

**EXPLORING THE POST SCHOOL CAREER/TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
TRAJECTORIES OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DISCIPLINE OF HUMANITIES

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**SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)**

BY

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SEPTEMBER 2020

DECLARATION

I, Sitha Laalje, declare that

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RESEARCHER: S Laalje

Date: September 2020



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“I am because we are,

I am because of you”

I owe my accomplishment to the following people:

- ❖ All the participants who participated willingly and without whom there would have been no study
- ❖ Professor Labby Ramrathan, for his wisdom, guidance and sterling supervision throughout this project
- ❖ My family, for their assistance, encouragement and patience through this journey
- ❖ My parents (Mr S. Singh and Mrs K. Singh), for the profound values that they instilled in me:

“Education is the key to unlock many doors of opportunity.”

ABSTRACT

Youth with disabilities have a high rate of unemployment, are under employed or earn less than youth without disabilities. They encounter many barriers when seeking employment and this makes them half as likely as their typically developing peers to gain employment. Poor preparation for the world of work, low level of education combined with a lack of skills provides justification to employers to discriminate against this group of young people. In view of the poor employment rate of youth with disabilities as well as the lack of attention given to their employment needs, this study was conceived. The purpose of this study was to explore the post school career/training and employment trajectories of students with special educational needs. A qualitative interpretive phenomenological approach to the study was adopted. Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were employed to select participants for this study. Students with special educational needs who exited a special school for the intellectually impaired were recruited and data was obtained from them using semi-structured interviews. The outcome of the data analyses revealed that some participants engaged in private training programmes in order to secure jobs whilst others searched for long periods to obtain jobs. Some of them held several short-term jobs, became entrepreneurs or attended sheltered workshops. The opportunities for work for special needs youth were limited and often of a generic nature and that which did not involve sophisticated engagements. Whilst their adjustment to the world of work was mostly favourable and they enjoyed family and workplace support, they experienced many challenges during their search for work. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations were proposed to respective persons, processes, policies and structures in an attempt to improve the post school employment and training outcomes for students with special educational needs. Some of the recommendations alluded to were: improving educational outcomes, the development of teachers, curriculum modification (to prioritize high-quality general education system with cognitive and vocational skills), developing transition programmes in preparation for the world of work, the provision of career guidance services, improved higher education and creating employment for the youth.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

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- B: Gatekeeper's consent letter (Principal of the Institution)
- C: Letter of information to the parents of the participants (in English)
- D: Letter of information to the parents of the participants (in isiZulu)
- E: Information letter to the participants
- F: Interview schedule (English)
- G: Interview schedule (isiZulu)
- H: Letter requesting the services of an interpreter
- I: Turnitin submission receipt

LIST OF ACRONYMS

LSEN----Learners with Special Educational Needs

ICF-----International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health

ICF-CY- International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health-Child Youth

TVET----Technical and Vocational Education and Training

GDP-----Gross Domestic Product

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Inclusion is not primarily a special education or even an education issue. It is a fundamental way of seeing and responding to human difference for the benefit of everyone involved.” (Lawrence-Brown & Sapon-Shevin, 2015)

1.1 Inclusion of all

In every country, certain groups of people (possibly foreigners, minorities or people with disabilities) experience barriers that impede their full participation in their country’s political, economic and social arenas of life (World Bank, 2013a). They are excluded because of their identity. These groups of people are viewed by stereotypes, stigmas and sometimes superstitions. They often live with insecurity and fear. Sadly, these barriers and attitudes deny them a better life as well as human dignity. They are excluded from among us and exclusion has dire consequences for the growth of human capital. Children too, can be excluded from education thereby preventing them from developing human capital. Social exclusion is detrimental because it impedes the development, opportunity and dignity of some individuals and groups of people (Das & Espinoza, 2019). Exclusion of groups of people can be costly to a country and can result in huge productivity losses affecting an entire economy.

When we include people in our midst, we develop them, provide opportunities for them and foster dignity. Social inclusion is the process of improving the ability and opportunity of people to participate in society. It is believed that change towards social inclusion can be achieved by changing attitudes. As an example, South Africa moved from a segregated society to an integrated one in just two decades. However, more needs to be done as inclusion is a process that happens over a period of time and is always work in progress (World Bank, 2013a). Shared prosperity ensures that those people who are at the lower end of the income distribution, rise as quickly as possible (World Bank, 2013b). Work is an important means of social inclusion and it offers people who are often excluded from society (such as those with disabilities) an opportunity to contribute to society and be part of it (Carew, Birkin, & Booth, 2010). Employment is also a necessary step in the direction of economic self-sufficiency and

consequently resulting in greater inclusion (Migliore, Timmons, Butterworth, & Lugas, 2012).

Below, employment outcomes for the general population and for those with disabilities will be discussed as well the current status of youth employment. National datasets on disabilities are important for fair and effective service planning and delivery of supports (McConkey & Craig, 2015).

1.2 Unemployment and prevalence in the general population

An unemployed person refers to one who was not actively employed in a reference week and one who has been looking for work recently or tried to start a business (narrow unemployment rate) (Statistics South Africa, 2018). The International Labour Organisation (2018) has reported that there are about one hundred and two million unemployed people globally, of which about seventy five million are youth. Millions more could lose their jobs in the near future (locally and internationally), due to the novel corona virus (COVID- 19) that is affecting most countries around the globe. COVID-19 has brought about a “career shock” for many people. Lockdowns have been imposed in many countries (including South Africa). This has negatively affected many industries as large sections of the African economy are reliant on people to people interactions (Ozili, 2020). Owing to the economic crisis and recession, more companies are expected to close, especially small business owners, resulting in significant job losses (Nicola et al., 2020). About two hundred million people, globally, will be unemployed (Bartik et al., 2020; International Labour Organization, 2020). There will be a significant rise in underemployment and reduced wages. The duration of this economic crisis is unknown and therefore the effects of it can linger for many years. These factors could exacerbate the current employment crisis and the impact could be worse for people with disabilities, especially if they are not sufficiently skilled.

1.3 Employment outcomes for people with disabilities

The World Health Organization estimates that over a billion people (or fifteen percent of the global population) have disabilities (Das & Espinoza, 2019; World Health Organization, 2015). There are thirty million unemployed people with disabilities in the world (Bernat, 2014; Marin & Cintron Delgado, 2015). Eighty percent of the people with disabilities live in developing countries (Mitra & Sambamoorthi, 2014). South Africa is considered to be an upper middle- income country (H. Bhorat, Cassim, & Hirsch, 2014; Saman, Blanke, Corrigan, & Drzeniek, 2015) and it also considered to be a developing economy (Zahonogo, 2016). The rate of unemployment for people with disabilities is very high, more so in developing countries (Department of Children and Persons with Disabilities, 2013).

Statistics in South Africa show that just 1,8 percent of people with disabilities are employed (Maja, Mann, Sing, Steyn, & Naidoo, 2011). Persons with disabilities are confronted by more barriers when accessing employment, than other minority groups (Aliaga, 2000). Owing to the current COVID-19 pandemic and its economic effects, people with disabilities may be at greater risk of losing their jobs or experience greater difficulty in securing employment. The consequences of a crisis are usually more severe for low skilled young people who were already experiencing difficulty in better times, as the crisis increases their risk of labour market exclusion (Buheji, 2019). The longer an individual is unemployed, the less likelihood there will be that the individual will return to work (Kraus, Frank, Dasinger, Sullivan, & Sinclair, 2001; A. Young, 2010). Not all people with disabilities are equally disadvantaged. The adverse effect of disability on employment can vary depending on several factors such as level of education or motivation (Tripney et al., 2015).

1.4 The current status of youth employment

Youth unemployment is a major challenge affecting both the developed and the developing countries (such as South Africa) (Dagume & Gyekye, 2016). Unemployment is high amongst the youth (Saman et al., 2015). Approximately a third of young people are not in employment, education or training. This problem is more

critical in developing countries due to their high poverty levels that require all people to work to ensure survival (International Labour Organisation, 2011). In all countries, the youth aspire to have regular and productive employment opportunities that can offer them a decent income, relative security and certainty, and reasonable working conditions (International Labour Organisation, 2015). Unfortunately, the reality that many youth are confronted with is far different from their aspirations. Universally they have been seen to be vulnerable to poor employment prospects (M. Engelbrecht, Shaw, & van Niekerk, 2017a). When jobs are difficult to find it is the young people who are most disadvantaged as they are unable to enter the labour market or are the first to lose their jobs. Young people are the biggest group of new job seekers and are therefore the most vulnerable group pertaining to unemployment (Cloete, 2015). Youth who struggle to access the job market continue to lag behind with respect to earnings and income growth.

Youth unemployment will continue to be an important global challenge as developing countries change in their demographics and other factors (World Economic Forum, 2018). Having a large unemployed and untrained youth population poses a considerable cost to society and not just to the youth themselves. Youth unemployment impacts greatly on social and economic development, it results in lower levels of knowledge and skills, a decline in the productivity of a young and active population and has long standing effects on the future labour force productivity of a country (Coles, Godfrey, Keung, Parrott, & Bradshaw, 2010).

There is much policy interest in creating productive employment for young men and women, as a billion young people will join the job market over the next decade (Solutions for Youth Employment, 2015). Youth development has also become a critical focus for South Africa, where youth is defined as individuals between the ages of fifteen and thirty five years, with the upper age limit being that high because of the historical imbalances that were created by the apartheid era (National Youth Development Agency, 2015). Almost three quarters of the unemployed population in South Africa are youth (Dagume & Gyekye, 2016). The unemployment rate within the fifteen and thirty-five-year age group was 43,2 percent in the first quarter of 2020 and fifty nine percent in the fifteen to twenty four year age group (Stastics South Africa, 2020). Youth with lower levels of skills, and the poor, are most affected by unemployment in South Africa. Those with some training or work experience have a

better chance of gaining employment (Dagume & Gyekye, 2016). The low level of economy is also unable to provide employment for the labour force (Cloete, 2015). With the current COVID-19 pandemic and the financial crisis, the unemployment figure could be higher and could continue to rise. Youth were already vulnerable within the workforce prior to the COVID-19 crisis; their employment situation could now become worse (D. Blustein et al., 2020). It is predicted that youth unemployment will continue to rise in the future (Buheji, 2019). In South Africa there is no guarantee that graduates will find work as many of them are jobless (H Bhorat, Kanbur, & Mayet, 2013). This paints a bleak scenario for students with special educational needs who often do not have any form of qualifications or preparation for the world of work and will therefore not be considered for employment (M. Engelbrecht, Shaw, & Van Niekerk, 2017b).

1.5 Employment for youth with disabilities

Information about youth with disabilities is scarce, with little indication of the exact proportion of youth with disabilities or how many of them are employed (M. Engelbrecht et al., 2017b). Youth with disabilities have a high rate of unemployment, are under employed or earn less than youth without disabilities (Groce, 2004; Tuckwiller & Dardick, 2015). The barriers that youth with disabilities experience, make them half as likely as their typically developing peers to gain employment (Engstrom, Ekstrom, & Emilsson, 2003; Lysaght, Ouellette-Kuntz, & Lin, 2012; Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009). They are often last to be employed and the first to be retrenched. Their jobs often require little training and they have fewer opportunities for development in the workplace (M. Engelbrecht et al., 2017b). Even with training, youth with disabilities take a longer time to find a job and they have less job security. Youth with disabilities also experience a lack of work and employment preparation at school level (M. Engelbrecht et al., 2017b). The outcome of this is a low probability of successful transitioning into employment. Poor preparation for the world of work combined with a lack of skills makes this group of people more vulnerable to job discrimination. (Roggero, Tarricone, Nicoli, & Mangiaterra, 2006; Wehman, 2011). Youth with disabilities has not been given special attention, with more research being focused on non-disabled adults than

youth with disabilities (Lindsay, McDougall, Menna-Dack, Sanford, & Adams, 2015). A decade ago the South African youth with disabilities was identified as a target group requiring attention, however, specific strategies to increase employment, were not implemented (International Labour Organisation, 2015). Creating access to employment for youth with disabilities, has not been a priority for governments. Therefore employment outcomes for youth with developmental disabilities have not always been positive (Wehman, 2011). In view of the poor employment rate of youth with disabilities as well as the lack of attention given to their employment needs, this study was conceived. The education system's failure to adequately prepare and skill the youth with disabilities for the world of work disadvantages them in the labour market, resulting in discrimination against them (Roggero et al., 2006).

1.6 Orientation and background to the study

Becoming an adult is often a difficult period for a young person and their family. There is an uncertainty about the future, a new need to navigate a variety of transitions, moving from a protected school environment to more or higher education, greater independence in travel or the forming of new relationships. The transition to adulthood for young people with disabilities, presents one of the most complex challenges for them (Burton, 2013). These young people sometimes require help and support to navigate this bumpy and often difficult new terrain. In the context of a service system that is often not responsive enough to their needs or one that facilitates their growth and change, their transition to adulthood can be bewildering and stressful for them. In order to provide appropriate support for them and ensure that they are being included and not left behind we need to listen to the voices of these young people (Pallisera, Fullana, Puyalto, & Vila, 2016). Disabled children's and young people's perspectives, particularly from the Global South, are overlooked (Kembhavi-Tam & Wickenden, 2014). It is perhaps assumed that they don't have much to contribute or are methodologically difficult to manage in research. Involving children with disabilities in research serves two purposes: their perspective on issues is heard and their disability specific views are highlighted. They are frequently denied an opportunity to express their varied views, beliefs and experiences, and to contribute to decision making that could affect their lives (Shah, 2007). Listening to

their voices is a critical path to understanding their needs and providing assistance to them (Kulkarni, 2012). This could also reduce their marginalisation from mainstream society (Kembhavi-Tam & Wickenden, 2014) and promote inclusion. Their expressions could surprise some and challenge thoughts and assumptions about them.

In this study I sought to give a voice to young adults with special educational needs regarding their post school career and employment experiences. Individual semi structured interviews were conducted and research questions were posed to them. The research questions, aims and objectives of the study follow.

1.7 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to explore the post school career/training and employment trajectories of students with special educational needs. The study had the following objectives:

- 1.7.1 To explore the participants' school experiences in preparation for the world of work
- 1.7.2 To determine the nature of the participants' career/training and employment opportunities post school.
- 1.7.3 To explore the participants' adjustment to the world of work, for those who were employed.
- 1.7.4 To identify the enabling factors that assisted the participants in obtaining and maintaining employment
- 1.7.5 To identify the challenges that the participants faced in search of and during employment.
- 1.7.6 To determine the participants' desires, aspirations and expectations regarding their career, employment and achievements for the future.

1.8 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the post school career/training and employment trajectories of students with special educational needs. The research questions are stated below.

1.9 Critical research question

What were the post school career/training and employment trajectories of students with special educational needs?

1.10 Sub-questions

1.10.1 What were the participants' school experiences in preparation for the world of work?

1.10.2 What career/training and employment opportunities did the students engage in post school?

1.10.3 How did the students adjust to the world of work, for those who were employed?

1.10.4 What were the enabling factors that assisted the students in obtaining employment?

1.10.5 What were the challenges that the students faced when in search of and during employment?

1.10.6 What were their future desires, aspirations and expectations regarding career and employment?

1.11 Rationale for the study

The rationale for the choice of this study was motivated by personal reasons, contextual reasons as well as to highlight the gaps in the literature.

1.11.1 Personal reasons for undertaking the study

As an allied health professional, I have worked with students with special educational needs for a long period of time. I have interacted with them while providing educational support to them and have watched them blossom into young adults who alluded to the same desires and pleasures as their peers in mainstream education. After leaving school many of them returned to visit. It was at these visits that they expressed their successes, failures, challenges, desires and dreams for the future. From the sheltered and protected environment of the special school, they were thrust

into the real adult world of work in which they appeared to be apprehensive and sometimes disillusioned. They wanted to work and learn more. They wanted to be like their working colleagues. Their parents expressed great consternation about their children's future. They were anxious about their children's inability to read and write and their lack of skills that they needed to find employment. It was the parents' desire that their children be given the same opportunities for development, training and employment as all other children. Having listened to them, I began to question our role as a training and educational institution. Were these students who attended the special school adequately skilled and prepared for the world of work once they had left? Did we teach them what they needed to learn? Could we have done more for them? What support structures did they have post school and who would help them? Was there a place that they could go to for assistance regarding job placement or training? These questions led to the conception of this research study. I wanted to know more about their journey into the world of work and their experiences. I hoped to add to the body of existing knowledge in this field. It was also hoped that this study would enhance the professional support that I provide to students with special educational needs.

1.11.2 Contextual reasons for undertaking the study

Of great concern in South Africa is the high rate of unemployment amongst the youth. Youth unemployment rate in South Africa reached a high of 43,2 percent in the first quarter of 2020 (Stastics South Africa, 2020). Youth with disabilities are included in this population. There is a far higher rate of unemployment amongst people with disabilities compared to people without disabilities (Drew et al., 2011). Young adults with disabilities experience great difficulty in finding and maintaining employment (Holwerda, Brouwer, de Boer, Groothoff, & van der Klink, 2015; Lindsay, 2011). Sub Saharan Africa has the highest youth population in the world and the highest number of youth in the working age population (Ayele, Khan, & Sumberg, 2017). If the youth population is this large, they have the potential to make a substantial contribution to the economy of the country. The youth should therefore acquire the education and skills required to find employment opportunities in order to facilitate transition into stable livelihoods (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). If the youth is equipped with sufficient education, training and jobs, the growth in their numbers could benefit the economy (Trading Economics, 2019). Therefore, investment in the

youth and their optimal development should be a priority for all the relevant stakeholders involved with the youth. It is hoped that the outcome of this study could contribute towards policy development in favour of youth with special educational needs.

1.11.3 Gaps in the literature

The voices of young people with disabilities are under-represented. This study explored the perspectives of young people with special educational needs regarding their transition to adulthood, focusing particularly on training, career and work. It addressed gaps in the literature on employment amongst young adults with disabilities. Little is known about the perspectives of the young people themselves. Most studies focused on adults or parents while less attention has been given to the work experiences of adolescents and young adults with disabilities, as they transition into adulthood (Jones, 2012; Lindsay, 2011). We also knew little about the characteristics of the youth who were employed, where they were employed, their experiences and their aspirations for their future. Many studies tend to put people with disabilities together as a homogeneous group without determining if there are differences amongst them according to the type of disability, gender or geographical location perhaps (Ferri & Connor, 2006). This study sought to address these gaps. Considering the high rate of unemployment in South Africa, having this knowledge about the youth could assist transition teams and policy makers in designing programmes and services to enhance the youth's participation in employment and to assist them to be included as full citizens of the country. South Africa presents with a range of socio-economic conditions with various challenges which impacts on those with and without disabilities. These would be elaborated on later. It was against this backdrop that the present study was conceived. I would like to clarify some terms that would be encountered frequently in the study, in an attempt to reduce ambiguity.

