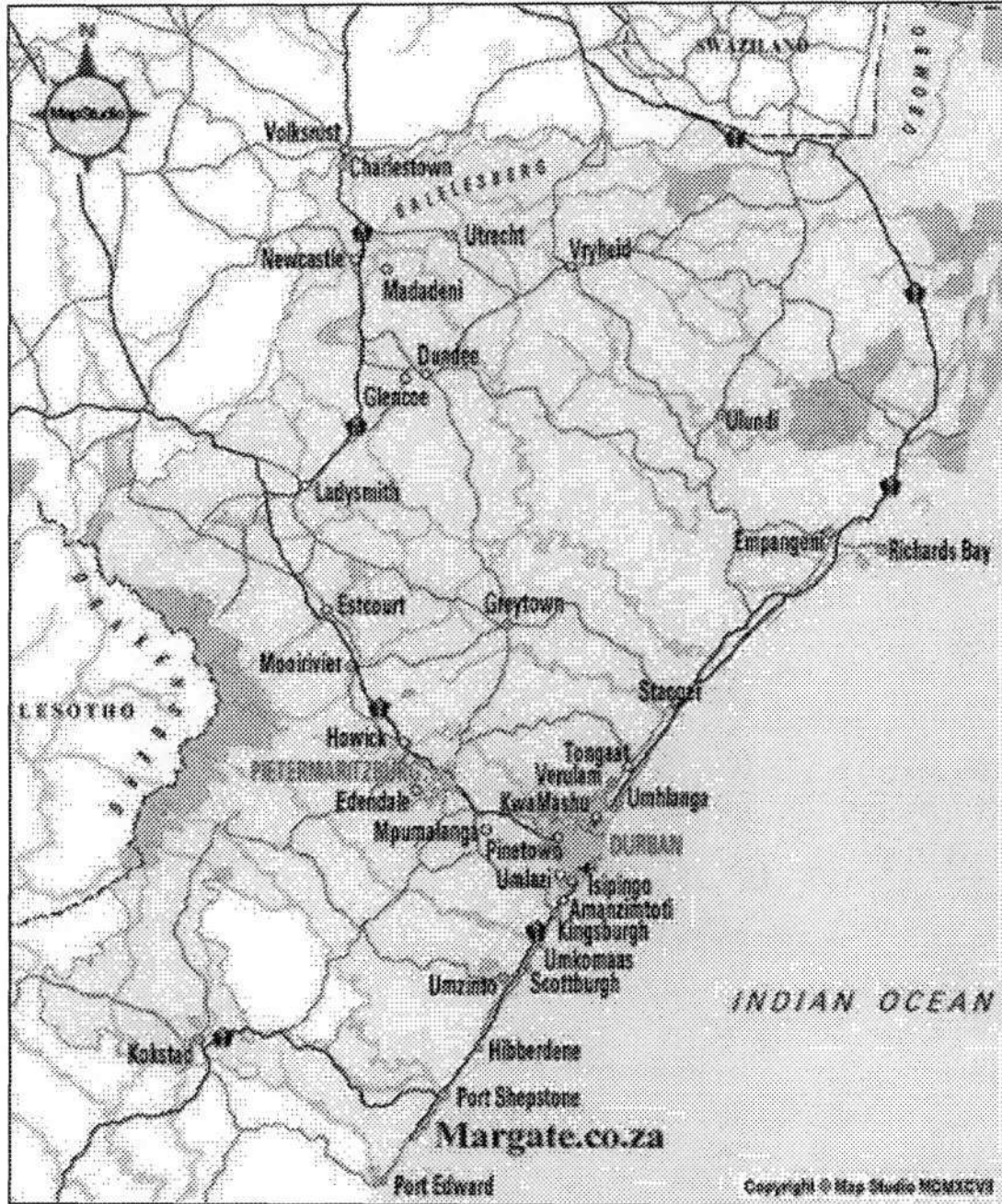
APPENDIX 2B: LOCATION OF RESEARCH SITE