1.12 The definition of “disability”

The definition of “disability” can be challenged and may differ. For the purposes of this research study the definition provided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2008 (United Nations, 2008) will be adopted as this definition provides a wholistic view of disability. This definition states that persons

with a disability are those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with attitudinal and environmental barriers may prevent their full and effective participation in society, on an equal basis with their counterparts. An impairment can result in a disability, where there is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function (World Health Organization, 2017). Some of these impairments are visible on the individual (like the physical) and some are not (as with intellectual or a hearing impairment).

In South Africa, students who have historically been termed “learners with special educational needs” (sometimes referred to as LSEN learners) are learners with disabilities and impairments (Department of Education, 2001a). Their special educational needs were the result of their impairment and disability (learning, intellectual, sensory or physical deficit). These learners are accommodated in different categories of special schools which are separate from mainstream schools. These are schools for the visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically impaired and intellectually impaired. There are also remedial special schools for students with learning disabilities. The terms “learners, “students” and “children” may be used interchangeably as they refer to the same persons. In this study, “disability” will be used as an umbrella term that will encompass disability arising in learners/students/children or adults, from any of the aforementioned conditions (physical, intellectual or sensory impairments). The participants in this study had an intellectual impairment which is a type of disability.

1.13 Theoretical Framework for the study

The purpose of the study was to explore the post school career, training and employment trajectories of students with special educational needs. During their journey into the world of work, their actions (active model of disability) and roles in negotiating their daily lives were determined, as well as their interaction and relationships with relevant others around them (social model of disability). Several models of disability and theoretical frameworks have been proposed, towards the knowledge of disability. In this study no single theoretical framework or model was adopted, however, concepts from various approaches were highlighted, concepts that contributed to the knowledge of this study. The various models assisted me in

understanding the actions of participants. The contribution of the medical model of disability was considered, as the medical diagnoses of the participants led to their being placed at the special school. The role of the social model of disability was acknowledged during the participants' interactions with others in their environment (home, work, socially). The responses and attitudes of the people in their environment influenced their decisions, actions and outcomes. The "International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health- Child Youth" (ICF-CY)(World Health Organization, 2007) classification system was utilized. The specific information relating to health and functioning of children promoted a multi-dimensional and interactional approach for special education (Sanches-Ferreira, Simeonsson, Silveira-Maia, & Alves, 2015).

Concepts from critical disability studies were applied to this study as they provided a greater understanding of the life conditions and circumstances of persons with disabilities. It enabled me, as the researcher, to understand disability from various perspectives. I embarked on an assemblage analysis to determine what elements the participants employed during their journey into the world of work and how they created rhizomes of opportunities for themselves using the assemblages at their disposal (it could have been few or more)(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Young people with special educational needs were the subjects of the study, the producers of knowledge as well as co- researchers in this study. It was important to give them a voice so that the data was relevant, honest and represented them, and the results and analysis could be grounded in their lived experiences. The participants were given the opportunity to talk about their own initiatives, experiences and attempts at taking charge of their lives (proactive model of disability). The manner in which they used their skills in the workplace shed light on their capabilities (capabilities approach to disability) and their abilities (Goodley, 2016). Their disability was viewed as a diversity and possibility (Aquino, 2016). Their positive contributions in their communities were acknowledged (Runswick-Cole & Curran, 2013). Their lived experiences were influenced by social factors, contexts and constraints (biopsychosocial model of disability). It was acknowledged that the individual participants could have had individual differences in their experiences (anti-essentialism) and could have responded differently to their circumstances. The differences amongst the participants with regards to gender, age, family background,

race and socio-economic background were acknowledged (intersectionality). Many of the participants emanated from an African cultural background and had their own unique ontological and epistemological understandings of life and different worldviews (Santos, 2015).

1.14 Selection of research participants and research site for the study

A qualitative interpretive phenomenological approach to the study was adopted Yates (2004). The primary goal of qualitative research was to describe and understand the phenomenon under study and the meaning that the participants ascribed to their experiences (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2016; Mouton & Babbie, 2007). Qualitative research is situated in an interpretive paradigm where human experiences in context are recognized from different subject perspectives (Malterud, 2015). In this study the participants provided insights into their post school career/training or employment experiences. Qualitative methods of obtaining the research participants as well as the data collection, were utilized. For this study twelve students who had left the school during the past six years were interviewed individually. Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were employed to select participants for this study. This involved selecting participants from whom the researcher could learn about the topic under study (McBurney & White, 2007). The students who exited the special school were requested to participate in the study and provide data relevant to the topic. A brief discussion of the methodology follows.

1.15 Methodology of the study

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. A pilot study was undertaken one week before the main study. The outcome of the pilot study informed the researcher of any modifications that needed to be instituted in the data collection instrument of the main study (McBurney & White, 2007). The interview was carefully planned, the purpose being to explore variables that were related to the objectives, in a permissive and non-threatening environment (Evans & Rooney, 2011). The oral data from the participant's interviews, pertaining to the topic of inquiry, was recorded using a Dictaphone. With open ended questions, it was important to record the answer exactly as provided (Mouton & Babbie, 2007). I used

the interview schedule as a guide when asking the participants questions during the semi-structured interviews. The recordings were then transcribed and analysed. A discourse analyses approach (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010) to reading and engaging with the transcript were taken. Themes, patterns or trends were identified in the data and quotes from the participants were included (Parahoo, 2014). The findings of the data were related to the research questions and the literature research. (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2016).

1.16 Ethical considerations during procedure

Ethical guidelines were applied during the research question stage, the data collection stage and the analyses and interpretation stages of the study. Informed consent was obtained from the participants and they were not coerced into participating in the study (Denscombe, 2007). Participation in the study was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any stage, without penalty (Mouton & Babbie, 2007). To protect their autonomy or prevent social stigmatization the young adults were provided with complete information about the research project and their rights as participants. The privacy rights and the welfare of the participants were important considerations (C. Fisher & Anushko, 2008). The researcher made all efforts to be honest and respectful to all individuals who may have been affected by the research actions or reports (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). The interests of the participants were protected and the researcher ensured that they were not physically or psychologically harmed in any way (N. King & Horrocks, 2010). During the data collection stage, the participants were given the opportunity to provide their own meanings to and a thick description of their experiences (Tracy, 2010). Confidentiality of the information obtained from the participants was maintained by not disclosing it to others and securing it in a locked cupboard (N. King & Horrocks, 2010). During the data analyses stage, the researcher's findings were not falsified or manipulated in the direction of a favoured outcome.

1.17 Limitations of the study

The findings of this study should be interpreted with caution, given several limitations. It was possible that other forms of data collection could have elicited more data from the participants. Securing detailed data from them was at times challenging as they sometimes provided short responses to the questions. Brief responses provide more restrictive interpretation (Hetherington et al., 2010). The research participants' intellectual disability and their accompanying limitations could have compromised their ability to answer the research questions. Although the participants chose to speak in English (not their home language), it was possible that not speaking in their home language could have compromised the richness of the data. The sample size was small and therefore generalizations could not be made on the basis of this limited data. Only participants with intellectual disability participated in this study, hence limiting the data to one type of disability. Students with other types of disabilities could have provided a more varied information on their experiences.

1.18 Structure of the thesis (Chapters one to nine)

Chapter one provided a general overview of the entire study. The study was introduced in a broad context and then proceeded to a narrower focus.

Chapter two provided a critical review of the issues that were related to the study, as cited in the literature.

Chapter three presented the various theoretical frameworks of disability and the tenets of critical disability studies.

Chapter four provided an outline of the conceptual framing of this study and the key contributors to the poor employment outcomes for all youth.

Chapter five presented the methodological choices, the reasons for their selection and the ethical considerations in this study.

Chapter six presented the participants' narratives and their career experiences post school.

Chapter seven provided a thematic analysis of the narratives and a discussion thereof, according to the objectives of this study.

Chapter eight sought to understand the findings of the study within the theoretical and conceptual frameworks provided.

Chapter nine concluded the thesis by returning to the questions that guided this study and by providing recommendations for development in key areas.

1.19 Summary of chapter 1

This chapter provided a general overview of the entire study. It began with an introduction and general background to the study. Unemployment and the prevalence in the general population and in people with disabilities were briefly discussed. The current state of youth employment and employment for youth with disabilities were alluded to. An orientation and background to the study were provided. A statement of purpose, the critical research question, sub-questions and objectives were outlined. A rationale for the study included personal and contextual reasons as well as the presence of gaps in the literature. Some frequently used concepts were defined and clarified. The selection of the research participants, the research methodology, ethical considerations and concomitant limitations of the study were included. Most of these aspects were discussed in greater detail in the chapters that followed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

“To have a large and lasting impact in the fight against youth unemployment, we must jump over our own shadows and start collaborating, sharing knowledge and best practices. This is not the time for egocentrism but one for a more balanced stance including altruism and collectivism –in the interest of our children. We must engage in an open dialogue to come up with and share the most suitable solutions to help today’s and tomorrow’s youth.” (Vogel, 2015)

2.1 Introduction

Unequal opportunities are one of the major constraints to achieving human potential. An unequal supply of services will result in limited opportunities to achieve human potential. Students with special educational needs may be denied basic education, extra remedial support or higher education. Students with disabilities who receive targeted support in addition to schooling are more likely to graduate, gain employment and live independently (Shonkoff & Meisels, 2000). Also, the nature of opportunities changes over time. There are critical junctures in one’s life cycle such as school exit, entry into the job market and during future job searches for career advancement, where appropriate support determines availability of opportunity and success. Youth is a critical period in a young person’s life.

2.2 Defining youth

The term “youth” refers to a period of transition from dependence in childhood to a stage of independence in adulthood (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017). Youth covers a period of time, however, using age could be a more useful way to define this group of individuals especially with regards to education and employment. Therefore “youth” is often referred to as a person between the age where he/she may leave compulsory education, and the age at which he/she finds his/her first employment. This age limit has been increasing, as higher levels of unemployment and the cost of becoming independent increases, resulting in many young people falling into a longer period of dependency. The operational definition of the term youth often varies from country to country and with circumstances, depending on specific sociocultural, institutional, economic and

political factors (United Nations, 2007). For the United Nations and the World Bank, youth are those persons falling between the ages of fifteen and twenty four years (International Labour Office, 2006). In South Africa youth refers to young people who fall within the age range of fourteen and thirty- five years (South African National Youth Agency, 2009). For the purposes of this study, youth or young people shall refer to individuals between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five years. The youth comprises those with disabilities and those without, although the trajectories of both could differ vastly. In this study, the terms “youth”, “young people” or “young adults” will refer to the same population of people. The terms “learner” or “student” will refer to those who are attending school or an institution of higher education or training.

2.3 Youth population trends

Young people comprise about a quarter of the world’s population. Globally, in 2015, there were 1,2 billion youth aged between fifteen and twenty four years, with one out of six people falling in this category (United Nations, 2015). By 2030 the youth population is expected to grow by seven percent to close to 1, 3 billion. The youth population in Africa is growing at a rapid rate. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest youth population in the world and the highest number of youth in the working age population (Ayele et al., 2017). By 2030, the population of youth in Africa is expected to rise by forty two percent, with it more than doubling from the current levels, by 2055. It can be seen that the youth constitute a large proportion of the population, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where one third of the world’s projected population will be found by the year 2050 (African Development Bank, 2015). It is logical to conclude that these individuals have the potential to contribute greatly towards the economic and social development of the country. Therefore, we need to invest in the youth of today in order to achieve gains in the future (Trading Economics, 2019).

2.4 Youth is an opportunity for the development of the self and society

The youth and optimal youth development is an important economic development issue (World Bank, 2007). Youth has been described as a distinct developmental stage of transition into adulthood when important decisions are taken, that could

affect the future trajectory of the individual and the society at large (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). These decisions are made in a social context, with the support of and interaction with family, the community and peers. This period is noted for its instability, exploration of identity, focus on the self and growth of executive cognitive skills, which are vital for building work and independence skills (Shattuck et al., 2012). Therefore, this period of development is an opportunity to inculcate work-based identities (Lysaght et al., 2012; Newman et al., 2009; Shattuck et al., 2012). A positive outcome of the youth trajectory occurs when the youth grows into a mature adult with a strong sense of self, good impulse control and is competent and skilled to engage effectively with the economy, society and the demands of daily living. When this outcome is absent, poverty and lower economic growth prevails. Adolescence is viewed as a period of opportunity for advancing a country's general development, for addressing marginalisation of certain people, for changing social norms and for stimulating economic growth (UK Department for International Development, 2016; USAID, 2012). The youth should acquire the education and skills required to contribute to the economy of a country and be able to find employment opportunities in keeping with their skills and abilities in order to facilitate transition into stable livelihoods (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). If the youth is equipped with sufficient education, training and jobs, the growth in their numbers could benefit the economy (Trading Economics, 2019). Inadequate investment in the education of the youth prevents them from developing their full social potential and contributing to the economy of the country for the present as well as for the future (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017).

2.5 Career development, aspirations, desires and expectations for the future for all youth

Career development is the process of working towards career goals over a period of time (Lindstrom, 2008). Career decision making and gaining employment occurs over time and are influenced by many factors relating to the individual, family, school and community (Szymanski, Enright, Hershenson, & Ettinger, 2003). For students with disabilities, however, career development can become complex, nonlinear and unpredictable (Lindstrom, Doren, & Miesch, 2011). After overcoming many hurdles in obtaining employment, disabled employees continue to experience barriers to their career progression. It was found that young people with a disability have the same

aspirations and hopes as other young people (Stokes, Turnbull, & Wyn, 2013). They desire more training, or education, they want to earn money, they want to engage in sports and hobbies and have a relationship or get married (Emerson, Honey, Madden, & Llewellyn, 2009). Young people with a disability want to become independent, have control over their lives and own their own home and car (Yueng, Passmore, & Packer, 2008). Although aspirations may signify a sense of the future, they are also influenced by their present realities and their relationships with people around them (Allport, 1955; Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008). Aspirations are also affected by background and the support and resources available to young people during their transition from compulsory school education (Yates & Roulstone, 2013). For young people with disabilities and those who are out of school, their daily lives constitute much uncertainty about their future and this impacts on their aspirations. Although many young people's aspirations may not become a reality for them, they still do matter because aspirations have an important role in people's everyday lives. Aspirations shape young people's lives and their actions (Crivello, 2015). As with the wider youth population, some young people with a disability may have strong aspirations for their future (which may be realistic or not) and others may be quite undecided. Those with disabilities may need additional supports in order to fulfil their ambitions and access employments (Nolan & Gleeson, 2017). Personalized training and mentoring can improve career outcomes for disabled employees (Procknow & Rocco, 2016).

2.6 The psychological benefits of employment to the youth and others

Entering employment and having a stable job greatly helps the youth (with and without disabilities) to develop positive and sound adult identities, a better quality of life and subjective well-being (Dunstan, Falconer, & Price, 2017), a greater probability of future career success and stronger earning potential (L. Blustein, 2008; Levine & Wagner, 2005; Shandra & Hogan, 2008). Employment is a social activity that makes up the majority of the adult life and is an important component of the transition into adulthood (Fussell & Furstenberg, 2005). Work also enables young people to enter the adult world, gives them a sense of purpose and value, develops their self-esteem and shapes their identity (Cloete, 2015). Work provides

interpersonal functions, helps one to gain recognition and satisfies one's psychological needs (C. Pratt, Gill, Barrett, & Roberts, 2014). The psychological benefits of employment also extend to those with disabilities (S. Saunders & Nedelec, 2014). Wage employment facilitates economic and social wellbeing, is related to good mental and physical health, contributes to quality of life, provides financial independence, develops one's confidence and expands one's social networks (Dutta, Gervy, Chan, Chou, & Ditchman, 2008; Jang, Wang, & Lin, 2014). Work provides a sense of belonging to a community and social network where one feels wanted and needed (Cloete, 2015). In most societies work is regarded as one of the most important aspects of being human. From a young age, children are asked: *What would you like to become one day?* implying: *What kind of work would you like to do?* If we meet an adult for the first time, we ask: *What work do you do?* A person's worth is estimated in terms of the money they earn through their work (Gonzo & Plattner, 2003). Paid employment is desired by many people with disabilities and policy makers and all other relevant stakeholders should regard this as an important goal to achieve. It is a means to attain productivity, meaningful participation and social inclusion in society. This is no different for people with disabilities. However, it should be noted that employment may not always be inherently beneficial (Broom et al., 2006), When support structures in the workplace are missing and when the employee is unable to meet the job requirements, work can be a cause for mental ill-health (A. Williams, Fossey, Corbière, Paluch, & Harvey, 2016). When job requirements in the workplace have increased or changed, this can pose a problem for workers with disabilities and cause dissatisfaction for them.

2.7The psychological effects of unemployment on people

The psychological effect of unemployment should be understood as it enlightens us on how people experience and respond to unemployment as human beings. One needs to look beyond just statistics and at the impact of being unemployed. Unemployment negatively impacts on human dignity and affects the total wellbeing of the person (Cloete, 2015). Some psychological effects of unemployment are: loss of self-esteem, anxiety, depression, alcoholism, pessimism and psychosomatic

disorders (C. Pratt et al., 2014; Witte, Rothmann, & Jackson, 2012). Unemployment also causes crime, divorce, suicide, abuse and poverty. Youth unemployment not only has a negative effect on individual and the family but also on the broader community in terms of serious economic and social effects (Dutta et al., 2008; Msigwa & Kipasha, 2013). The negative impact of unemployment is greater in magnitude amongst those individuals with disabilities compared to those without (Milner, LaMontagne, Aitken, Bentley, & Kavanagh, 2014). In view of these findings, policies aimed at increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities will improve their mental health and provide work for them.