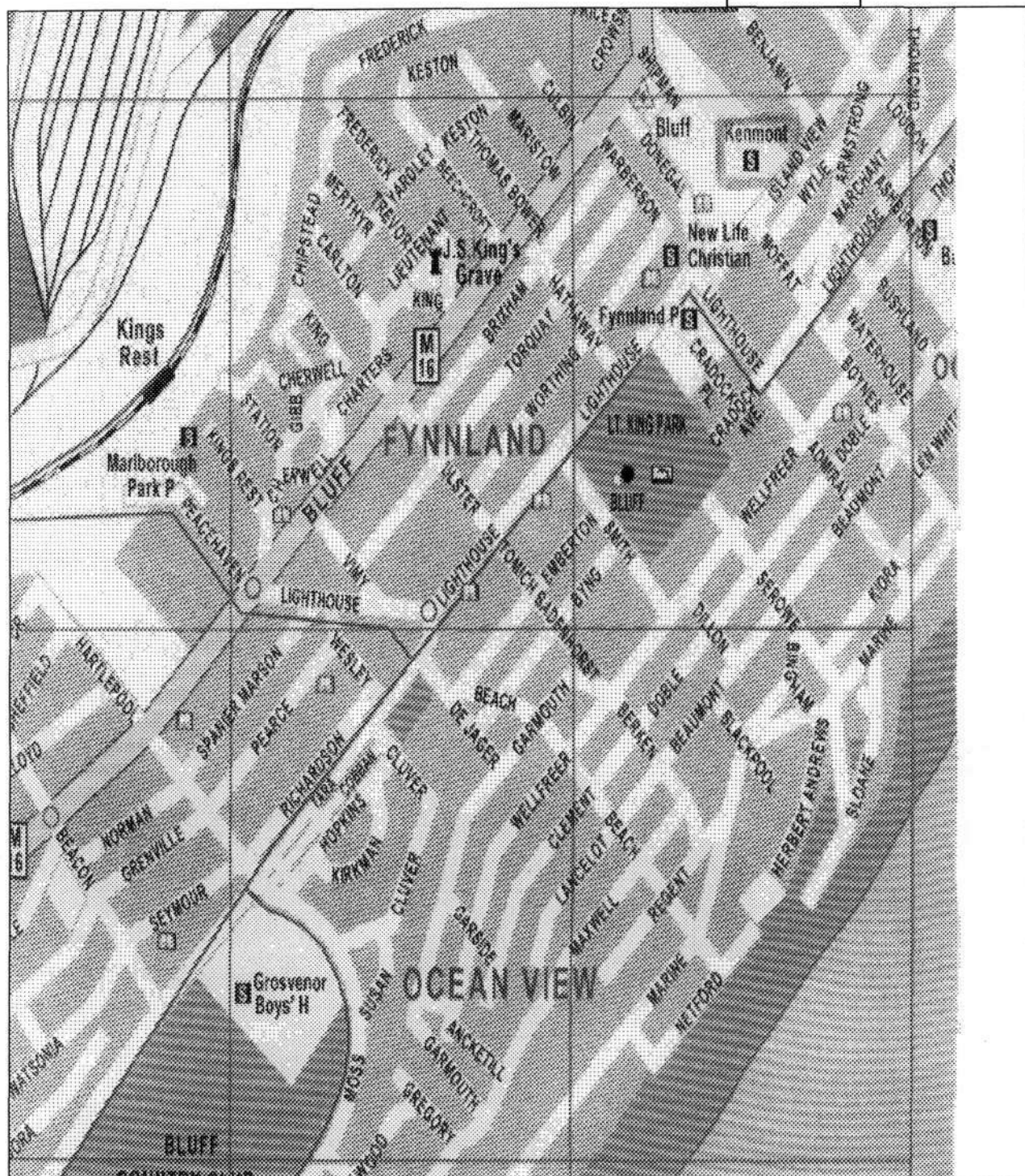
SURVEY ON OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES

RESPONDENTS: EX-MATRICULANTS

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SURVEY IS TO DETERMINE THE OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES OF EX–MATRICULANTS BETWEEN 1996 – 2001 AT A SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL. THE BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS REASEARCH AND INFORMATION FROM THIS SURVEY WILL BE USED TO PLAN CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROGRAMMES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

PLEASE CROSS (X) APPROPRIATE BOXES WHERE APPLICABLE.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

1. Name: _____

2. Age: (Please x the appropriate box)

   1. 18-20years... | 1 |
   2. 21-23years... | 2 |
   3. 24-26 years.. | 3 |
   4. 27years.. | 4 |

3. Gender:

   1. Male... | 1 |
   2. Female.. | 2 |

4. Race:

   1. Black.. | 1 |
   2. White.. | 2 |
   3. Coloured... | 3 |
   4. Indian... | 4 |

5.   Marital status:

1.   Single………………………………………………………………………..……
2.   Married………………………………………………………………………….
3.   Live-in-Partner…………………………………………………………………

1	
2	
3	

6.   What is your first language?

1.   English. ……………………………………………………………………………
2.   Afrikaans……………………………………………………………………………
3   isiZulu………………………………………………………………………………
      isiXhosa……………………………………………………………………………

4.

1	
2	
3	
4	

B.   ACADEMIC DETAILS

7.   Cross the subjects you studied for the Senior Certificate Examination.

SUBJECT	X
1. Afrikaans	X
2. English	X
3. Mathematics	
4. Accounting	
5. Hotel-Keeping and Catering	X
6. Typing	
7. Travel and Tourism	
8. Business Economics	
9. Geography	

8.   Did any of these subjects influence your occupational choice?

1.   Yes……………………………………………………………………………………
2.   No……………………………………………………………………………………

1	
2	

      If Yes, please specify: ………………………………………………………………………………………
      …………………………………………………………………………

C.   FAMILY DETAILS

9.   Whom do you live with?

1.	Both Parents..	1
2.	Mother..	2
3.	Father...	3
4.	Self..	4
5.	Guardian..	5
6.	Spouse..	6
7.	Live-in- partner..	7
8.	Other..	8

10.   What is the approximate family income?

1.	Less than R 1 000..	1
2.	R 1 000-R 3 000..	2
3.	R 3 000-R 5 000..	3
4.	R 5 000-R 7 000..	4
5.	R 7 000-R 9 000..	5
6.	R 9 000 +..	6

11.   If you are still studying, who is paying for your studies?

1.	Both parents...	1
2.	Father...	2
3.	Mother..	3
4.	Guardian..	4
5.	Student –loan...	5
6.	Other..	6

12.   Father's Profile

12.1   Age

1.	40-50 years old..	1
2.	50-60 years old..	2
3.	60+..	3

12.2   Occupation: _____

12.3   Education Level:

1.	Below Matric...	1
2.	Matric...	2
3.	College..	3
4.	Technikon	4
5.	University...	5
6.	Other..	6

13. Mother's Profile

13.1 Age

1. 40-50 years old..
2. 50-60 years old..
3. 60+..

1
2
3

13.2 Occupation: _____

13.3 Education Level:

1. BelowMatric..
2. Matric..
3. College..
4. Technikon..
5. University..
6   Other..

1
2
3
4
5
6

14. Guardian's Profile

14.1 Age

1. 40-50 years..
2. 50-60 years..
3. 60+..

1
2
3

14.2 Occupation: _____

14.3 Education Level:

1. BelowMatric..
2. Matric..
3. College..
4. Technikon..
5. University..
6. Other..

1
2
3
4
5
6

15. Did your father's occupation influence your occupational choice?

1. Yes..
2. No..

1
2

16. Did your mother's occupation influence your occupational choice?

1. Yes..
2. No..

1
2

17.　Who influenced your occupational choice the most?..........................

D. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED YOUR OCCUPATIONAL   CHOICE

18.　What is your occupation?..

19.　Do you think that knowledge about yourself, your aptitudes, interests and abilities influenced your occupational choice?