2.8 Barriers for disabled youth when accessing employment

Attitudes and perceptions are important factors for social inclusion to take place as people act according to how they feel. The way marginalised groups are made to feel will influence the opportunities they are able to obtain and how they participate in society (Das & Espinoza, 2019). Attitudes and perceptions determine how individuals are treated by both society and the state. Prejudices, stereotypes and misperceptions influence the way policy is implemented and designed. These constitute barriers that result in social exclusion and will prevent people with disabilities from accessing employment opportunities (Nolan & Gleeson, 2017). Some people hide their disabilities (non-disclosure) in order to be considered for employment (Drew et al., 2011). Other people with disabilities were deemed to not be in the appropriate state of mind, dangerous and reported that they were underpaid and overworked and did not receive the same benefits as others did. The marginalization of persons with disabilities is also due to a lack of awareness and knowledge about disabilities (Drew et al., 2011).

Generally, barriers that prevent disabled people from accessing employment are attitudinal, institutional and sometimes self-created barriers (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2014). Attitudinal barriers include personal prejudices and biases against people with disabilities. Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2014) in their study, found that employers harboured doubts about the abilities and productivity of workers with disabilities, had less confidence in their performance and regarded them as high risk. They also feared that hiring people with disabilities would alienate their co-workers

and negatively affect the organization (L. Lengnick-Hall, P. Gaunt, & M. Kulkarni, 2008). Employers are often reluctant to hire them as they do not fit the ideal candidate profiles. Also, managers could prefer candidates from mainstream educational institutions rather than special or vocational institutions. Institutional barriers can include obstacles that people with disabilities encounter once they have been employed. An accommodation barrier can be experienced where a workplace adjustment that is required to perform the job, may not be granted for various reasons. With regards to self-created barriers, people with disabilities can negatively affect their recruitment process by limiting their job search, for instance, and being pessimistic about job prospects. They can however, positively contribute to their employment access by engaging in proactive behaviours (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011) such as vocational training, voluntary work or by disclosing their disability (Hebl & Kleck, 2002).

2.9 Strategies to overcome negative attitudes to disability

It has been suggested that in order to overcome negative attitudes, stigmatization and discrimination, a frame work for disability needs to be developed, one that allows for generalization to examine how people understand disability (Vornholt et al., 2018). Organizational staff needs to be educated about disability and its implications for a person in a work environment. Positive experiences can be shared and examples of best practices can help to reduce mistrust and fear among employers and co-workers, which can increase employment of people with disabilities. Political stakeholders can be part of this process by promoting workplace integration in the form of best practice examples and the provision of support structures. Instead of focusing on the limitations of employees with disabilities, their capabilities and strengths should be exploited in the form of training or interventions. Public awareness of their potential needs to be raised. Necessary accommodations should be put into practice so that work adaptation and adjustment is facilitated.

2.10 Employers views on disability, employability and labour market inclusion

Some researchers have recognized the importance of understanding employers and how they view disability issues (Millington, Asner, Linkowski, & Der-Stepanian, 1996). Since employers have an important role in the process of employment, it is crucial to understand their perspective as well, not just the employee's circumstances. A review of studies in this regard has dichotomized and oversimplified employers' attitudes as being either positive or negative (Gilbride, Stensrud, Vandergoot, & Golden, 2003). While most research studies have suggested a negative bias against employing people with disabilities, some studies have indicated a positive outcome towards employing them (Nordstrom, Huffaker, & Williams, 1998; Rose & Brief, 1979; Stone & Sawatzki, 1980; Strindlund, Abrandt-Dahlgren, & Stahl, 2019). Many employers hire, accommodate and include people with disabilities, especially where they have had previous positive experiences with them (Chan et al., 2010; Copeland, Chan, Bezyak, & Fraser, 2010; Unger, 2002). Where employees receive the required support from vocational rehabilitation agencies and are found to contribute to the workplace, employers were happy to employ them (Strindlund et al., 2019). It has been found that a person with a disability can develop into a well-adjusted and productive worker in an environment where there is acceptance, co-operation and goodwill (Kirsh et al., 2009; Rusch, Wilson, Hughes, & Heal, 1995).

2.11 Benefits to employers, of employing people with disabilities

Research on the employment of people with disabilities often focuses on the challenges in this regard and not the benefits of hiring them. Also, most of the research in this area focuses on the supply side (educational and vocational services for those with disabilities) and less attention is given to the demand side (employers' behaviours and work environments). Some companies have shared their successes when they employed people with disabilities. Many studies found that including people with disabilities in their businesses resulted in improved profits (Buciuniene, Bleijenbergh, & Kazlauskaite, 2010; Hartnett, Stuart, Thurman, Loy, & Batiste, 2011; Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014) and cost effectiveness (R. Cimera, 2010; Cimera & Burgess, 2011; Graffam, Smith, Shinkfield, & Polzin, 2002). Employing people with

disabilities also improved the company image (M Friedner, 2013; M Friedner, 2015; Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014) and resulted in a competitive advantage over other companies (Kalargyrou, 2014; Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014; Rosenbaum, Baniya, & Seger-Guttmann, 2017). Another benefit from hiring people with disabilities was that it resulted in an inclusive and diverse workplace culture (Hartnett et al., 2011; Henry, Petkauskos, Stanislawzyk, & Vogt, 2014; Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014). The abilities of these employees were also highlighted to the public (Buciuniene et al., 2010; Lindsay, McDougall, & Sanford, 2014; Scott et al., 2017). This challenged people's stereotypes and misperceptions about the abilities of people with disabilities (Lindsay et al., 2014). The staff with disabilities were reported by employers to be reliable and punctual (Hernandez et al., 2008; Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014; Schartz, Hendricks, & Blanck, 2006) with good work attendance (Kalargyrou, 2014; Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014). These employees were loyal (Buciuniene et al., 2010; Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2011; Kalargyrou, 2014) and dedicated to their jobs and showed much gratitude. They were also innovative, creative (M Friedner, 2013; Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014; Scott et al., 2017) and productive (M Friedner, 2015; Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014; Kaletta, Binks, & Robinson, 2012). Studies also reported a strong work ethic among employees with disabilities (M Friedner, 2015; Irvine & Lupart, 2008; Scott et al., 2017). It can therefore be seen that employees with disabilities have positive attributes to offer in the workplace and employees need to be aware of this.

2.12 Human rights for people with disabilities

Every individual is entitled to universal human rights and equal economic opportunities. Since the 1970's there has been many international initiatives aimed at addressing disabled people's social exclusion and protecting their human rights. The "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled People" was adopted in 1975. It encouraged national and international protection of the rights of persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2018). The "United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities" was adopted in 2006 and it was enforced in 2008 (United Nations, 2016). This Convention is an international legal agreement and it emphasized the duty of nations to protect and promote the human rights of people with disabilities. In 2007, South Africa became a signatory to the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Lang, 2009). The South African government committed itself to a radical new approach to persons with disabilities of all kinds. Despite this human rights instrument being put into place the South African Government appears to not be carrying out its obligations and responsibilities as a signatory to the Convention (Burns, 2011). This is the case in many low- and middle-income countries where health and social services for intellectually disabled persons remain largely inadequate, under-developed and under-funded. The social, political and economic rights of such persons are often violated and they encounter discrimination, social stigma and prejudice in their daily lives in the form of reduced work and social opportunities (Drew et al., 2011).

2.13 Overall policy and legal framework for people with disabilities in the workplace

In South Africa the “ Employment Equity Act” is the principle legislation for protecting and promoting the right to equality in the workplace (Horwitz & Jain, 2011). It was designed to overcome the disadvantages that were experienced by historically marginalised groups such as people with disabilities. The act stipulated that no person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including disability. This act mandates employers to strive to achieve employment equity which includes employing suitably qualified persons with disabilities. In the United States of America, the main statute which aims to ensure that persons with disabilities are accorded fair employment opportunities is the “Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990” (K. Walker, 2014). This act also requires an employer to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees. The United Kingdom (Frank, 2016), Germany (Lodkowska, 2013), and Australia (Maritz & Laferriere, 2016) also have anti-discrimination laws that impact people with disabilities. Many international organizations have contributed to the spread of knowledge about people with disabilities (for example, Disabled People’s International; National Council on Disability).

2.14 Some reasons that middle and lower-income countries have a youth employment problem

2.14.1 Poverty

Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's poorest region (Bicaba, Brixiová, & Ncube, 2017), with poverty being pervasive in Africa (including South Africa). The foundation for good outcomes in adulthood is established in early childhood. Poverty has long standing effects on a child's brain development, health, cognition and character. Poverty is also linked to poor post school outcomes. Children from poverty-stricken backgrounds are less likely to attend school or more likely to leave school early without having attained the basic skills of literacy or numeracy (World Bank, 2018). Poverty also increases the likelihood of disability due to malnutrition, poor health care and dangerous living (World Health Organization, 2015). These disadvantaged children continue to be disadvantaged when they become adults, often when trying to seek employment (Heckman & Kautz, 2013). Young adults who came from poor households experience great difficulty in accessing and maintaining employment as they have not acquired the necessary skills for the workplace (World Bank, 2012c).

2.14.2 Lack of resources and opportunities for students

Lack of resources and opportunities are linked to poverty. Young people who grow up in poor households have fewer personal and educational opportunities to build the skills required to produce a successful outcome in adulthood (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). The scarcity of personal and educational resources (infra structure, equipment) impacts on educational outcomes (Gamero & Lassibille, 2016; Urwick & Kisa, 2014), with greater levels of resources being linked to better outcomes (Alcázar et al., 2006; Visser & Juan, 2015).

2.14.3 Lack of structural transformation in government structures

Structural transformation is lacking in low and lower income countries (Bicaba et al., 2017; L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). Poor governance, corruption and political economy challenges can prevent economic transformation (Amadi & Ekekwe, 2014). Opportunities will improve only as the economy of a country transforms. As

economies develop more workers leave their informal economic activities in search of more formal, wage paying and growth-directed enterprises.

2.14.4 The poor quality of education received

The quality of the education in South Africa is weak, with low levels of literacy and numeracy (Cloutier, Reinstadtler, & Beltran, 2011). In the “Progress in International Reading Literacy Study” (PIRLS) three-quarters of South African learners were not able to reach the lowest international benchmarks in reading achievement (Howie et al., 2017). This remains a challenge to the youth and their post school outcomes. Inferior and incomplete education contribute to youth unemployment, where they do not have the appropriate skills or work-related abilities to be employable or to set up successful businesses of their own, and they experience great difficulty in the transition from education to work (Filmer & Fox, 2014; Lam, Leibbrandt, & Mlatsheni, 2008; J. Smith, 2011). The low quality of education eventually leads to the poor being trapped in poverty, which impacts on employment outcomes (Spaull, 2015).

2.15 The learning crisis amongst our students

There are two important questions regarding the role of education, that should be asked. These are: what should education do? and: does it do it well? (van de Werfhorst, 2014). Schooling is not yielding sufficient learning, as the outcomes in basic education in developing countries are much lower than that of high-income countries. Even students who reach the end of primary school are not competent in basic skills. Early learning deficits become greater over time. Estimates based on forty one countries indicated that, globally among young adults (aged fifteen to twenty four) four hundred and eighteen million of them are lacking in essential foundational skills (World Bank, 2018). This global learning crisis is costing governments one hundred and twenty-nine billion dollars a year. Reading literacy is at the centre of the learning crisis (Howie et al., 2017). The World Bank Report on Education (World Bank, 2018), stressed that schooling cannot be equated to learning and more needs to be done by countries to improve learning in schools (Pritchett, 2013). Schooling without proper learning is a wasted opportunity and a grave injustice to the students who most need a good education (like those affected by

disabilities or have a special educational need) in order to be successful in life (Spaull & Taylor, 2015).

This skills gap is greater in developing countries. In the “Progress in International Reading Literacy Study” (PIRLS) three-quarters of South African learners were not able to reach the lowest international benchmarks in reading achievement (Howie et al., 2017). Poor performance in literacy is impacting negatively on numeracy (Howie et al., 2017). Illiteracy by the end of grade three has long term consequences as the child falls behind, cannot access the curriculum, struggles to keep up or catch up and minimal learning takes place (Muralidharan & Zieleniak, 2013). In 2013, thirty three percent of young people aged between fifteen and twenty four years were neither working nor enrolled in any educational institution (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). The skills gap also affects disadvantaged youth, such as those affected by poverty or disability and they now become doubly disadvantaged (as they learn the least), at a time when they most need the boost that a good education can offer them. Students with disabilities may feel incapable when they experience academic difficulties and this can result in poor self-concept (Girli & Öztürk, 2017).

2.16 The poor quality of education in South Africa

The quality of the education in South Africa is weak (Cloutier et al., 2011). The large number of youth not in employment, education or training, in South Africa, has been linked to deficiencies in the education system and the labour market. The educational system also does not develop socio-emotional and problem-solving skills that assist youth in obtaining employment outcomes (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Inferior and incomplete education (due to early school leaving) contribute to youth unemployment, where they do not have the appropriate skills and they experience great difficulty in the transition from education to work (Lam et al., 2008; J. Smith, 2011). The learning crisis is not confined to students alone as it extends to teachers as well. Teachers performed poorly on a test undertaken by them in 2008 (Badat & Sayed, 2014). At present the learning crisis for many South African students is exacerbated by the global COVID-19 pandemic which has resulted in the closure of schools and centres of higher learning, for several weeks. (Ozili & Arun, 2020). It was reported that the COVID-19 outbreak has left more than a billion students worldwide

out of school (Azevedo, Hasan, Goldemberg, Iqbal, & Geven, 2020). Close to seven million students from primary up to secondary education could drop out due to the income shock of the pandemic. Exclusion and inequality could become worse if already marginalised and vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities are more adversely affected by the school closures. Even a short period of missed school will impact skill growth (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020). Only few schools had the capacity to resort to a distance or online learning platform for their students. Online learning for students with disabilities can be a challenge as it is often not fully accessible to them (Zhang et al., 2020). Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the world over was already experiencing a learning crisis, with fifty- three percentage of children in low- and middle-income countries living in “learning poverty” (unable to read and understand a simple text by age ten) (Azevedo et al., 2020).

2.17 Reasons for the learning crisis in Africa

It is important to determine the causes of the current learning crisis if we are going to improve the outcome. Proximate determinants of the learning crisis have been identified as those factors that are most closely linked to the learning outcomes (World Bank, 2018). Four determinants have been identified as: student preparation, teacher skills and motivation, the availability of relevant inputs and school management. When children begin school, they need to be prepared physically (healthy and able) and mentally (socio-emotional, linguistic, cognitive factors) (Galasso, Weber, & Fernald, 2017; McCoy et al., 2016). Children who are not prepared in these areas and who have poor preschool skills will not benefit completely from formal schooling. Therefore, early childhood education must be prioritized. Teachers are the most important determinants of students’ learning. Often teachers lack the ability to teach the subject matter sufficiently. In Sub-Saharan African countries, the average teacher does not perform better on reading assessments than the best performing grade six students (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006). Furthermore, many developing countries experience a great loss of instructional teaching time (due to factors such as poor training or absenteeism), the consequence being reduced student learning. Effective management (Bloom, Lemos, Sadun, & Van Reenen, 2015; Fryer, 2017) and school leadership are associated with

better educational outcomes (V. Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008) and this is lacking in many developing countries.

2.18 The consequences of inadequate learning on the youth

One of the tasks of education is to prepare the youth for the labour market (van de Werfhorst, 2014) . In order for individuals to be successful in the labour market, the abilities to read, write, think logically, do math, listen and speak must be strong (Heckman & Mosso, 2014). The education system is not providing the skills that are required of them to function effectively in a sophisticated economy (World Economic Forum, 2018). Economies with greater skills develop faster than those with mediocre skills. Ultimately, the lack of learning has severe consequences for the skills of the workforce (World Bank, 2018). The outcome is high youth unemployment. Individuals with low proficiency in literacy are not equipped for the labour market, further education or on the job training. In the fast developing labour market, most high quality jobs or job training requires adequate reading competency which should be above the minimum proficiency (Desjardins & Rubenson, 2011; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016). Good foundational skills are critical for further skill development and later work success. Low foundational skills will prevent better career opportunities and better earning power for much of the young adult's working future (di Gropello, 2011; Fouarge, Schils, & de Grip, 2013; O'Connell & Jungblut, 2008; Windisch, 2015). This will result in stagnant jobs and income for many students with poor foundation skills and this situation can be aggravated by increased technology and the demand for more skills. The skills deficit restricts their ability to enter into further education and training. The benefits of education will be determined by the skills that the students acquire, not merely by the number of years they spend in the classroom (World Bank, 2018). Improving learning must therefore become a priority for students in order to progress academically and in their career trajectories later.

2.19 Academic success as an important prerequisite for youth employment success

Education represents an agent for change and stimulating inclusion (Das & Espinoza, 2019; Janjua & Kamal, 2014). Education infuses power within people and

society and gives them a voice and confidence to articulate their needs (Power, 2015). Entry into primary education is vital in order to achieve basic and stronger literacy and numeracy skills, which is a prerequisite for obtaining decent employment (Institute of Development Studies, 2017). In 2016, sixty one million children of primary school age were not attending school, while two hundred and two million children of secondary school age were out of school (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2016). More needs to be done to promote school enrolment. Academic success has become an important goal to be reached amongst students, in today's society. Being proficient in reading, writing and mathematics are important skills that are required for later success. Students who do not acquire these skills at school, are at risk of becoming unsuccessful later, in the job market as they experience severe shortfalls in skills in the workplace (Girli & Öztürk, 2017). Not being able to read is linked to an increased risk for school dropout, anxiety, depression and low self-concept (Christie & Yell, 2008; Daniel, 2006; McArthur, Castles, Kohnen, & Banales, 2016) as well as high unemployment (G. Young & Browning, 2005). Reading failure restricts future work opportunities for children and they are prevented from contributing to the economic growth of a nation in an increasingly technologically advanced world market (Hornery, Seaton, Tracey, & Craven, 2014). In South Africa, the unemployment rate is highest among the youth without a matric pass, compared to those with a matric and further qualifications (Statistics South Africa, 2012). This implies that secondary education as well as tertiary qualifications facilitates access to the labour market (Hampf, Wiederhold, & Woessmann, 2017). Reading is a complex task and many students with disabilities experience great difficulty in this area (Koritsas & Lacono, 2011). However, most of these learners can learn to read with the implementation, by educators, of evidence based instruction in reading (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2017; McArthur et al., 2016).