1
2

1.　Yes..
2.　No...

19.1　Qualities such as being:

19.1.1　Reserved

1
2

1　Yes..
2　No...

19.1.2　Outgoing

1
2

1.　Yes..
2.　No...

19.2　Interests such as:

19.2.1　Sports

1
2

1.　Yes..
2.　No...

19.2.2　Dance

1
2

1.　Yes..
2.　No...

Other interests:
Specify...

19.3　Abilities such as:

19.3.1　Verbal Abilities

1
2

1.　Yes..
2.　No...

19.3.2　Non-Verbal Abilities

1
2

1.　Yes..
2.　No...

114

19.3.3   Creative Abilities

19.3.1   Art...
19.3.2   Music...

1
2

Other Abilities
Specify...

20. Did your gender, the fact that you are male or female influence your
    occupational choice?

1
2

1.   Yes..
2.   No...

        If Yes, please explain...
        ....

21.   Did your health influence your occupational choice?

1
2

1.   Yes..
2.   No...

        If Yes, please explain...
        ....

22.   Did the fact that you have a Learning Disability (LD) influence your occupational choice?

1.   Yes..
2.   No..

1
2

23.   Did you choose your occupation because you firmly believe that you will be very successful
       in that field?

1.   Yes..
2.   No..
3.

        If Yes, please explain...

1
2

24.   Did you choose your occupation because of family traditions?

1
2

1.   Yes..
2.   No..

25.   Did you choose your occupation because of family responsibility such as
       being the sole breadwinner?

1.   Yes..
2.   No..

1
2

26. Did the media influence your occupational choice? Media, as in the radio, television, newspapers and magazines.

1
2

1. Yes...
2. No..

27. Did the demand for certain jobs influence your occupational choice?

1
2

1. Yes...
2. No..

27. Did the area you live in influence your occupational choice? Area as, living in the country or in the city.

1
2

1. Yes...
2. No..

   If Yes, please explain...
   ....

29. Did government policies influence your occupational choice, for example, Disability Laws?

1
2

1. Yes...
2. No ....

   Specify...

30. Did issues such as Technological change in areas of work influence your occupational choice?

1
2

1. Yes...
2. No...

31. Did you choose your career by chance? Chance, meaning by accident or good luck.

1
2

1. Yes...
2. No...

   If Yes, please explain...
   ....

32. Was there any other reason for your career choice? Please explain.

33.   What are your strengths in terms of your occupational choice?

_____

_____

34.   What are your limitations in terms of your occupational choice?

_____

_____

35.   What do you enjoy most about your occupation?

_____

_____

36. If you had a choice would you change your occupation?

1.   Yes.. | 1 |
2.   No... | 2 |

    Give a reason for your answer

_____

_____

37.   Is there any other additional information you would like to share?

_____

_____

Thank you for your co-operation!

APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM

SURVEY ON OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES

RESEARCHER	MRS P. BAIJNATH SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
SUPERVISOR	DR Z. NAIDOO UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN – WESTVILLE
PURPOSE	TO INVESTIGATE THE OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES OF EX- GRADE 12 LEARNERS AT A SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL.

I understand that:

- Participation in this study is voluntary
- I may withdraw for this study at any time
- I may refuse to answer any of the questions
- There with be a maximum of two interviews
- The interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed for ease of analysis
- Confidentiality will be strictly respected.

I consent to participate in this study.

_____   _____

    Signature   Date

APPENDIX 5: NARRATIVE CAREER STORIES

Bob

Bob, age 24 years was the school head prefect in 1995 and in 1996. He spent more than a decade at remedial schools; first at a short-term remedial school and then at a long-term remedial school. According to the school records, Bob's father also had a learning disability.

Bob was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and a paediatrician prescribed Ritalin. His parents were divorced.