2.20 Addressing education as a strategy to improve employability

Education does matter. The importance of education to build the economy and to compete in the globalized world of the 21st century, has been stressed by policymakers. Education is key to a country's national development and it unlocks the human and economic potential of its citizens (Maina, 2014). It equips them with the

necessary skills to participate in and benefit from their national economy. Education is a central socio-economic right that provides the basis for life-long learning and economic opportunities including employment (Hall, 2015). Human capital is acquired through schooling and continued learning throughout one's life. Human capital are skills, knowledge and competencies that enable workers to perform their jobs efficiently and to create new innovations and progress technologically (Hampf et al., 2017). It is this human capital that allows one to escape unemployment, find a job, increase one's earning power and enhances wellbeing.

2.21 Skills that students need to function and thrive in society

Education should provide all students with the skills they require to lead healthy, productive and meaningful lives. The outcomes on youth employment are dependent on education and skills with respect to quality, quantity and relevance (World Bank, 2018). Skills are the product of formal general education, formal and informal vocational education and training (Woessmann, 2019). Skills capacitate people, shapes their lives, and enable them to function and flourish as individuals and in a society. As a whole skills enhance social inclusion, social mobility and economic productivity (Kautz, Heckman, Diris, ter Weel, & Borghans, 2014). Skills can be taught to people and they are not genetically predetermined or cast in stone at birth. The World Bank Report of 2018 describes three broad categories of skills (which are cognitive, socio-emotional and technical) which can change at different stages of life and with instruction. Cognitive skills are obtained in childhood and in school and includes literacy, numeracy, problem solving and higher order thinking skills. Cognitive skills are further developed later and is the base upon which socio-emotional skills are built (F Cunha, Heckman, Lochner, & Masterov, 2006). Socio-emotional skills (sometimes referred to as "non-cognitive" skills) includes personality traits (or character skills) such as leadership, self-control and motivation (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; John & DeFruyt, 2015; Kautz et al., 2014; Payton et al., 2008). Countries such as Peru and Turkey have worked on developing students' socio-emotional skills and this has had positive outcomes (Alan, Boneva, & Ertac, 2015; World Bank, 2017b). Socio-emotional and cognitive skills work together in the workplace and in the course of life,

and they reinforce each other. Acquiring strong cognitive and socio-emotional skills early in life is critical as both determine the path of lifetime trajectories (Kautz et al., 2014). Technical skills can be acquired through-out life through specific training in school or in a specific job (Handel, Valerio, & Sanchez Puerta, 2016). In the adolescent years greater benefits are gained from programmes that target non-cognitive skills compared to the benefits from cognitive or academic programmes (F Cunha, Heckman, & Schennach, 2010). This has implications for interventions that are aimed at improving school to work transitions as well as social inclusion of youth with weak foundational skills (as in those with certain disabilities). All of these skills need to be promoted so that education can encompass a wide range of competencies to enable students to meet the demands of a changing world context (Winthrop & McGivney, 2016). Inclusive education in South Africa, was adopted in order to address the full range of learning needs for students who came from diverse backgrounds such as those experiencing disability or poverty (Department of Education, 2001a).

2.22 Inclusive Education in South Africa

Inclusive education is an initiative towards discontinuing discrimination towards some children (such as those with disabilities) which excludes them from receiving appropriate education (Mariga, McConkey, & Myezwa, 2014). Children who are affected by disabilities face many hurdles to accessing and completing education and therefore have significantly lower participation rates in school and less educational qualifications than those without disabilities (Shonkoff, Richter, van der Graag, & Bhutta, 2012; United Nations, 2014; World Bank, 2007). Inclusive education is an important strategy towards achieving the broader “Education for all” goal agreed upon by world leaders in 2001 and the call for “leave no one behind” principle. Inclusive education is also a means to building the social capital of our society and educating all the people so that they obtain paid jobs and live fulfilled lives (Mariga et al., 2014). At present the literature suggests that there is a lack of clarity and agreement over what exactly inclusive education is and the extent to which it focuses on children with disabilities (Kalyanpur, 2011; Pather, 2011; Wapling, 2016). Globally there are different interpretations of inclusive education.

The South African policy document, “Education White Paper 6” (Department of Education, 2001a) aimed to develop a system where, with relevant support, students with disabilities could learn with their peers in the same classroom (Pivik, McComas, & Laflamme, 2002). Most children with disabilities or high support needs, in South Africa, are however, not taught in classrooms alongside their typically developing peers (as inclusion would have it), but rather in special schools for the various categories of disabilities (intellectually, hearing or visually impaired, learning disabled, physically disabled) (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). These learners are exposed to a differentiated learning programme (National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12) for the duration of their stay at the special school (Department of Basic Education, 2019b). It is not known whether this programme adequately prepares them for the world of work. Therefore, it is still unclear as to how much of an impact inclusive education is having on educational outcomes for children with disabilities in South Africa (P. Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit, & van Deventer, 2015).

In South Africa, there are ambiguities relating to the goals of the policy and in how it is to be executed and this could be leading to the lack of progress in the implementation of the policy (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; P. Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Some studies concluded that the prevailing South African socio-economic environment is not conducive to the successful implementation of inclusion as resources, facilities and supports are lacking (Du Toit & Forlin, 2009; Nel, Müller, & Rheeders, 2011; Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht, & Nel, 2016; Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009). There has been a significant gap between the idealistic conceptualisation of inclusive education in the South African policy documents, in this regard, and the implementation there-of (P. Engelbrecht et al., 2015). In order to implement inclusion successfully, educators must have adequate training, support, resources and positive attitudes towards inclusion. A study conducted in the Gauteng province in South Africa (one of the most resourced provinces in South Africa), revealed that most students with disabilities either seldom or never received specialised support services (Nel et al., 2011). Inclusive education is not cost effective if students with disabilities are not attaining their academic potential. Obstacles to inclusion impede educational progress in both developed and developing countries (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). A revised education system is being piloted in South Africa.

2.23 The new “three-stream education system” in South Africa

The Department of Basic Education in South Africa has embarked on a plan to transform its education system (Department of Basic Education, 2016). The new educational system, “the three-stream education system” is aimed at enhancing economic growth, job creation and greater entrepreneurship. It is hoped that it will improve students’ employability and that training in the occupational or vocational skills will assist in meeting the demands of the industry. According to the national development plan, South Africa has a skills shortage and needs to produce thirty thousand artisans every year by 2030. Currently all students are engaged in a general learning curriculum. The new plan would place students into three different streams of education. The first stream is the academic, which is the traditional general education system that is currently in use in South Africa and prepares the students for university admission. The second stream is the technical vocational, which prepares the student for electrical, mechanical or civil engineering at a technical college. The third stream is the technical occupational, which will prepare students to become artisans upon completion of secondary school. The two technical streams (technical vocational and technical occupational) are expected to constitute sixty percent of all the learners and the streaming process could begin as early as grade four. The technical occupational programme was due to have been piloted in 2017 in fifty-eight schools, including special schools.

This educational transformation by the department of basic education in South Africa appears to have good intention, however, there have been several areas of concern. The launch of this revised education system could be delayed due to the economic, financial and educational impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa. There is concern that streaming students on a particular path too early in the school career (at grade four) could place them on an unchangeable course for life and restrict future career opportunities. Countries that have delayed the streaming process into Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (such as Poland) have had positive outcomes (Jakubowski, Patrinos, Porta, & Wiśniewski, 2016). Also, the subjects that will be studied may not meet the labour market demand or new technological advances for the future (Hanushek, Schwerdt, Woessmann, & Zhang, 2017). It is not known when all special and mainstream schools without the relevant infra-structure required for the new system will be upgraded and this could be a slow

and a costly process that could compromise the intended educational outcomes. A further concern is that the new graduates of the technical occupational stream of education would not have the ability to perform any other job if they could not find work, not having had a general secondary education (Hampf & Woessmann, 2016). The new system assumes that technical skills are most needed to improve the economy or to be more employable however, growth and industrialization are influenced by many additional factors. A traditional 'general' education holds comparatively more value than a technical education which may not be all that the economy needs. It is important for young people to master foundational skills of reading, writing, numeracy, critical thinking and problem solving, to enable them to participate meaningfully in this programme (Breton, 2013; Hampf et al., 2017; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2012). Socio-emotional skills are also required before moving into specialized streams (Kautz et al., 2014), and this has not been considered. It has been advised that high levels of technical skills should accompany high levels of general education which would provide a balanced array of skills. Evidence from developed economies shows that narrow technical education facilitates early entry into the labour market, however, this advantage is not sustainable when adaptation is required (as with technological change) and students would then become vulnerable to job losses (Hampf & Woessmann, 2016; Hanushek et al., 2017). In a study conducted in Switzerland, however, it was found that employment rates for those with vocational training remained high throughout their entire career, in the presence of structural change (Korber & Oesch, 2016).

In dynamic economies, education policy should consider the full working life-cycle of an individual. It is not wise to just focus on the current employment situation and ignore the dynamics of growing and changing economies (as with globalisation or technological advances) (Woessmann, 2019). Focusing just on vocational education or general education only could be disadvantageous. A key factor for education policy is its ability to adapt to changing economic conditions. Modern knowledge based economies highly reward skills (Hampf et al., 2017). Of importance is a high-quality general education system with cognitive skills that form the basis for further learning and adaptation should the need arise (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2015). Policies for skills development at all levels (from early childhood development, during school years, on the job life- long learning opportunities) and policies that ensure that

skills are effectively retained and utilized must be in place and implemented. Such policies are important to secure future prosperity of the individual and the country.

2.24 Higher/postsecondary education for students with special educational needs

Post-secondary education is a vital component in career development, whether one has a disability or not (M Grigal, Migliore, & Hart, 2014). It has been reported that postsecondary education can help individuals obtain employment and higher level occupations (Cheatham, Smith, Elliot, & Friedline, 2013). Those who are exposed to post-secondary education are more likely to find jobs that pay better wages as compared to their peers who do not have any form of postsecondary education (Marcotte, Bailey, Borkoski, & Kienzl, 2005). Higher education for students with intellectual disability has many benefits for them. They are able to compete with their counterparts with regards to their job and they can obtain paid positions (Zafft, Hart, & Zimbrich, 2004). In a study of college students with disabilities and their experiences of college, it was found that they want to be like all other students at the college, in spite of their disabilities (Hong, 2015). However transitioning from school to higher education can be a challenging experience for disabled students (Hong, Ivy, Gonzales, & Ehrensberger, 2007). For many youth with disabilities the end of their schooling does not translate into successful transition into continued post-secondary learning.

Access to higher education for disabled students in South Africa poses difficulties. Some government institutions do provide support services for disabled students, however, the range of disability support services is limited to three disabilities, namely, blindness, deafness and paraplegia (Department of Education, 2001b). It has been reported that students with disabilities often do not have the academic, personal and social skills that is required for them to adjust to the needs of higher education (Brinkerhoff, McGuire, & Shaw, 2002). They often require support to enable them to successfully complete their studies and this is often not available (Ferrell & Marshak, 2004). The “National plan for higher education” which was formulated in 2001 by the ministry of education outlined guidelines on the transformation of higher education in South Africa. The document, however, did not

provide sufficient or clear plans for disabled students in the post school domain or in higher education (Matshediso, 2007). Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges lack the policy or capacity to cater for students with disabilities (Marsay, 2014). In South Africa, much more needs to be done to create post-secondary educational opportunities for all youth with disabilities. Developed countries such as the United Kingdom, United States of America (Plotner & Marshall, 2015) and Canada (Aylward & Bruce, 2014) have the necessary capital and human resources to provide services to students with disabilities in higher education.

2.25 Transition from school to work

School to work transition refers to the period where secondary school students are prepared to exit the school system and enter the adult world of work (Cleland & Smith, 2010). One of the major goals in the education and training of learners with disabilities is to prepare them for independence as adults (Cheong & Yahya, 2013). This should include their entry into competitive employment, vocational training, postsecondary education and supported employment programs as a bridge from school to work. There are many challenges which occur during the transition process. Learners with disabilities require more support than their mainstream counterparts, due to their difficulty in adjusting to these natural shifts in life independently. Transition problems can be reduced if not solved, if students can be guided by the relevant individuals during transition. For youth with disabilities, the education system should provide effective transition into adult employment (Kraemer & Valentini, 2018). In the United States of America, the “Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997” established a mandate to school districts to provide comprehensive transition services to all students with special educational needs who are fourteen years of age and older (Lipkin & Okamoto, 2015). The mandate also requires the school to coordinate transition activities with community service agencies to make needed services more readily available to graduates after leaving school. Links to paid work and training services in the community is advised (Lawson & Shields, 2014). In South Africa, there is no legislation which makes transition services compulsory for all students with special needs. The issue faced by many parents and persons with special needs is that there is a lack of effective transitional plan from

school to employment which leads to poor employment outcomes for this population. Career services in special needs education is limited (M. Engelbrecht et al., 2017b). Preparation for the world of work is insufficient, resulting in a low probability of successful transitioning into employment. Vocational training as a preparation for transition to work is not highly prioritized in the curriculum (Steyn & Vlachos, 2011). The Department of Education has acknowledged the challenges experienced by students with severe intellectual disability in making the transition from school to work (Department of Basic Education, 2018). They have recommended that the students be exposed to the world of work from age fourteen, however it is not known to what extent this has been implemented. At present most students use their own resources to source opportunities for training or employment post school. Employment for persons with disabilities is limited and most of them depend on sheltered workshops, some form of job training, (if they are able to obtain this) or centres run by non-governmental organizations. Without effective and meaningful transition programmes for youth with disabilities, they will remain marginalised with poor career outcomes (Lawson & Shields, 2014).

2.26 Factors affecting post school employment outcomes for students

Post-high school employment outcomes of young adults with disabilities are likely to be influenced by many factors that can interact in complex ways (W. Carter, Austin, & Trainor, 2011). Schools and policy makers can use this information to improve the employment potential of learners with disabilities. Here are some of the factors that can affect post high school employment outcomes.

2.26.1 Academic achievement

Academic achievement has been associated with positive employment outcomes (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine, 2005). The most important academic skills for students to achieve in school are that of reading, writing and arithmetic. Students who do not achieve these skills are less successful post school (Girli & Öztürk, 2017). People with higher literacy and numeracy skills are more likely to be employed and earn higher wages than people with lower literacy and numeracy skills (Morrisroe, 2014; Shomos & Forbes, 2014). Literacy and numeracy levels are important components of human capital and greater levels of human capital are linked to better

labour market outcomes and greater productivity. Literacy and numeracy skills are also more transferable to other jobs thus making the employee more employable (Morrisroe, 2014). Students with special educational needs could have low academic achievement, depending on the nature and severity of the impairment (Moeschler & Shevell, 2014).

2.26.2 Employment experiences of students

One of the strongest predictors of post high school employment success for youth with disabilities is having had a paid job during school enrolment years (Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000; Landmark, Ju, & Zhang, 2010; Raben, 2002; D. Test et al., 2009; M. Wehman et al., 2014). Paid work experience or employment, community-based work experiences, or internship opportunities outside of school, during high school, help students with disabilities develop workplace socialization skills and human capital (Gold, Fabian, & Luecking, 2013; Morrisroe, 2014). This can also serve to allay employer concerns and perceptions about people with disabilities. Paid work during the school years makes the youth more competitive in the labour market, they acquire more work skills, they develop and maintain their work and career performance, they become more confident in their abilities, and widen their contact networks that can in turn generate more future work opportunities for them (S. Allen, Ciambone, & Welch, 2000; Burgstahler, 2001; Gold et al., 2013; Shandra & Hogan, 2008). Despite these advantages, few young people with disabilities actually obtain paid competitive jobs during their school years. Youth with disabilities have been found to have less work experience than their peers during high school and often encounter many hurdles when trying to become independent (E. Carter, Trainor, Ditchman, Swedeen, & Owens, 2009; Wolf-Branigin, Schuyler, & White, 2009). These findings highlight the need for schools to increase their efforts to acquire paid employment for youth with disabilities.

2.26.3 Supports and resources available to students

Many studies have documented the important role of social networks in influencing the employment success of young adults with disabilities (A. Carroll et al., 2009; C. Carroll & Dockrell, 2012; Doren, Gau, & Lindstrom, 2011; Doren, Lombard, Clark, & Lindstrom, 2013). Young people with a disability have less opportunities for

developing social networks. Supportive parenting, familial relationships and community support enhance attainment of independence. Parents have a continued presence and influence in their children's lives (Heckman & Mosso, 2014; Martinez, Conroy, & Cerreto, 2012). Working siblings also help to expand their peer network and opportunities for work. Family legacies can predict the type of educational opportunities that they will obtain and their success in the labour market (Filandri, Nazio, & O'Reilly, 2019). Young people who grow up in working households have better work outcomes than those coming from workless households (Berloff, Matteazzi, & Villa, 2017; Zuccotti & O'Reilly, 2018). Parental expectations have been linked to the academic achievement of disabled individuals in high school and their employment outcomes (M. Wehman et al., 2014). Young adults with disabilities were more likely to be working after secondary school, when their parents expected them to do so (Doren, Gau, & Lindstrom, 2012). Universally parents have immense faith in the power of education and they believe that education can change their children's lives for the better. Almost all parents would like their children to complete school, even if they themselves did not go to school (Mukerji & Walton, 2012). Post-employment services such as on the job support services and assistive technology services will assist disabled people to remain in their jobs (Beach, 2009; J. Saunders, Leahy, McGlynn, & Estrada-Hernández, 2006). Young people with disabilities require appropriate supports that would maximise their opportunities towards independence (Stokes et al., 2013).

2.26.3 Inclusive versus non- inclusive learning environments in schools

Inclusive education is one where all students, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities, spend most of their learning time together, from a meaningful and appropriate curriculum (Meynert, 2014a). Numerous studies (E. Cimera, 2010); (Test, Mazzotti, Fowler, Kortering, & Kohler, 2009) have demonstrated the positive effects of inclusive school environments on post-school outcomes, such as employment, postsecondary education, and independent living. Inclusion allows students to make either as much or more progress academically and in adaptive behaviour, as opposed to being placed in separate educational settings such as special schools (Dessemontet, Bless, & Morin, 2011; Dimitrova-Radojichich & Chichevska-Jovanova,

2014; Finke, McNaughton, & Drager, 2009). Inclusive schools allow children to build and develop friendships that they may have not encountered otherwise (Finke et al., 2009). Children who participate in inclusive education have been found to be more independent (Baker-Ericzén, Mueggenborg, & Shea, 2009; Dimitrova-Radojichich & Chichevska-Jovanova, 2014; Stahmer, Akshoomoff, & Cunningham, 2011) and it resulted in their having a greater sense of self and self-worth (Diamond & Huang, 2005; Fitch, 2003). Inclusion in school provides greater opportunities to make choices, express preferences, set goals, and become more self-determined (Hughes, Cosgriff, Agran, & Washington, 2013; M. Walker et al., 2011; L. Wehmeyer, Agran, Martin, Mithaug, & Palmer, 2007). Educational environments that are highly structured, restrictive, or protective (as in a special school) usually do not provide opportunities for independent problem solving or decision making (L. Wehmeyer & Meltzer, 1995).