Bob's IQ as measured by the S SAIS-R was:

Verbal IQ = 120   Performance IQ = 117   Full-Scale IQ = 120

He excelled at school and on the sports-field and was the recipient of many awards. His school records describe him as being honest, reliable and trustworthy. He was mainstreamed at the end of grade eight and spent a year at a technical school because he wanted to be "normal". According to Bob, he was miserable there. He missed the supportive environment of the school and returned to complete grade ten, eleven and twelve here.

Bob's occupational choice was influenced to a great extent, by the school. He studied Hotel-Keeping and Catering. As a result of work experience arranged by the school, Bob began working as a barman and waiter from the time he was in grade nine. After matriculating, he did various jobs. His mother works for a security company and for a while Bob worked there installing cameras for large shopping complexes. Bob relocated to another province when he had a job there. He worked for a clutch and brake company, but the job just wasn't him so he left

Bob tried studying part-time at a local technikon last year. He enrolled for a course in plumbing. The course was difficult for him mainly because he had no knowledge of mathematics and also because of time constraints, he managed a restaurant at night. He also attempted studying photography at a

technikon, but he had to abandon this because it involved a lot of reading. Studying is problematic for him as he was a slow reader. In his current job he relates to people verbally and in doing so works around his reading and spelling problems.

For the past three years Bob has been working as the manager of a restaurant, pub and grill. He sees himself as outgoing and as a people's person. He is of the opinion that this type of job is definitely a male oriented field because it requires one to be assertive. Bob feels that he is perfect fit for his job. He has always been in the hospitality business. He feels that he started at the bottom and now that he's reached the top, he is achieving job satisfaction.

Bob is a risk taker. He is prepared to change his job at any time, if the salary is appealing. He enjoys trying his hands at anything and he is prepared to relocate if necessary.

Pam

Pam, now 24 years old, is the youngest of four children raised by a single parent. She spent three years at the school and was the head girl in grades eleven and twelve. Her IQ as measured by the S SAIR-R was:

Verbal IQ: 109   Performance IQ: 111   Full-Scale IQ: 111

The school played an influential role in her occupational choice. She thoroughly enjoyed Hotel Keeping and Catering and the work experience that the school had arranged. Having experienced reading and spelling difficulties at school she realized that it would be in her own interest to have an occupation that was more practical. She decided that the hospitality trade was the way she would go. Her mother and an elder sister who had worked in the hospitality industry played a very supportive role with the decision she made.

Pam was employed in several part-time positions as a bar-lady and waitress from grade nine onwards. She earned a salary from the time she was sixteen years olds she was trapped in a "rat-race" always trying to earn more money. She is an outgoing and sporty person and she sees herself as a peoples' person having "the gift of the gab".

After she completed her Senior Certificate Examination, she went on a working visa to Europe. There she worked in various positions in the hospitality industry. For the first six months in Europe, she managed small hotels, worked as a bar-lady and as a waitress. Each time she was offered a job with a better salary, she moved on. To improve her efficiency she became computer literate. She also worked for a company that leased out apartment buildings on an international scale. The salary was excellent and she was able to keep this job for three and half years.

On her return to South Africa, she found difficulty getting a job easily. Her job applications were being turned down on the basis of Affirmative Action. She did however manage to get jobs for short periods of time, managing small hotels during peak seasons. She is currently working as a bar-lady and a waitress for a friend who was at the school with her.

Pam is a very determined person. She has her sights set on opening her own backpacking hotel. With the money that she earned overseas and the experience she accumulated working with an international market, she knows that she is destined for greater success.

Gerry

Gerry, a single 25 year old is currently in partnership with a friend in a rigging company. He is a hard-worker, and enjoys his work tremendously. In a period of three years his company has trebled in size.

Gerry spent seven years at a long-term and four years at a medium term remedial school. He was diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and was medicated with Ritalin for several years. He has a severe reading and spelling disability. His IQ as measured by the S SAIS-R was:

Verbal IQ: 95   Performance IQ: 101   Full-Scale IQ: 92
His younger brother also had a learning disability.