2.26.4 Severity of impairment of students

Those individuals with less severe impairments are more likely to be employed than their more severely affected counterparts (Jensen et al., 2005; Ozawa & Yeo, 2006; Pack & Szirony, 2009; J. Saunders et al., 2006). With less severe impairments, their physical and psychiatric problems may be fewer and they could encounter fewer barriers to accessing and sustaining employment.

2.26.5 Vocational training for students

Vocational education is often seen as a solution to youth unemployment, by policy makers (Biavaschi et al., 2013; N. Hoffman, 2011; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013). Students with disabilities who have engaged in vocational or community based work are more likely to obtain and maintain their employment (Lindstrom et al., 2011). A recent study argue that being vocationally able has benefits at the onset of a career as it facilitates entry into the labour market (Forster, Bol, & van de Werfhorst, 2016; Hanushek, Woessmann, & Zhang, 2011). In a study carried out in the Limpopo Province in South Africa, it was found that youth who had some form of training or work experience were less likely to be unemployed (Dagume & Gyekye, 2016). General education and vocational education and training

are important in making young people employable and more productive. Vocational skills improve employability for young people and complements general education (Biavaschi et al., 2013). Acquiring occupation-specific skills to meet employers' demands and firm-related work experience creates closer links with the labour market and facilitates transition into employment (Buheji, 2019). Relevant vocational training should be a major component of the transition from school to work in the form of practical job training in the final years of school (Kim & Dymond, 2010; Lindstrom, 2008; Rusch & Millar, 1996). Vocational training should occur through the educational process as well as facilitated by government policy that provides the finances and the resources that is required for technical and vocational training (Boating, 2018; Steyn & Vlachos, 2011). This would reduce the mismatch between vacancies and job seekers. Vocational education should go beyond technical skills and increase their social and occupational possibilities. The curriculum of the vocational programmes should contain a fair portion of general education skills (apart from job specific skills) that will facilitate later learning. An important aspect for long-term employability should be a focus on lifelong learning. Skills must be updated and there should be flexibility if changing labour market conditions suggest occupational change. A study by Cheong and Yahya (2013) revealed that vocational education is lacking in the special education system for individuals with learning difficulties. In South Africa, the "Three stream education system" has been introduced by the Department of basic education, which includes technical training at mainstream and special schools (Department of Basic Education, 2016). This could provide all students with more skills.

2.26.6 Labour legislation and how it effects employment

Regulation of employment can be sometimes be an obstacle to business creation and expansion. Evidence indicates that when regulations are relaxed (tax, licensing, employment protection legislation) it results in greater job creation (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). In South Africa the National minimum wage Bill has been signed and took effect from May 2019. The main objective of the bill was to provide for a national minimum wage in order to promote economic development and social justice for all by improving the wages of the lowest paid workers and protecting the exploitation of workers (Portfolio Committee on Labour, 2017). Critics of the bill claim that it does

not ensure that it will live up to its potential to reduce working poverty and inequality. The minimum wage policy could be a deterrent to employment. H Bhorat et al. (2013) studied the implementation of minimum wage in six sectors in South Africa. No employment effects were found in five sectors and there was non-compliance with the wage policy in three of the six sectors. The new wage legislation also discourages the creation of new businesses and encourages a bias towards technologies that require a minimal workforce. The role of labour brokers has also been minimised, whereas previously brokers assisted new entrants to the labour market to find a job (McGregor, 2019).

2.27 Personal factors that influence employability

2.27.1 Self-determined behaviour and its value in school and the workplace

Promoting self-determination of adolescents with disabilities has become an important consideration in secondary education and transition services as it has been linked to post school outcomes, (Fowler, Konrad, Walker, Test, & Wood, 2007; M Wehmeyer, Palmer, Shogren, Williams-Diehm, & Soukup, 2013). Self-determination refers to the act of making choices and solving problems. The role of self-determination in promoting positive academic, social, and adult outcomes (including employment) for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities has been highlighted (A. Erickson, Noonan, Zheng, & Brussow, 2015; Hughes et al., 2013; Konrad, Fowler, Walker, Test, & Wood, 2007; S. Lee, Wehmeyer, Soukup, & Palmer, 2010; McGuire & McDonnell, 2008; Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Rifenbark, & Little, 2015; M Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). Active involvement by students in their educational programs and transition planning is emphasized as a means to encourage students' self-determination and positive post-school outcomes (L. Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, Garner, & Lawrence, 2007). Employees with intellectual disabilities can be trained to develop self-determination skills which can improve their job satisfaction and performance (Fornes, 2008; Fornes, Rosenberg, Rocco, & Gallagher, 2006; M Wehmeyer et al., 2013).

2.27.2 Autonomy and its role in influencing employment outcomes

Autonomy is one of the important characteristics of self-determined behaviour and it has a strong role in predicting many outcomes in early adulthood including employment (M. Field, Martin, Millar, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998; Shogren & Shaw, 2016). Autonomy refers to the degree to which a person acts according to one's own interests and abilities and without unnecessary influence (M. Ryan & Deci, 2017; M Wehmeyer, Abery, Mithaug, & Stancliffe, 2003). Autonomy is a basic psychological need which when exercised enables one to experience positive psychological benefits such as greater satisfaction with life (Ferguson, Kasser, & Jahng, 2014). When relevant others (such as parents, teachers and employers) support their autonomy, they experience more wellbeing (Chirkov, Ryan, & Sheldon, 2010; Deci, 2000; Inguglia, Ingoglia, Liga, Coco, & Cricchio, 2015; R. Ryan, 1995; Shogren & Shaw, 2016; Thøgersen-Ntoumani, Ntoumanis, & Nikitaras, 2010). Most people with disabilities are denied the opportunity to make their own choices as it is assumed that they do not have the ability to do so (Carlson, 2010). It has been argued that people with disabilities can exercise autonomy if they are provided with appropriate support and opportunity to do so (Bjornsdottir, Stefansdottir, & Stefansdottir, 2014; Nota, Ferrari, & Soresi, 2007; Wullink, Widdershoven, & HvS, 2009).

2.27.3 Character skills as a predictor of life outcomes

Both cognitive (literacy, numeracy, problem solving) and socio-emotional character skills are important factors in determining success in economic and social life. Acquiring strong cognitive and socio-emotional skills early in life is important as both determine the path of lifetime trajectories (Kautz et al., 2014). Evidence shows that non-cognitive character skills can predict various life outcomes, including educational achievement and labour market outcomes (Heckman & Kautz, 2013). They are called skills because the attributes can be shaped and enhanced in adolescence and there are effective ways to do so. Character skills such as conscientiousness, perseverance and self-control helps one to engage productively in society (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015; Durlak et al., 2011; Kautz et al., 2014; Payton et al., 2008). Numerous studies have found that the character skill "conscientiousness" is associated with job better performance and wages (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hogan & Holland, 2003; Nyhus & Pons, 2004; Salgado, 1997).

2.28 The role of gender in securing and maintaining education and employment amongst the youth

Globally, girls are twice as likely as boys to not enrol in school and girls also have decreased school completion rates (Education Commission, 2016). When gender and poverty are combined, just twenty five percent of the poorest girls in low income countries complete primary school (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016). In Sub-Saharan Africa, poor rural girls are seven times less likely than non-poor urban boys to complete school and less than one in twenty of these girls will complete secondary school. Gender exacerbates disadvantages in other spheres such as socioeconomic status, disability and race (Kabeer, 2015; Lewis & Lockheed, 2006). Low educational levels place females at an immediate disadvantage when seeking employment. Gender differences in employment has become a significant topic for youth with disabilities as well as for women in general (Bisello & Mascherini, 2017; Bishu & Alkadry, 2016; Magill-Evans, Galambos, Darrah, & Nickerson, 2008; World Bank, 2012a). It has been reported that females found themselves fifty percent less employable than males (Qenani, MacDougall, & Sexton, 2014). Gender has influenced employment outcomes in all economies, often caused by cultural practices which influence economic activities and behaviour of women (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017; World Bank, 2012b). In some countries, girls and young women do not have the same access to education and training as their male counterparts as many youth programmes are gender specific (United Nations, 2015). This places them at an immediate disadvantage in pursuing higher education and subsequent employment. There are also gender differences in earnings with women consistently earning less than men, even with similar performance levels (W. Graham & Smith, 2005; Joshi, Son, & Roh, 2015). Men with disabilities experienced better employment outcomes than women with disabilities (Doren et al., 2011; Lindsay, Cagliostro, Albarico, Srikanthan, & Mortaj, 2018; Lindstrom, Harwick, Poppen, & Doren, 2012). In South Africa disability intersects with gender, age and race to yield negative outcomes in education, employment and income for all people with disabilities, more so for black women with disabilities (Moodley & Graham, 2015). The unemployment rate among the youth (in South Africa) for the period 2001 to 2011 was consistently higher for females than for males. (Kyei & Gyekye, 2011; Msigwa & Kipsha, 2013).

2.29 Technology and its effect on learning and the world of work

Globally the nature of work is undergoing change (World Bank, 2018). Some countries have shifted away from agriculture, especially high-income countries (L. Fox, Haines, Muñoz, & Thomas, 2013). Other shifts have been the move away from industrial revolution. With progressive computing power and the connectivity that the internet offers, jobs are being replaced by technology (Weller, 2019; World Bank, 2016c). The result is that technology is becoming more difficult to operate as the complexity of the applications is growing. This is associated with an increase in skill requirements and a reduction in simple tasks resulting in poorer labour market opportunities for people with special educational needs (Weller, 2019). The effects of technology vary dramatically across countries. Technology alters the demand for skills much more in countries that have the infra structure to support automation. In low- income countries the impact of technology on work will occur at a slower pace. Those individuals with better technological skills will be at an advantage in the workforce as they will be able to access those professions that are benefitting from technology (World Bank, 2016c). Their earning power will also be greater (Falck, Heimisch, & Wiederhold, 2016). Technological advances will require major modifications to education systems (Diop, 2017). Globally eighty five percent of countries include computer skills in their secondary school curriculum and in Sub-Saharan Africa, just fifty percent of the countries do so (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017). In South Africa a “Digital Skills Programme” (including coding and robotics) will be piloted from grades R to three in 2020, in grades four to six in 2021 and in grades seven to nine in 2022 (Department of Basic Education, 2019a). This addition to the curriculum, according to the department of education, will provide students with an understanding of coding and robotics and will develop their skills and competencies necessary to prepare them for the fourth industrial revolution. Technological, cognitive and socio-emotional skills complement each other and will enable students to embrace the 21 first century innovatively (World Bank, 2017b). The concern regarding the new programme is that thousands of educators would have to be trained in its use and the infrastructure for the system would have to be set up in every school and this could prove to be costly. In a study by Wolbring (2016) it was suggested that engagement with disabled people has been lacking regarding the use of robots and its impact on their employment. Many of the jobs

predicted to be taken over by robots are often the ones most accessible and manageable to disabled people and this could be a setback for them. In a study undertaken by Weller (2019) on disabled and non-disabled employees, it was found that there was a substitutive effect of computer technology on the routine tasks and a complimentary effect for the non-routine tasks in the workplace. In the current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic some workers have been forced to work from home, requiring adaptation to on-line and virtual work arrangements (Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020). The suitability of this work arrangement for people with disabilities is uncertain.

2.30 Globalization and its implications for people with disabilities

Globalization refers to the merging of international economies as a result of global financial mobility (Hurrell & Woods, 1999). Globalization is welcomed by many countries as it is said to bring economic efficiency (Dicken, 1992). Globalization brings with it expanding opportunities and freedom in the worldwide market, all of which non-disabled people can benefit from. However, people with disabilities have not been considered in the move towards globalization (Jeon, 2014). In the global context and in terms of employability, disabled people are assumed to be “not capable persons” and therefore cannot succeed in the labour market (Neufeld, 2001; Sandmo, 2001). Economic globalization creates and enforces a new hierarchy dependent on labour mobility and capability. This creates an unstable market system where unskilled workers and less-capable persons can become excluded.

2.31 Improving the employability of the youth by workplace based adolescent intervention programmes

Transition from school to work can be a difficult period for many young adults. Many of them, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds (due to poverty or disability) may leave school earlier than their colleagues and therefore may not have the necessary foundational skills needed to succeed at jobs (World Bank, 2018). The following are job training programmes that can help all youth to develop their skills. These can greatly benefit successful employment for disadvantaged youth (United States Agency for International Development, 2013).

2.31.1 Short term job training programmes

Many short-term job training programmes (duration of two weeks to two months) are available but do not meet labour market demands and they do not have much benefits as compared to completing a formal education (D. McKenzie, 2017). Many of these programmes are not well constituted and implemented. Programmes that develop multiple skills have better chances of success (Eichhorst, Rodríguez-Planas, Schmidl, & Zimmermann, 2012; Fares & Puerto, 2009; Kluve et al., 2016). Short term job training programmes have been found to have limited impacts, but well thought out programme design could improve these outcomes.

2.31.2 Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships provide young people an opportunity to improve their skills in a workplace setting (Heckman & Mosso, 2014). During this training, a young person works with an experienced craftsperson over a period of time and learns the skill (International Labour Organisation, 2010). This training is highly structured and well designed. Apprenticeship systems that combine learning at school and in the workplace is recommended. This system requires a strong institutional and regulatory framework (with proper certification) that supports its success (Woessmann, 2019). Well-structured career focused programmes improve character, problem solving and occupational skills (Halpern, 2009). Apprenticeship training produces higher returns than other training programmes. Research outcomes on apprenticeships in Senegal have produced positive effects on labour market outcomes and limited effects on general cognitive skills (Frédéric, Giles, & Sahn, 2017). Germany has a “Global Apprenticeship Network” that assists companies universally to initiate apprenticeship programmes (Jacobs, 2017). An area of concern is that apprenticeships result in training in a specific field only and students may not be able to adapt to a changing labour demand. Informal apprenticeships can lead to apprentices learning obsolete workplace practices if they do not have master trainers who keep up with the latest developments (International Labour Office, 2012). In South Africa many of the state-owned enterprise apprenticeship schools were closed

post 1994, resulting in a shortage of artisans (Naidoo & Hoque, 2017). Some apprenticeships and learnerships are available to students in South Africa, however this initiative has some shortcomings. The curriculum should include a greater variety of skills to be taught and students with lower levels of educational attainment, such as those with special educational needs, need to be accommodated (Kruss et al., 2014).

2.31.3 Internship programmes

This refers to formal workplace training with a skills development activity that relates knowledge gained in the workplace to the needs of the business. Training strengthens workers' skills and raises workplace productivity (Haelermans & Borghans, 2012; Kullberg, Behrman, & Robalino, 2012). It can increase workers' output by ten percent or more (De Grip & Sauermann, 2012; Konings & Vanormelingen, 2015; Saraf, 2017). Internships can teach students the importance of character skills such as perseverance, conscientiousness and other skills that are important both in the workplace and society and it could make them more marketable. In spite of its proven benefits, most young workers do not receive workplace training. Training participation is even lower for those who have an incomplete education or limited skills, such as those with disabilities (Cabrales, Dolado, & Mora, 2014; Kullberg & Aterido, 2010; Sousounis & Bladen-Hovel, 2010).

2.31.4 Career academies

Some countries offer "career academies" which function in regular schools and prepares students for post-secondary education and employment (Kemple & Willner, 2008). Career directed courses are offered which could include job shadowing, career fairs, job search workshops, resume and interview preparation. Career academies also includes activities to develop the character in the workplace (Kemple & Snipes, 2000). This type of knowledge is valuable to all youth as it would assist them in accessing work opportunities.

2.31.5 Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

The TVET programme can be implemented in secondary school or at a tertiary institution (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2014; Tan &

Nam, 2012). The Department of Higher Education in South Africa intends expanding the TVET sector to accommodate more students and to promote greater collaboration between TVET and industries. More vocational skills are required to meet the needs of the economy as well as the employment needs of the youth (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). Technical and vocational education and training can prepare young people for work but the programmes must be constructed and implemented in consultation with the employers. The TVET programmes in developing countries are of poor quality and are not relevant to the labour market (S. Field, Musset, & Alvarez- Galvan, 2014). In 2013, 2,4 billion rands was given towards skills development in South Africa (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2014). However, an investigation revealed a disjointed TVET system where the students, lecturers and prospective employers were disengaged from one another (S. Field, Musset, & Galvarez-Alvan, 2014). There was poor guidance from management, to lecturers and students. Lecturers were ill equipped to teach and the student failure rate was high. The vocational system did not have adequate partnerships with business and industry. The South African TVET college system needs to be strengthened and transformed in order to provide quality vocational education (Mitgang, 2012). The curriculum content of the TVET programmes should be reviewed, relative to the needs of the society and of the economy (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). TVET should be combined with general education (Oketch, 2014). Key general competencies must be established first (literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills). Skills selected to be taught must be relevant and enduring over time. In the process of providing vocational education to students, their democratic and human rights must be protected whilst meeting the economic and skills needs of the country.

2.32 Sheltered workshops versus supported or community employment for individuals with disabilities

In the 1980's supported employment was introduced where people with significant disabilities began to participate in integrated community-based employment and sheltered workshops. Later, sheltered workshops were viewed as a barrier to the inclusion of people with disabilities into the community and society as a whole

(Murphy & Rogan, 1995). There have been calls for an end to segregated workshops, sheltered workshops and subminimum wage for people with disabilities. In the United States many sheltered workshops have been converted to community based supported employment (Murphy & Rogan, 1995; Rogan, Held, & Rinne, 2001). This process of conversion had positive outcomes. It resulted in people with disabilities being happier, more skilled, having a better quality of life and receiving more cost-efficient services (Dague, 2012; Forrester-Jones, Jones, Heason, & Di'Terlizzi, 2004; Jahoda, Kemp, Riddell, & Banks, 2008; Rogan et al., 2001; Wehman, Chan, Ditchman, & Kang, 2014). Studies conducted on the cost analyses of sheltered and supported employment programmes revealed that supported employment is a better investment for taxpayers over time than sheltered workshops (Cimera, 2008; Jang et al., 2014). In South Africa we have a few sheltered workshops which provides employment to adults with a range of disabilities. Service provision for disabled people is limited and is often provided by non- governmental organisations (J. McKenzie & McConkey, 2015). These facilities do not have adequate funding and these individuals are isolated from the community and do not receive vocational or life skills development (J. McKenzie, McConkey, & Adnams, 2014).