At the school Gerry studied Hotel-Keeping and Catering. This subject had a great impact on his life as he worked as a kitchen manager, chef and waiter at various stages in his life. The work experiences organized by the school, assisted him in functioning effectively.

Between grades nine and twelve, he was the kitchen manager for his mother's restaurant. He also assisted his father in his garden services business.

After Gerry matriculated, he worked at a small bed and breakfast hotel in the midlands of Kwa-Zulu Natal. He did not enjoy what he was doing and he left after two weeks. He was then offered a job in his father's business. Although he managed the business for two years, Gerry did not achieve job satisfaction so he resigned. His father's friend offered him his next job repairing clutch and brakes on trucks. It was not something that he expected to do or like, but after a while he began enjoying his work. While working at this site Gerry learnt to drive trucks. He met the person who was to become his partner while he worked there and was offered his next job.

Gerry drives a huge rig costing over half a million Rand. He really enjoys his work and works tirelessly, often working a six- week stint in four weeks. According to Gerry, this is the only job that he has really "clicked" with. His hard work was rewarded and he was offered a partnership. He currently receives a very satisfying salary as well as company perks.

Gerry works around his disability by using the support team on site, spell-check on computer and by using the intercom and a dicta-phone.

He manages a staff of ten and he firmly believes that rigging is a man's job as it entails very strenuous work. As a manager, affirmative action policies do not really affect Gerry as he employs mainly black workers. In the case of disability laws, Gerry often redeploys staff within the company.

Gerry is a very loyal and dedicated worker. He enjoys his job very much and will only change his occupation if he is compelled to do so.

Mervin

Mervin, single and 25 year old, is the area manager of nine North Coast beaches in KZN. He has a staff of 50-60 people to manage.

He had spent almost a decade at the school because of SLD. Both his parents had learning disabilities. His mother is a housewife and his step-father, an engineer. His step-father has a Technikon diploma and his mother's educational level is below matric. Mervins's IQ as measured by the S SAIS-R is:

Verbal IQ = 107   Performance IQ = 117   Full Scale IQ =113

His IQ is within the bright normal range of intelligence. He was the deputy head boy at the school and the top learner in his class for the 1996 academic year.

A chance promotion for his stepfather led to the family's relocation to a north coast suburb. At that time Mervin was in Grade nine. Since his move to the coastal suburb Mervin spent almost every single day at the beach and he grew to love it passionately. Prior to the relocation, he was the school freestyle champion for four years in a row. After the family's relocation, he joined a life-saving club and represented the club at both a local and international level.

His ambition to become a lifesaver was realised in his grade nine year when he completed a certificated course. He then began working as a voluntary lifesaver on the beach during the weekends and school holidays. In grades eleven and twelve, he became a fully-fledged lifesaver and squad leader and was paid for his services. Just after he completed his Senior Certificate Examination, a permanent position as a life-guard was available at the local beach. Mervin applied and was accepted.

Mervin's job is secure and as South African Life Saving (SALS) is affiliated with International Life Saving (ILS), he will be able to get a job anywhere in the world. As an area manager, he enjoys perks such as a company car, medical aid, pension-fund, and a house and cell-phone allowance.

His duties include hiring and training lifesavers. Government policies influence the manner in which he selects his employees. He is compelled by law to employ six black people of out of every ten.

Mervin works around his spelling disability by making using the computer and spell-check facility. He has overcome his reading disability and has become an avid reader. He makes use of the inter-net to communicate with the head-office and to do the company banking through the inter-net.

Mervin enjoys his job and is very dedicated. He will change his occupation only if he is compelled to do so.

Carry

Carry, 21 years old, White and single was the deputy head prefect in 1998. She spent five years at the school. Her father has a technikon qualification and her mother completed Grade 12. Carry has very caring and supportive parents.

She is easily distracted and has poor attention and concentration. Her IQ as measured by the S SAIS-R was:

Verbal IQ: 100   Performance IQ: 100   Full-Scale IQ: 100

The school played an important role in her occupational choice. Work experiences organized by the school opened up opportunities for Carry because she studied Hotel-Keeping and Catering.