2.33 Entrepreneurship as an option for the youth

Entrepreneurship has been defined as the action of one or more individuals toward initiating and maintaining a profitable business activity (Nwachukwu, 1990) and creating employment (Baxter, Chapman, DeJaeghere, Pekol, & Weiss, 2014; Maina, 2014). Entrepreneurship has been encouraged across the world as a means to facilitate economic participation amongst young people (World Bank, 2012c). Entrepreneurship supports economic growth, economic independence, self-esteem, job creation and the social welfare of a country (I. Dempsey, 2009; Fatoki & Chindoga, 2011). It can provide support to youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (United States Agency for International Development, 2013; World Bank, 2012c). Assisting youth to find a sustainable livelihood in agriculture or in self-created enterprises may assist the employment challenge in Africa (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). Youth must consider self-employment as an option instead of persisting towards wage employment. An entrepreneurial mindset should be promoted in

society. The youth of South Africa appear to be behind in establishing their own business ventures, as compared to their counterparts in other countries (Fatoki & Chindoga, 2011; Von Broembsen, Wood, Herrington, Shay, & Sheppers, 2005). Youth can be screened for latent or active entrepreneurial inclinations such as innovative thinking, leadership attributes, passion and drive. This however must be done in conjunction with other supportive measures such as availability of finance (Institute of Development Studies, 2017). They also need skills to develop their networks and linking with higher levels of the value chain. The most effective entrepreneurship training combines business administration skills with softer entrepreneurship skills such as problem solving (Kilimani, 2017). In 2009, in South Africa, the “National Youth Agency” was formed with the aim of providing employment support to the young people (Chabane, 2011). Subsequently the “National Youth Economic Empowerment Strategy and Implementation Framework” was drafted, to develop youth entrepreneurship and technical skills and to reduce unemployment (South African National Youth Agency, 2009). In a study conducted by Gwija, Chuks, and Iwu (2014) in South Africa, it was found that a major inhibiting factor to entrepreneurship development was the lack of awareness and inaccessibility of youth entrepreneurship support structures in that community (Gwija et al., 2014). Entrepreneur education and training has been recommended in order to provide students with skills that will help them establish and sustain a career in business (Osuala, 2010; Turker & Selcuk, 2009). This education increases the chances of success as an entrepreneur and it could develop the social, economic and political domains of a country (Nafukho & Muyia, 2010). It was also suggested that the schooling system should develop entrepreneurial attitudes, skills and knowledge in students (Isaacs, Visser, Friedrich, & Brijal, 2007; Mahadea, Ramroop, & Zewohir, 2011; Sandrock, 2011). However, entrepreneurial programmes and initiatives alone may not change the employment trajectories of participants. Their success is also dependent on greater economic, social and political factors that may be beyond their control (Wiger, Baxter, & Dejaeghere, 2015).

2.34 Evaluations of programmes to increase wage employment

The most common intervention to assist youth with gaining employment is training (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). Comprehensive programmes which offered technical, vocational

as well as life skills with internships and work experience yielded positive results in some countries but not in others. In addition to a basic education, high productivity skills that can accelerate youth employment include processing, marketing, machinery operation and repair, commercial transportation, logistics and quality control (Institute of Development Studies, 2017). A wage subsidy programme in South Africa did increase wage employment although ninety eight percent of the firms did not make use of the wage subsidy. African employers main concern about youth is that they lack “employability” skills (life skills) (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Life skills are a cheaper form of intervention, however impact evaluations indicated that life skills programmes alone did not increase employment rates. In the main, the evidence on training programme evaluations indicate that average employment effects from youth training programmes are limited, have short term gains and are very costly. Young people are experiencing great difficulty in accessing the world of work and obtaining work-based skills and experience, even with the wage subsidy (H Bhorat et al., 2013). The scenario is worse for students with special educational needs. Many young graduates are also out of work implying that a qualification does not automatically guarantee them a job. In Africa just resources alone are not adequate to ensure that the young people gain productive employment. They need to acquire the relevant skills though their education system (Boating, 2018; Kilimani, 2017). However, scholars have warned against the narrow orientation of vocational and technical education that teaches skills that limit the type of employment available for youth (Baatjes, Baduza, & Sibiya, 2014). Curricula that are modified to suit the needs of current and future labour demands are important, yet missing for high school learners with disabilities. Work experience during high school years is also absent (Martin, Van Dycke, & D’Ottavio, 2007). It has been suggested that secondary education be expanded so that the youth can obtain work experience through internship and apprenticeship opportunities (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017).

2.35 Features of successful job training programmes

It is important to develop partnership arrangements between government, employers and non-profit organizations which are established to train unemployed adults. (Committee for Economic Development of the Conference Board, 2015; Conway & Giloth, 2014; C. King, 2014; Martinson, 2010). Young adults who are under skilled must be targeted and supported to enter careers and to plan their progress to longer

term careers. Also, classroom learning must be accompanied by workplace learning. Formal apprenticeships are a common way to achieve this. For programmes that are aimed at secondary school students, ensure that foundational skills as well as occupation specific skills are taught, in order to avoid narrow specialization (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010). Studies show positive outcomes for the employer and the employees who complete formal apprenticeships (Dietrich, Pfeifer, & Wenzelmann, 2016; Hollenbeck, 2008; Lerman, 2014; E. Smith & Kemmis, 2013). A good apprenticeship has structured training, a professional trainer to oversee the apprentices and a written contract that stipulates arrangements and an assessment to verify the acquired skills (Cumsille, 2016; Fazio, Fernández-Coto, & Ripani, 2016; E. Smith & Kemmis, 2013). Capable teachers are an integral ingredient of successful training programmes (Axmann, Rhoades, & Nordstrum, 2015; Stanley, Adubra, & Chakrun, 2014; Watts & Sultana, 2004). Teachers must be able to apply competency-based standards in training, assessment and offer certification. Student support services and comprehensive information must be provided to students for decision making. Career information is essential in training programmes, to help students to identify opportunities and enter into careers (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010; Watts & Sultana, 2004). It is important for the youth to be able to access information on training or jobs from an information or youth centre (Kilimani, 2017). Promoting apprenticeships is an effective strategy to mitigate the adverse consequences of strict labour legislation. A combination of further subsidies and incentives to industry to encourage apprenticeship schemes is required (McGregor, 2019).

2.36 Solutions to Africa's unemployment challenges

Unemployment, an increasing youth population, graduate unemployment and skills challenges were issues that the participants faced during the “Youth Employment and Skills Chapter” meetings of the recent African Transformation Forum (Boating, 2018). According to the United Nations, Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's youngest population with more than three-fifths of its people being below the age of twenty five (United Nations, 2015). The region's working age population is expected to rise by forty five percent by the year 2030. However, the labour market prospects and the state of education do not appear to be prepared for this rise. In low- income countries

unemployment levels are increasing (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). So, what does Africa need to do in order to accommodate its expanding youth population and high youth unemployment rates? This was one of the questions addressed by “The African Transformation Forum” which was held in Ghana in 2018. At the forum it was concluded that four critical areas required attention. Firstly, they highlighted the need for a detailed database on labour market projections, entrepreneurs and gaps in skills. Existing analytical evidence tends to focus on formal employment in urban areas. Less is known about the functioning of the informal and agricultural sectors (Institute of Development Studies, 2017). Secondly, there should be increased liaison amongst policy makers, academia and the private sector. There is a need for an integrated approach involving different levels of government and multiple stakeholders (Kilimani, 2017). Thirdly, increased policy focus on technical and vocational institutions across Africa and more funding, is required. Lastly, there should be greater technical and vocational training across the education system and this should include collaboration amongst educators, parents, policy makers and the private sector.

Governments in lower income countries are exploring ways to improve youth employment in the long term. Promoting job rich inclusive growth is important for youth employment. Strategies to expand labour demand are needed (Institute of Development Studies, 2017). It is maintained that employment opportunities will only improve with economic transformation that uses new technology and greater productivity in existing formal and informal sectors (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Therefore, the first step is to closely examine the economy and the employment opportunities to determine where future opportunities could emanate from. One needs to find out what problems and challenges the youth is faced with in areas where opportunities could exist. The choice of interventions to problems should be influenced by a “theory of change” which would guide the possible solutions to the problems. Supply side (workers) interventions could work on developing the youth to improve their outcomes. Business interventions (demand side) would work on their ability to create more and better opportunities for the youth (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017).

2.37 Supply side (workers) interventions to increase wage employment

Addressing the labour market challenge, where there is oversupply of workers relative to the number of formal sector opportunities, requires policies and programmes that will stimulate a demand for labour in the market. Formal sector paid employment must be supported. As wage employment increases, youth employment increases as well (Filmer & Fox, 2014). In countries where there is an expanding labour force (as in South Africa) an employment strategy should support the youth to enter the informal sector (agricultural and non-agricultural sectors) as well as the formal sector. This is referred to as mixed livelihood strategies. They should be guided to find these opportunities. It may be more worthwhile to prepare the youth for stable self-employment. Start-up funding and access to land could assist them to begin the agricultural process (Kilimani, 2017). Youth could be provided with agricultural resources together with interventions and knowledge to make agriculture more effective. Investments in agriculture, education and health have yielded economic growth and increased employment (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). The climate of economic transformation that will facilitate employment transformation is a long-term process that can take up to two or more generations.

2.38 Demand side (business enterprise) interventions to increase wage employment

Developing countries (such as South Africa) require strategies to increase investment in labour intensive enterprises in an effort to develop wage employment (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). Accelerated transformation needs to take place where more private firms work at creating more jobs. Some successful interventions are: training, management support and business development services, increasing access to finance and innovation policies. Stimulating economic growth in South Africa requires foreign investment. The president of South Africa has called on international investors to invest in South Africa (South African News Agency, 2020). However, this could only succeed if the policy of the country is rational and certain so that the investors have confidence in the long-term sustainability of South Africa as an investment destination (McGregor, 2019). The president of South Africa has expressed a plan to create two million jobs for unemployed youth, within the next decade (Lekabe, 2019). This urgent intervention is required as the unemployment

rate among the youth currently stands at almost fifty nine percent and this is expected to rise considering the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa.

2.39 Addressing the quality of education as a strategy to improve employability

Education is a powerful instrument for growing human capital, removing poverty and ensuring that all people progress and prosper, from school to the job market (World Bank, 2018). Education will create and raise the youth's aspirations and increase their potential to reach them. Improving the quality of education could be the best strategy for better employment but one that is often neglected because the gains are long term and will not be immediately seen or of use to the current youth. The future is determined by what is done in the present. Investment in the present education system will yield gains for the future generations. Strong educational foundations form the basis of all learning and skills development (World Bank, 2018). It is possible to achieve quality education together with enhancing schooling. The Republic of Korea began, in the 1950's, to focus on achieving quality primary education for most of its population and then followed a similar plan for secondary and higher education, with excellent learning outcomes (World Bank, 2018). An important feature is a persistent emphasis on the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged population (J. Lee & Hong, 2016). The human capital theory of education has however, been criticized for merely addressing the demands of the local and global economy and neglecting the social development aspect of people (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018; Vally & Spreen, 2016). Education should support intellectual growth as well as personal and social enrichment (Baatjes et al., 2014)

The South African National Development Plan, as part of its Vision for 2030 emphasises the importance of improved educational quality and outcomes in South Africa. It is expected that better educational outcomes will lead to higher employment and earnings and economic growth (National Planning Commission, 2012). The World Bank Report (2018) on education provided some guidelines for countries to improve their education outcomes. In order to fulfil its intentions, better policies are required both within and outside of the education system. Furthermore, assessment

of learning needs to become a serious goal (not just schooling) and determining how it can be enhanced in order to produce better outcomes for all students (ways to diagnose system weaknesses and improve learning). Evidence on the kind of learning programmes that will most effectively boost learning must be considered and evaluated (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Schweisfurth, 2011). Also, greater effort is required to make schools work for all students (including those with disabilities). The provision of remedial education programmes can strengthen the foundational skills of academically weak students and prepare them for further education and training (Post, 2016). School management must implement interventions that will enhance learning where students are ready to learn, teachers are skilled and motivated and other factors that will support the teacher -student relationship and learning (such as school infra structure, resources) (World Bank, 2018). Teacher professional development must be effective and result in enhanced learning for the students. Evidence from high income countries showed that practical, specific and continuous professional development produced the most gains in education (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2016). In Africa, programmes that entailed long term teacher mentoring and coaching has had positive effects on student learning (Conn, 2017). Good early childhood development programmes must be prioritised to teach sound foundational skills (Fernald, Prado, Kariger, & Raikes, 2017). Teaching children to read in their mother tongue is highly recommended as children learn to read most effectively in the language that is spoken in the home (Piper, Zuilkowski, & Ong'ele, 2016; Taylor & von Fintel, 2016).

2.40 Making the education system work for learning which will in turn support employment outcomes

Education systems are often not a good match with learning goals (World Bank, 2018). The system often works towards many goals at the same time and many of them are in conflict with each other. This takes away the focus from learning. A further problem is that of limited policy implementation by government departments responsible for education (Viennet & Pont, 2017). Lack of focus on implementation can have serious implications for education. Technical challenges, political bickering (World Bank, 2016a) and compromised policy implementation (due to factors such as union or parent action) also contribute to the misalignment of learning goals. Our skills shortage is not confined to the students, it also extends to management

positions. Mismanagement in education is the outcome of the absence of skilled managers in key positions. Importing of skills should be considered where necessary (McGregor, 2019). Learning goals must be monitored strictly. Accurate statistics on learning must be accessible in order to monitor performance. Financial accountability assessments are vital (Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability, 2017). Aligning the various parts of the education system coherently towards teaching and learning in the classroom is vital and will pay good education rewards in the long term (Liang, Kidwai, & Zhang, 2016). The development of home-grown solutions is also important, as simply borrowing models from other countries will not result in coherence amongst different parts of the education system. However, implementing principles from the developing global knowledge and adapting it to the South African context, can supplement learning in some contexts.

2.41 We must learn from successful interventions

It is also important to study evidence to ascertain which kinds of interventions have been successful in improving employability. Additional data is required to evaluate the employment processes that take place in low income settings. There may be cost effective interventions that would enhance employment (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). Programmes to link rural youth with urban youth is needed. The youth can also be assisted to achieve the skills that they did not master earlier such as writing.

2.42 Summary of chapter 2

Included in this chapter were all the topics that was deemed relevant to youth in general as well as to youth with disabilities. Sub-Saharan Africa's high youth population was highlighted (Ayele et al., 2017). This offers great potential for self and national economic development if it is managed well (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). The psychological benefits of employment and the psychological effects of unemployment were outlined. We were informed of the several barriers that disabled people experience when accessing employment. The employers' views on disability and employment were sought. The benefits of employing people with disabilities were presented. The new "three-stream education system" in South Africa, higher/postsecondary education and transition from school to work were included. The reasons that low- and lower-income countries have a youth employment problem have been outlined. The poor quality of education and lack of skills have been major

contributors to unemployment. Factors affecting post school employment outcomes for students were discussed. Personal factors that influence employability were alluded to. The effects of technology and globalisation on employment were relevant. Workplace based adolescent intervention programmes, supply and demand side interventions and improved education to enhance employment outcomes for all youth, were advised (United States Agency for International Development, 2013).

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“A theoretical framework serves as spectacles through which to see the world, at the same time, it places boundaries on one’s vision and horizons.” (L. Connelly, 2014)

3.1 Introduction

It is said that a theoretical framework is the basis upon which all knowledge in research, is constructed (C. Grant & Osanloo, 2015). Discovering knowledge or reality always takes place within a theoretical framework (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2014). Theoretical and conceptual frameworks also make research findings more meaningful and generalisable. Several models of disability and theoretical frameworks have been proposed, towards the knowledge of disability. Alternative theoretical explanations highlight different aspects of the frameworks as being especially important in determining individual preferences and outcomes. Models of disability (or theories) can assist us by providing a framework, a possible cause and effect perspective among core variables and possible parameters for responsibility thinking and actions (*serves as spectacles through which to see the world*) (McGinnis & Ostrom, 2014). However, no one theoretical perspective is sufficient to analyse and explain all feasible situations (*it places boundaries on one’s vision and horizons*). Any framework has limitations. In this chapter I explored some models related to people with disabilities. Below were the contributions in this field that provided a greater understanding of the life conditions and circumstances of persons with disabilities. The various models provided a different lens for looking at phenomena, allowing it to be examined from different perspectives, for a greater understanding of all its facets (L. Connelly, 2014).

3.2 Medical model of disability

From the 1800’s the medical model of disability was proposed. Disability was described as a medical condition that resides in the individual (Kraemer & Valentini, 2018). Patients were described clinically using medical terminology and sought the services of trained professionals who cured them. The medical model of disability focused on the deficits of the person which were fixed in the individual (Goffman, 1963; Williams-Whitt & Taras, 2010). Although the medical model medically improved

the lives of people with disabilities, their social contexts were ignored. Disabled people were viewed as objects to be fixed and this approach failed to acknowledge that people are much more than their biological components and they are influenced by historical, social, economic and cultural factors. The need for medical treatment was noted, however, this was not the only way that disability was to be understood (The Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation, 1976). The sole focus on medical diagnoses led to a lack of attention to the wider social worlds in which those with disabilities have to function in and the inequality that they could experience in all areas of their lives (Read, Mcgregor, Coggan, & Thomas, 2006). The medical model was also based on two assumptions that had a negative impact on human rights. The first assumption legitimized separate facilities for people with disabilities, such as special schools or sheltered workshops. The second assumption was that those with disabilities were unable to take care of themselves or make decisions and they require constant guardianship (Degener, 2016). There was also disagreement over the power that medical and other professionals had over people with disabilities, arguing for their independence, integration and right to make autonomous choices. Medical professionals have been accused of socially oppressing people with disabilities as they take on the role of “expert fixer” (Rickson, 2014). It is important to acknowledge that many people with disabilities do have medical conditions that require medical care. The primary limitation of the medical model was its lack of attention to structural issues that influence disability, such as poverty, environmental barriers and social exclusion (Braathen, Munthali, & Grut, 2015; Shakespeare, 2014; Shakespeare, Lezzoni, & Groce, 2009). In the field of education, as long as disability was confined to a biological basis, the main cause of failure to learn lay within the child, thus minimising the role of the environment on the development of the child (Reid & Valle, 2004). By the end of the 20th century, a new approach to disability was proposed in which the medical model was replaced with a model of disability acknowledging the social and cultural contexts that we live in (Simeonsson, 2009). The medical model was challenged by the social model which rests on the belief that disabled people do not pose a problem, but rather the environment and attitudes of people present barriers to them (Fevre, Robinson, Lewis, & Jones, 2013). Societal deficiencies were identified and it was debated that those with impairments were disabled by people and social barriers could be changed. There was now an

implication that there was a continuous influence of the environment on an individual's functioning.

3.3 The social model of disability

Michael Oliver (Oliver, 1983) was one of the founding fathers of the social model of disability. The social model of disability was developed as a critique to the medical model. The social model had a strong impact on the society in the United Kingdom, by questioning social discrimination and beliefs about disability. The North American and the disability movements in the United Kingdom rejected the medical model of disability as a physical or cognitive pathology and maintained that disability is socially constructed (M. Shildrick, 2012). The medical model resulted in people with disabilities losing opportunities to prosper, like all other people, due to physical, attitudinal and social barriers in society (Braathen et al., 2015; Harpur, 2012). The social model was a theoretical paradigm shift from the medical model, with its emphasis on diagnoses and treatment, to a more permissive social justice system (Leshota, 2013). The medical model was seen to be contributing towards oppression and marginalization of people with disabilities, while the social model was seen as empowering them (Bricher, 2000; Shakespeare, 2014; Shakespeare et al., 2009). Whilst acknowledging that bodies may be impaired, disability was considered to be caused by social, environmental and attitudinal barriers that prevent participation in society (Hemingway, 2008; Rickson, 2014). This change in thinking resulted in considerable benefits for people with disabilities in the way of legislation that prevented discrimination against them. This model also had an impact on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2016). According to the United Nations Convention persons with disabilities include those with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments and this, together with various barriers, may prevent their full, effective and equal participation in society (United Nations, 2006). An important aspect of this definition is the acknowledgement of the interaction between a person and the environment. Disability no longer focuses only on the deficit within the person, but also on the limitations within the environment that affect the functioning of the person.

Oliver (1996) argued that disabled people are not disabled by their bodily impairments, but by the attitudes of a disabling society. The social model shifted the focus away from the individual with the problem and instead looked at the social structures and policies that disempower people with disabilities. As an example, an individual on a wheelchair cannot be denied a job on the basis of his physical disability. Instead the workplace should be assessed and re-designed to accommodate the individual on the wheelchair. The social approach focuses on the way society disables people with impairments. From the perspective of the social model the social organisation of the labour market must be looked at in order to ascertain how those with disabilities are excluded from work (Barnes & Mercer, 2005). This could involve studying the employee's experiences in the workplace and the labour market (Foster, 2007; Foster & Fosh, 2010). Those who subscribe to the tenets of the social model to address exclusion, also acknowledge the link between the social theory of disability and political action. They call for citizen rights, equal opportunities and inclusion (Barnes & Mercer, 2010). It is also viewed in terms of changing people's attitudes or perceptions towards people with disabilities.

The social model of disability has had a major impact on inclusive education legislations and policies across the world. In South Africa, we had the *South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996*, the *White Paper 6 of 2001 on Special needs Education and Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* as well as the *White Paper 3 of 2007 on the Transformation of the Higher Education System*. All these acts and policies were aimed at inclusion and equal access in education for students with disabilities (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012). The educational environment was modified in order to accommodate students with special educational needs.

Although many activists embraced the social model of disability, it was also criticised by many, as strongly as the medical model was (Shakespeare, 2006; Shakespeare & Watson, 2001). The dichotomy of impairment and disability and the material slant of the social model have been criticized (Degener, 2016). It was felt that the reality of the impairment was overlooked and minimised through the dissociation from the medical model. Anastasiou and Kauffman (2012) point out that social models do not acknowledge the differences among and within disabilities. According to them disability is the result of the complex interaction of biological, psychological, cultural

and socio-political factors, all of which cannot be simplified. Also, one cannot hold a solely social view of disability because social redistribution can become insignificant. Complete rejection of the medical model could reduce public support and welfare programmes for disabled people. It is also possible that focus away from the disability can wrongfully lead researchers and professionals to assume that feelings of depression or anger originate from social exclusion when in fact it is related to physical pain or discomfort (Shakespeare, 2006). The social model was also criticized for disregarding identity issues which care about differences amongst people and perceives them in a positive light (Degener, 2016).

It is possible to consider both models of disability and to develop a more flexible approach that would be responsive to both the individual's disability as well as to the environment that the individual has to function in. Finkelstein (2007) argued that models had to suit their times and needed to change with those times. It was said that the social model became fixed in a narrow rights-based approach and its relevance began to be questioned, in the 1990's. It was debated whether the social model was fit for purpose or was there a need for a more active model to initiate change (J. Levitt, 2017b). It was thought that the disability movements were not able to uphold the rights of people with disabilities (Oliver & Barnes, 2012). The social model was starting to erode but legislation was still important (Berghs, Atkin, Graham, Hatton, & Thomas, 2017).

3.4 Human rights model of disability

People with disabilities needed a stronger social model which ensured their human right to live in dignity and to live in an environment that enabled them to flourish with their disability (Berghs, Atkin, Hatton, & Thomas, 2019). The social model of disability was expanded upon by the human rights approach to disability. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 had a strong impact on disability law and human rights law globally (United Nations, 2006). This brought about a paradigm shift in disability policy where the rights of people with disabilities were acknowledged and their impairment should not be seen as a cause to deny them their rights. The human rights model of disability arose. This approach recognized disability as a social construct that arises when impairment interacts with

the challenges of society (Degener, 2016). Barriers to inclusion and equal economic, political and social outcomes were addressed through the enactment of laws and policies (Rioux & Valentine, 2006). In difficult economic times, the human rights of people with disabilities are affected by cutbacks in funding, as an example, and any new human rights laws should have a clause where their rights should be protected and enforced. Society must also enable these rights. A social model of human rights act should state this in legislative form. This should facilitate a change in society and its values and uphold the human dignity of all people. People with disabilities should not be singled out as requiring special legislation just for them, as disability should not be viewed as an inconvenience. Rather disability should be viewed as diversity which should be a norm (V. Williams et al., 2018). The human rights model differed from the social model by the former providing formal and obligatory legislation to ensure equal rights, equality, supports and accommodations for people with disabilities.

3.5 The biopsychosocial model of disability

Philosophical and conceptual changes over the past three decades has led to several changes in spheres related to people with disabilities. Increased societal awareness of human rights brought about legislation and corresponding obligations to remove discrimination and segregation (Sanches-Ferreira et al., 2015). With this awareness, the medical model of disability was rejected and people's interaction with the environment became an important consideration. A new paradigm of disability was born where the environment in which an individual with a disability functions, plays a key role in the process of disablement (Verbrugge & Jette, 1994). The new model became known as the "biopsychosocial" model which combines the main concepts contained in both the medical (the pathology in the individual) and social models (environmental impact on disability) and acknowledged that disability is a complex entity (Üstun, Chatterji, Bickenbach, Kostanjsek, & Schneider, 2003) with the complex interaction between personal, physical and environmental factors (Luckasson & Schalock, 2013). An implication of this model of disability was that by eliminating barriers, people with disabilities could function better and participate in society (Tripney et al., 2015).

The World Health Organization in 2001 endorsed the “International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health” (ICF) which is a comprehensive and internationally accepted framework describing health related functioning in different conditions (World Health Organization, 2001). Its main purpose is to provide a classification of functioning for adults and children with disabilities, taking into account their daily lives, the activities they are involved in, the environments where this takes place and their health condition (Simeonsson, 2009). It also places disability in a universally accepted context and explains that disability is an umbrella term which covers impairments, limitations in activities, restrictions in participation and attitudinal barriers in society. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health maintains that disability arises from a discrepancy between an individual’s health condition and the demands emanating from contextual or environmental factors (Saltychev, Kinnunen, & Laimi, 2012; Vornholt et al., 2018). This model represented a shift in responsibility from the individual to society which has to overcome barriers. It is crucial that this shift in thinking not only takes place in theories and frameworks, but becomes known at a broader societal level (Vornholt et al., 2018). The classification and categorisation of childhood disability assists professionals to have a common understanding of disorders and their eligibility criteria (Hollenweger, 2008; Wedell, 2008). The classification systems are important as they enlighten us on the prevailing discourses and the relationships of knowledge and power (Riddell, 2008). In 2007 a child and youth version of this framework was developed and added on, making it the “The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health-Child Youth”(ICF-CY)(World Health Organization, 2007).

The specific information relating to health and functioning of children promoted a multi-dimensional and interactional approach for special education (Sanches-Ferreira et al., 2015). The identification of differences among children influenced policy decisions, educational practices and interventions. This classification system provided a holistic approach to special educational needs (Castro & Palikara, 2018). It included all aspects of a person’s life: medical (body structure and function), social (ability to participate), environmental factors (the person functioning within the context of the physical world) and personal factors (race, gender, education, age) (Marsay, 2014). In special education, it effects the provision of services, intervention planning and allocation of resources to students, depending on the contexts in which they have to

function. In the school setting, all allied health professionals and the educators can interact with each other using the common language of the ICF-CY to determine the most needed interventions and environmental supports for students. It can also influence social policy in special education and leadership in the labour market (Machaj, Lorkowski, Starczyńska, & Pedrycz, 2013). Despite the advantages that are offered by the ICF-CY, this framework did have certain limitations. Raggi (2014) indicated that the application of the ICF-CY could be impeded owing to the complexity of the classification and limited feasibility in educational practice. Other critical issues pertaining to disability classifications is whether they did contain valuable educational value (Nilholm, Almqvist, Göransson, & Lindqvist, 2013). Also, they tended to place educational problems within the child and lower the expectations from the child. Such classifications could become stigmas or labels and can prevent more inclusive practices. More widespread use of the ICF is required in order to appreciate its benefits (Bagraith & Strong, 2014). Use of it has been slow in the education sector (Aljunied & Frederickson, 2014). Some components of the ICF require review as it did not consider concepts such as resources and agency, especially when it is used in economically disadvantaged countries, communities or individuals (Mitra, 2018). The ICF should acknowledge that not every dimension of life can be specified or classified and the classification is not a complete list of the lived experience of health conditions.

3.6 Capabilities approach to disability

The capabilities approach to disability was put forward by Sen (1985), Nussbaum (2006) and later Mitra (2018). In this approach, functioning and capabilities were highlighted. Functioning referred to the engagement of the individual in an activity in question and their achievements. Capabilities referred to the opportunities that enable functioning. Nussbaum identified ten capabilities (ranging from body health to emotions) that provide the minimum requirements for adequate functioning and wellbeing. A person's wellbeing can be judged by performance on these capabilities (Mitra, 2018; Nussbaum, 2006; Wolff & De-Shalit, 2007). Capabilities are regarded as a kind of freedom and an individual must be able to have a choice in this. This freedom of choice has been criticized by some as school children, as an example, are not able to exercise good judgement and therefore cannot be given the freedom to choose. It is the interaction between one's internal and external resources within

the social environment that determines functioning. The capability approach is normative in that people's lives should be assessed according to functioning and/or capabilities (Mitra, 2018).

The main political and social goal should ensure that every person (disabled or non-disabled) receives above a threshold level of each capability. This can be achieved for most people with disabilities if appropriate social policies are designed and implemented. Nussbaum did acknowledge that some people with disabilities will not be able to reach this threshold, however, attempts should be made to strive for as many thresholds as possible. An important principle that the capabilities approach was based on was that of human dignity and the entitlements that should accompany it, not duties. The capabilities approach was successfully applied to the area of disability as the United Nations and the United Kingdom have used it for policy development and implementation. This approach has been criticized (Pogge, 2010; Walby, 2009). However, despite its shortcomings, it has been appreciated for engaging with disability in an informative and practical manner (Sayer, 2011).

3.7 Active model of disability

Disabled people and disability activists highlighted the importance of inclusion of people with disabilities in all spheres of society. J. Levitt (2017a) maintained that no current model of disability considers the impact of the actions of those with disabilities on their disability. Disabled people should not be passive and powerless to act on the restrictions that disability might impose on them. The "active" model of disability encouraged people with disabilities to engage in self-help actions, using support groups and assistive technology, in order to reduce the limitations imposed by disability. The World Health Organization defined impairment as "a problem in body function or structure" and disability as "a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives" (World Health Organization, 2017). This description of disability takes both medical and societal factors into account but does not consider the impact of the actions of disabled people. Those with disabilities should take control and responsibility for their own lives and limit the effects of their own disabilities. The actions of people with disabilities can reduce the impact of their disability. Studies have found that self-help can decrease health problems and the effects of disability (Carpenter, Stoner,

Mundt, & Stoelb, 2013; Kruger, Helmick, & Callahan, 1998; LeFort, 2004). Studies have reported that support groups (E. Fisher et al., 2012) and assistive technology (Ben Mortenson et al., 2012) can reduce the effects of disability. The current generation of people with disabilities have more resources and opportunities than the previous generations, to reduce the impact of their disabilities. Also, a combination of society, the disabling condition, the actions of disabled people and several other factors, together affect disability.

3.8 Human Developmental Model of Disability

This is an interactional model where wellbeing results from the interaction between the health deprivations, personal factors, resources and the environment (structural factors) (Mitra, 2018). This model highlighted the links between impairments, health conditions and wellbeing outcomes such as poverty, not just disability. Relevant personal factors, resources and structural factors can vary depending on the issue at hand. This approach was flexible and unspecified. It did not see impairments or health conditions as individual factors, but as aspects that are affected by resources, structural factors and personal factors. Hence socio-economic factors are important determinants of health.

3.9 Cultural model of disability

A cultural studies approach to dis/ability can be a powerful tool, as it postulates to always look at both sides of the coin and challenges implicit norms and values of mainstream society and culture (Waldschmid, 2018). It claimed that disability alone should not be made into a problem, but be regarded as one side of a coin, whose reverse side also needs investigation. This other side could be called “normal”, “healthy” or “ability.” The need to categorize people as either/or (binary opposites) has been questioned as well as the reason that disability is negatively valued. Also, the cultural model of dis/ability argued that disability is to be understood not as a characteristic of a person, but as a category of human differentiation that is always embodied and thus materialized. This model further stated that both ability and disability are interdependent and both should be investigated equally, with no special focus on either one. One should look at society in general (have a wider perspective) and take a “de-centring” approach and this would lead to new insights and possibilities.

A disadvantage to this model is that it can be viewed narrowly to focus on cultural aspects such as symbols, beliefs and customs and these could be exaggerated.

3.10 Critical Disability Studies approach

Issues around disabilities and people with disabilities have undergone changes in conceptualization over time (Leshota, 2013). Critical Disability Studies is an approach to studying disability and has emerged over the past two decades as a challenge to the apparently materialist slant found in the more conventional approaches to disability, for example the social model (Vehmas & Watson, 2014). Schalk (2017) and Minich (2016) believe that disability studies is a methodology, approach or theoretical framework rather than a subject area to be studied. The methodology involves not focussing on physical or mental impairments but rather on social norms that create impairments. The function of race in this process is important as the incidence of disability is higher in communities of colour and they receive unequal health care and are disadvantaged. According to them, the method of analyses is important. The methodology must disrupt the multiple socio-political ideologies that values only some forms of thinking (Minich, 2016). The primary aim of critical disability studies is to analyse ideas about disability and to determine how they have influenced the ideology about disability. It is about critically evaluating our assumptions about disability and to create a more theoretically cautious approach to disability. As more thought is given to disability research, more questions are asked (Swartz, 2014). Critical disability studies sets out to unsettle set ways of thinking about disability and to determine how and why certain ideologies are constructed and maintained over a period of time (M. Shildrick, 2012). It has allowed us to engage in critical thinking where all conventions are subject to critical analyses. It is an approach that is transdisciplinary and open to various resources and possibilities that are not commonly encountered in mainstream disability studies. It expands the boundaries of knowledge by asking new questions and questioning old answers. It considers relational, cultural and psychological implications of disability in the context of economic setbacks (Flynn, 2017). Epistemological perspectives have come together with ontological notions to create new concepts and frameworks (Goodley, 2019).

3.11 The purpose of theory

The main purpose of theory is to understand the social world. In critical disability studies we want to acknowledge what has already been proposed and build further on it. The word “critical” suggests a qualitative shift in disability studies from the known to the new and evolving thinking. This has been referred to as intersectional thinking where concepts such as disability can take on multiple identities, with critical thinking and the generation of new ideas (Crenshaw, 1991; Moodley & Graham, 2015). Activities such as activism and politics contributed to new thinking on subjects such as disability. Critical disability framework has some key aspects to it. The first acknowledges the power of the materialist analyses (of concern to disability activists and researchers) which became known as the social model of disability. The second aspect recognised the contribution of others, such as feminists to the field. The third acknowledged the contemporary issues that are at play, such as the widening gap between the rich and the poor, globalisation and capitalism. The fourth aspect acknowledged the effects of global, national and local influences on people with disabilities. The fifth talks about cultural relativism, which maintains that there are differences in ideas, views and values among diverse cultures and all of them should be accepted (Bamgbose & Olomola, 2011). The sixth element acknowledged that forms of political activism should not be ignored. The seventh element is committed to confronting dis-ableism and ableism in the everyday lives of people. Critical disability studies is a growing field of theorizing and activism that encourages debate and disagreement. Debates on aspects of disability follow.