Although Carry viewed Hotel-Keeping and Catering as a male oriented field, she began working at a hotel in the mid-land region of KZN after she matriculated. She did not mind relocating from the city to the country. She was prepared to make the sacrifice in order to earn a salary and to gain a qualification. She really enjoyed the practical aspect of the course but experienced great difficulty studying for written examinations as she has poor reading and study skills.

Carry is very reserved. She refused to disclose her learning disability to her course coordinators for fear of being singled out and ridiculed. At the end of her three- year stint at the hotel she succeeded only in passing the practical aspect of her Hotel and Catering Management Diploma.

She ascribes some of her difficulties to the fact that it was the first time that she left the protective environment of her home and she had adjustment problems. Furthermore, with the large class sizes it

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was difficult for her to concentrate. Little things such as someone's pen scraping against the paper irritated her. Having to work long hours was exhausting and left little time to study.

She left the hotel in December 2001 and a short while later got a job as a bar-lady at a tavern close to her home in the city. The position was however, short lived because the tavern closed down. Thereafter she worked at the Wimpy for about three months. Although her salary was poor, she enjoyed the job while it lasted. As she is a people's person one of the things that she really enjoyed about her job was meeting and networking with people.

Carry was offered a job as a chef at a hotel in the central Drakensberg area of KZN in May 2002. This time round, she says, she is really determined to succeed. The hotel offers refresher courses and she is determined to take advantage of these. She has secured a contract for a year and hopes to save her money to travel overseas. She is hopeful that she will be able to work there for a while.

Although Carry is happy with her present job she indicated that she would be prepared to change if and only when something better came up. Her dream ambition is to become a marine biologist.

Terry

Terry who is twenty- one years old spent twelve years at the school. Her father had also experienced learning disabilities and had dropped out of school before grade twelve. He runs his own car sales business. Her mother who is a housewife completed grade twelve. Both parents are very supportive of her.

Terry's IQ as measured by the S SAIS was:

Verbal IQ: 107   Performance IQ: 100   Full-Scale IQ: 104

She was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity (ADHD). The paediatrician prescribed Ritalin and she was on medication for several years. Throughout her school life she experienced severe reading disabilities. She was dyslexic and according to her the words just simply flew into her face. As a result of these difficulties she received intensive remedial therapy. She "wrote" all her tests and exams using amanuensis tapes.

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According to Terry, she is slightly outgoing and slightly reserved, depending on the company she is in. She is a qualified SCUBA diver and actively pursues the sport. She is very creative and loves "writing" poetry and short stories. All she requires is a scribe.

Terry's occupational choice was influenced to a large extent by the school. She held several jobs as a receptionist, waitress and chef. Her jobs were short lived due to several problems. When she worked as a receptionist, she experienced difficulties with taking down messages. Her spelling was very poor and her handwriting painstakingly slow and untidy. Her employer did not understand her disability as he could not see anything physically wrong with her and so she was dismissed. She had similar problems in her other jobs.

Eve

Eve, nineteen years old was the school's head-girl and a recipient of the top LSEN (Learner with Special Education Needs) award in Kwa-Zulu Natal for 2001. She reported that she had spent a whole decade at the school. Her mother and her brother both had learning disabilities. Her brother, who graduated from this school, successfully completed a diploma in Sales Management at a technikon. Eve's IQ as measured by the S SAIS-R was:

Verbal IQ: 107   Performance IQ: 94   Full-Scale IQ: 103

According to Eve, all the subjects she took at school influenced her career path. Her father a print manager, and her brother, a top car salesman have both influenced her occupational choice. This becomes apparent in her statement, "I'm business minded, I like the cooperate world".
She voices her preference for Hotel-Keeping and Catering and the thought of opening a small catering business is foremost in her mind. She is at the moment studying for a Small Business Management course. Her parents are financing her studies.

After matriculating, Eve worked for a Repro House. Here she worked as a receptionist. She was employed for a period of six months and really enjoyed her job. As the company was downsizing, she was compelled to leave because of the principle of last - in first - out (LIFO).

In her next job, she worked as a receptionist for a Credit Management company. Her work entailed working with the business manager, marketing manager and tele- saleslady. She enjoyed her job but the director "wasn't quite her cup of tea", so, she left. She was unemployed for a short period and a few days after this interview she called to inform the researcher that she had a job with a company that organizes flea-market stalls.

Eve is an out-going person. While still at school she enjoyed tap-dancing and modelling. She is also quite artistic. She does not believe that one's gender should influence one's occupational choice. She firmly believes that anyone is capable of doing whatever anyone wishes. She also believes in "them sisters are doing it for themselves".

Eve is prepared to change her occupation as many times as is necessary. She says, "I'll knock at doors and where I'll fall, I'll fall". She has many dreams "the sky's the limit for me."

Wayne

Wayne, age 20, is one of a twin. School records indicate that in addition to SLD, he has a diagnosis of ADHD (predominantly hyperactive type). Ritalin was prescribed for him and he was on medication since Grade 4 to 12. Wayne's parents are divorced. He lives with his father.

Wayne's IQ as measured by the S SAIS-R was:
Verbal IQ: 92   Performance IQ: 92   Full Scale IQ: 92
His occupational choice was influenced to a large extent by the school. Work experiences organized by the school led to various part-time jobs from the time he was in Grade 10. Furthermore, his father, a catering manager for the defence force also influenced his occupational choice.

Wayne is very popular with his peer group, and gets along easily with people. With a network of influential people in the hospitality industry, Wayne has been able to secure several jobs since he graduated from high school. He has worked mainly as a waiter and a barman in part-time positions. Wayne has difficulty staying in a job because he is easily bored.

Although Wayne is goal orientated and desirous of pursuing a Hotel Management Diploma in 2003, he is concerned about his success. In his Grade 12 examination he was allowed to use tapes. He was unaware that tertiary institutions offered accommodations to individuals with LD. Wayne was not comfortable with disclosing his disability because he did not want to feel "different." He just wants to be "normal."

Wayne will change his job as many times as necessary. This was dependent on issues around salary and job stability. He is desirous of gaining a qualification and working overseas.

APPENDIX 6: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE OF EX-GRADE 12 OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES: 1996 –2001.

Occupational Choice	N	%
Apprentice builder	1	1.1
Army	1	1.1
Chef	7	8
Child care	6	7
Cosmetology	1	1.1
Driver	1	1.1
Family business	1	1.1
Fitness instructor	1	1.1
Horse riding - stables	1	1.1
Information Technology	2	2.3
Managers	9	10.3
Photography	1	1.1
Receptionist/secretary	6	7
Salesmen	4	4.6
Students	19	22
Traffic police	3	3.4
Technicians	3	3.4
Unemployed	5	6
Waiters/waitresses	15	17.2
Total	87	100

Table 5.9: Factors influencing Occupational Choice according to Gender

Dominant Influence	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total		N=87
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Self – knowledge	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Technological change	96%	94%	96%	100%	96%	97%	97%
Learning Disabilities	88%	65%	100%	100%	94%	83%	89%
Geographic location	69%	71%	79%	75%	74%	73%	76%
Subject choice	81%	65%	64%	69%	72%	79%	76%
Choice	58%	59%	54%	69%	56%	64%	60%
Chance factors	42%	59%	57%	69%	50%	64%	57%
Media	50%	47%	57%	43%	53%	45%	49%
Demand for jobs	42%	29%	68%	44%	55%	36%	48%
Health	42%	35%	61%	50%	51%	43%	47%
Government/decisions	46%	47%	50%	38%	48%	43%	46%
Gender	35%	24%	57%	19%	46%	21%	34%
Self-determination	38%	18%	21%	25%	30%	22%	26%
Fathers' influence	46%	19%	11%	6%	29%	13%	21%
Mothers' influence	0%	23%	0%	6%	0%	14%	7%