3.12 What is disability?

According to Ben-Moshe and Magaña (2014) disability should be considered as fluid, on a continuum and contextual instead of biological. One becomes disabled or abled relative to the context one is in (as an example, a wheelchair becomes a disability if the environment cannot accommodate it), however this can change if the context changes. Certain medical conditions get classed as “disabilities” relative to what is considered as “normal” by those who have the power to impose these definitions on others. Critical disability studies take the constructed nature of disability as a starting point. Our bodies should not be classified in binary terms as absolutes (abled/disabled; normal/abnormal). Variations occur in human nature (in

respect of appearance, functioning or sensory acuity) and the meanings that we attach to these variations are important. These meanings are socially constructed by people's thoughts, words and what is physically feasible. These meanings then become accepted ways of defining people and their characteristics and take on cultural and historical meaning (often negative) over time. Disability studies therefore aims at removing the perception that disability is a personal tragedy, pathology or deficiency. Some in the disability culture, and activists, see disability as a source of pride and a kind of biodiversity. Disability can also be seen as one of the many components of one's overall identity and is an indication of one's diversity (Aquino, 2016). During this process of removing the pathology from disability (what critical disability does) intersectional analyses and introduction of race, gender, class and other constructs can complicate it. According to M. Shildrick (2012), the embodied self is always vulnerable and unstable and there is no single acceptable form of embodiment. People should not be labelled as deficient but rather different.

3.13 Giving people with disabilities voice

In the emergent field of critical disability studies, experiences of those with disability, are understood in the context of the barriers society imposes on them, barriers that sometimes serve to pathologize, restrict and ostracize them (Reaume, 2014). Above all else, this new discipline allows disability (students with special educational needs in this study) to be understood from the perspective of those who experience it, as much as this is possible. The voices of disabled students themselves have often been excluded as researched focussed on the perspectives of parents and others. Credit should be given to them to be the experts in understanding their own lives, while advocating for positive change in society towards them. For critical disability studies, disability is a lived reality in which the experiences of people with disabilities are key to interpreting and securing a place in society. It is also used socially and politically to influence power relations, by activists, politicians and theoreticians, representing many disciplines and perspectives. Critical disability studies challenge approaches that imply that physical, mental and sensory differences need correction, but rather advocate for accommodation and equality for disabled people in all areas of life. They seek to alter conventional thoughts of people with disabilities as tragic victims of disability who require sympathy and who have to adjust to life as well as

they can. Changing public attitudes toward disabilities is essential. People with disabilities should be seen as people with unique abilities (Marsay, 2014). Disability has also been studied from a strengths based perspective of “positive psychology” (M Wehmeyer, 2013). It can be viewed as one aspect of human functioning that can stimulate positive growth and development in an individual. We must challenge the negativity and stereotypes that prevail in the lives of disabled people, move away from their deficits and give attention to their hopes, dreams and aspirations and support them to achieve them (Curran, Liddiard, & Runswick-Cole, 2018).

3.14 Understanding disability and childhood

The social models and critical theories of disability have recently been applied to children with disabilities (Curran et al., 2018). The social model of disability has given little attention to children with disabilities and their experiences (Connors & Stalker, 2007). Children with disabilities have often been excluded from childhood studies, especially if they are not “typically developing” as expected of the professionals from the Global North. The life contexts of children living in the Global South were ignored (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011). The voices of disabled children need to be heard. Children are active social agents who shape the world around them. The disabled children’s childhood studies focus on the positive contributions of disabled children in their everyday lives. The “accommodation or adaptation” that is sometimes required for them should not be viewed as a negative event but rather as productive and positive. Disability offers opportunities to re-think and re-invent previously accepted assumptions and practices (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016). Positive contributions that disabled children make to their communities should be acknowledged (Runswick-Cole & Curran, 2013). Critical disability studies also examine how disability intersects with race, gender, class and sexuality in ways that affect personal experiences and wider power relations.

3.15 Intersectional studies, essentialism and reflexivity in disability research

Intersectional analysis or studies means working across discipline boundaries and placing specific focus on differences among social groups (Davis, 2008). Much

disability research has provided a voice to people with disabilities, however, the weakness in this inclusive effort is that this research appears to essentialize the category of people with disabilities (Erevelles, 2011). The disability of the person was given the main focus and their other characteristics such as gender, age, socio-economic status and cultural background were not accorded much attention. In view of this, there was a call for researchers to consider diversity amongst people with disability with regards to various other variables (Jacob, Kobsell, & Wollrad, 2010; Raab, 2007). This shift in focus also exposed and challenged dis-ableism (Goodley, 2019). Intersectionality as a research tool enables the researcher to acknowledge the multiple identities of people (Symington, 2004) the compounding effects (Emmett & Alant, 2006) there-of and how these determine disadvantage or advantage in their lives.

This led to disability studies examining how disability intersects with race, gender, class and sexuality in ways that affect personal experiences. These social categorisations (race, gender, disability) interact with issues of economy ((Flynn, 2017). Differences in people's colour, class and language can result in disparities in service provision and access to medical care. Disabled people of colour face many barriers to obtaining rehabilitation and health care services (Balcazar, Oberoi, Suarez-Balcazar, & Alvarado, 2012; Magaña, Parish, Rose, Timberlake, & Swaine, 2012). Intersectional analysis in the educational field has shown the over representation of students of colour in special education (Ferri & Connor, 2006). The significant relationship between race, gender, disability, class and other factors in creating inequalities in education has been a catalyst for engagement on these issues in a critical manner (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013). In South Africa disability intersects with gender, age and race to yield negative outcomes in education, employment and income for all people with disabilities. Disability and gender intersect to compound the negative effects for black women with disabilities (Moodley & Graham, 2015).

Deep engagement of race intersecting with disability is important. As disability studies is seen as a fluid and changing construct, race should also be viewed likewise (Voronka, 2016). Some researchers have begun to include other variables related to people with disabilities in their research, however, others persist in solely comparing people with and without disabilities, thereby producing binary data which

can be limiting (Goethals, De Schauwer, & Van Hove, 2017). A further area of neglect is the focus given to disability and the use of an additive approach (simply adding categories to one another) to other related variables, making these appear to be isolated and not interactive (Yuval-Davis, 2006). It is important to involve people with disability in the research so that it is relevant, honest and represents them, and the results and analysis would be grounded in their lived experiences. The inclusive approach should include reflexivity and anti-essentialism (to not essentialize and assume that all members of a single social group share similar experiences, perspectives or needs). Members of a group can have individual differences. As an example, young people with disabilities can vary considerably according to income, age, family background or socio-economic status. It must be acknowledged that various factors interact in human lives and how these factors interact in time, place and circumstances to produce inequality, should be determined (Aquino, 2016). Disability studies should therefore be critical, inclusive, reflexive, anti-essentialist and embrace intersectionality (Goethals et al., 2017). Research should be conducted on the premise that people's lives are complex and therefore intersectional methodologies (such as inclusion, reflexivity and anti-essentialism) should be employed.

3.16 “Lived experiences” debated

The concept of “lived experiences” has been debated by some disability researchers. Who we are determines how we interpret our experiences as well as what the outcomes of interventions will be (Voronka, 2016). How we self-identify also determines how we interpret our experiences. Therefore, experiences alone do not determine how we interpret it. Experience, identity and context interact with one another to produce meaning. However, when we refer to “persons with lived experience” as a universal identity this becomes an essentialist concept implying that identities are consistent entities for specific political and practical uses thus creating a narrow view of these persons (Barker, 2004). While it is advantageous at times to essentialize “lived experience” there could be dangers in this as notions of normalcy and differences can become rigid truths (Spivak, 1990). By subsuming the different ways in which one makes sense of experiences and placing them under a single

umbrella of “lived experiences” we could conflate distinct ideological and conceptual models (which some researchers have worked hard to elucidate) making them insignificant. When we act to obscure the differences amongst us through the use of broad universalized concepts such as “lived experiences” we run the risk of erasing important differences amongst us that do matter. Individuals with disability, as an example, will experience disability differently as factors such as race, class and gender collude with each other to produce different outcomes for each individual. How we apply the lived experience to research matters, as it determines the manner in which we conduct our research and analyse our data (Voronka, 2016). By positioning ourselves and our interpretation of our research, we have the power to solidify, revise or disrupt already established ways of conducting research. As researchers our role in knowledge production is also determined by our lived experiences, social factors, contexts and constraints. All these factors can work for and against us.

3.17 “The river is flooded by tributaries”

The literature on disability and decolonisation in disability has predominantly been shaped by academics from the Global North (a term used to indicate the unequal socio-economic circumstances between countries) (Opini, 2016), although about eighty percent of the six hundred and fifty million people with disabilities live in the so called Global South, where most of them experience poverty (Grech, 2012; World Health Organization & World Bank, 2011). To completely understand the world, we must try to understand it from many ways of knowing (“the river is flooded by tributaries”) (DeBenedictis, 2019; Ngara, 2008). The Global North cannot explain all the ways of knowing without acknowledging the culture, uniqueness and indigenous lifestyle of the Global South (Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013). In spite of this most of the disability studies have emanated from the West European and North American countries and focussed largely on urban post industrialist contexts. The views and tenets (inferences, generalisations and myths) of the Western disability studies are exported to the majority world (Global South). It is now thought that scholars and researchers of the Global South should no longer be consumers of theory and expertise from the Global North. The Global North has much to learn from the Global South as they are

now grappling with challenges (poverty, inequality, immigration, corruption) that the Global South have been living with and managing for many years (Swartz, 2014). The current COVID-19 pandemic has clearly revealed the false belief that the Global North has the most knowledge and solutions and highlighted the need for multi-directional learning (Oldekop et al., 2020). It was originally assumed that South Africa would be overwhelmed and devastated by the effects of the corona virus, however, we responded swiftly and efficiently to the pandemic (Kavanagh & Singh, 2020).. African countries have developed intensive surveillance and case-finding employing the “Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response” framework which has been in use over the past twenty years (Ihekweazu & Agogo, 2020). We have had to manage infectious diseases in the past and the scaling up of molecular testing capacity that exists for other diseases (drug resistant tuberculosis, HIV, Lassa fever) has been impressive in Africa. South Africa has displayed innovation and resilience in the face of great odds and adversity and we have survived the pandemic. The Global North could benefit from our strategies that we have implemented in the past and present (Oldekop et al., 2020).

British scholars are said to have been biased in their expectations of studies done elsewhere. They have imposed language choices on others and the choice of African researchers have not been accepted. Some have accused disability research of being too white (A. Miles, Nishida, & Forber-Pratt, 2017). Western culture has claimed to be the centre of legitimate knowledge. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) maintained that western stories of truth are embedded in a specific cultural and social system that needs to be decolonized. Frameworks for understanding disability should be decolonised in order to accommodate the life experiences of the Global South (Burman, 2008; Grech & Goodley, 2012; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). It is believed that disability is a social construct and models and theories from the global North have been imposed onto the African context (Chataika & McKenzie, 2013). The impact of poverty on the children with disabilities in Africa and the culture of collective wellbeing as expressed in “ubuntu” must be acknowledged. It is said that Africans have their own histories to use as epistemological and ontological models to inform their understandings of disability (Santos, 2015). Like its people, gaining knowledge is collective and community orientated. Southern African scholars and activists who are working in disability studies have argued that “Ubuntu” is a part of their worldview, a

philosophy of shared collective humaneness and responsibility (Chataika, Berghs, Mateta, & Shava, 2015). It includes wholeness and a sense of community which are deeply embedded in their cultural values. The philosophical underpinning of “Ubuntu” is humanism and indivisible humanity is located within society as a complex whole (Assié-Lumumba, 2017). Disability is viewed as diversity and respect for that diversity is paramount (Berghs, 2017). Knowledge and its methods of investigation cannot be separated from people’s history, cultural context and worldview as worldview determines our beliefs and actions and acts as our theoretical framework within which knowledge is gained, evaluated and understood (Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013).

Decolonization involves a greater understanding of the underlying assumptions and motivations that informs the research process. Titchkosky and Aubrecht (2015) believed that colonial power was used to objectify human life as a problem that required Western control and intervention. If we are to improve our conceptual frameworks that will be mindful of factors such as oppression it is crucial that we know about the experiences of all people with disabilities. It is important to critically assess one’s own culture, values and beliefs and also to realize that this is not the norm. One needs to be aware of and receptive to different worldviews and ways of gaining knowledge. Western regimes have not acknowledged other forms of knowledge that is prevalent in local contexts, as well as inclusion and exclusion practices (Nguyen, 2019). Researchers need to critique their own interpretations and to determine just how true their truths have been made to be and how much of alternate stories have been marginalised. Critical Disability studies also needed to be expansive in its targets so that more can be achieved. Northern scholars have been conducting research about the global South and have ignored the historical conditions that contribute to such impairments (Nguyen, 2019). Also, authors do not critically engage with the effect of colonialism and imperialism in causing violence, disablement, poverty and inequality for the people with disabilities in the South. The effect of the policy of apartheid in South Africa was acknowledged by some scholars in the United Kingdom (Groce, Kett, Lang, & Trani, 2011). Disability studies with a colonial framework has shaped our knowledge about disability in the global South, through colonising practices and discourses. To understand disability differently colonial power and their methods of interpretation (based on Northern

epistemologies) must be challenged in order to create a hearing for the voices of the South. Critical disability studies must be open and engage with and learn about the global South in its entirety (Grech, 2012). We learn what we live.

3.18 Is disability the object or subject of studies?

As more and more theories of disability are generated it is feared that disability could become merely an object of curiosity for theoreticians and the focus could move away from disability. A guiding philosophy for disability studies was the Disabled People's Movement belief that people with disabilities should always be involved in their causes ("Nothing about us, without us") (Charlton, 2006). People with disabilities are often used as objects of inquiry by researchers and not viewed as producers of knowledge. In the current study young people with disability were given the opportunity to express their knowledge in the form of their experiences. Their experiences informed the researcher of their feelings, thoughts, desires and knowledge of the world. With young people as our co-researchers, this study was a space where young people with special educational needs could tell new stories of disability; their own stories.

3.19 What is said about disability?

Within critical studies has been the cultural studies approach that is linked to the humanities and art (Shakespeare, 2014). Disability has commonly been depicted as a lack or a deviance; however, it has also been featured in cultural aspects such as paintings, films and music. Disability, however, should not be used as a metaphor to suggest a deficit or malfunction (Titchkosky, 2015). Discourse on disability has not considered the notion that disability might be desired. Most discourse on people with disability portray them as the objects of pity, charity and professional intervention. Critical realists like Vehmas and Watson (2014) and Shakespeare (2014) (who are part of disability studies) have questioned the reality of disability. They now have become increasingly concerned about the body and mind. The new materialist theories display greater understanding of the complexity of disability. The material element of disability challenges the way disability is being used by

governments and policy makers to reduce funding and services to those affected by it (Feely, 2016; Flynn, 2017).

3.20 Disability and ability

Goodley (2016) embarked on critical studies of “ableism”. Disabled people experience exclusion and discrimination due to “dis-ableism” (Mallet & Runswick-Cole, 2014). Wolbring (2009) and Campbell (2009b) have found that “ability” has been made to be the most important element of success and progress amongst people. It is the most valued commodity in schools, colleges and workplaces. However, Critical Disability Studies value the notions of interdependence, varied and distributed competence and the possibilities of human potential of those who are less able. Dependency and collectivity are qualities of the disability experience that critical Disability Studies have promoted as positive attributes and possibilities. New social theories of disability must be developed in order to consider our goals for people with disabilities and how these can be achieved (Campbell, 2009b). Differences between disabled and non-disabled people are said to be socially constructed for the purpose of dominance (Goodley, 2016). The people without disabilities are considered to be the more privileged and powerful category and thus considered the norm whilst those with disabilities are seen as deviant and inferior (Campbell, 2009a). Normalcy is constructed to make the person with the disability the problem. Disability should not be viewed as a failure or lack, but rather as one mode among multiple ways of being (M. Shildrick, 2012). It is hoped that by using the term ability instead of disability the negative stereotypes associated with disability and impairment can be challenged and reduced. It is believed that by removing the categories of abled and disabled, the discrimination felt by disabled people can be addressed. The belief that disability or impairment is negative has also been contested. This challenge of what is normal, of what is good or bad or right or wrong pervades the literature on critical disability studies. It has been argued that disability is not a flaw nor is it a tragedy (Goodley, 2019). Disability can be a place of oppression and possibility. It is a matter for public discourse as disability is resulting in exclusion of children from mainstream schools (Slee, 2018), the marginalization of disabled adults from employment (Beyer, Meek, & Davies, 2016) and their reduced access to basic human rights (World Health Organization & World Bank, 2011). Research and theory on disability gives less attention to the everyday realities of

people living with disabilities. A new way of thinking called “new materialism” has emerged (Feely, 2016). This approach considers both the language used and the realities of life that some people experience. New materialism could be a useful approach for researchers and activists in the field of disability.

Whilst critical disability studies are making judgements about policies or about the current understanding of disability, it offers no evaluative arguments on impairments. M. Shildrick (2012) believes that any strategy, political arrangement or ethical ideology that is based on group identity or built upon a difference, is ethically wrong. He however does not provide an ethical argument to support his claim or a practical example of how it could be implemented. Critical disability studies in general raises ethical issues and implies normative judgements but cannot support the ethical arguments (Vehmas & Watson, 2014). It is deficient in this regard as the moral wrongs related to dis-ableism are of great concern to disabled people and critical disability studies should address them (Thomas, 2007). Disability and disadvantage also need to be looked at by critical disability studies with a need to identify and critique discrimination associated with the ill treatment of people with disabilities (Wolff & De-Shalit, 2007). Stigmatization and unemployment may prevent people from being properly educated and included in society. This type of exclusion is psychologically and physically harmful.

3.21 Critical disability and justice

It is important that we recognize and acknowledge the effects of disability on individuals and their wellbeing. In this way we can we can offer them personal and social support so that their lives can be improved and they can be included in society. People with disabilities are often disadvantaged with regards to the market and capitalism and consequently with regards to employment, equal social participation, respect and wealth (Wolff & De-Shalit, 2007). In addition to this disadvantage, people with disabilities are often stigmatized and viewed in a negative light (as deviant) and they experience oppression. This is one of the research areas in the current study and it is hoped that the participants would provide information on the support that they received or the challenges that they encountered in their search for employment. The effects of disability are rooted in

the deep economic structures of society and requires the deliberate re- allocation of opportunities and wealth, not just the removal of obstacles that hinder them. The required changes come at an extra cost to both the employer and the state, however their real needs must be met in order for us move forward. Ideological change must be accompanied by material change. Society must take responsibility for those in need and not deny them the services that they require. The differences that exist amongst people (as in ability) should be acknowledged and not be a source of disadvantage to them.

3.22 Critical disability studies attack on essentialism

The social model regards impairment as real but disability (referring to environmental and attitudinal barriers that impede participation in society) as a social construct that can be minimized. Critical disability scholars maintain that impairment and disability should be seen as a social construct rather than an essential truth (Feely, 2016). To strengthen this argument, they referred to the work of Foucault (1980) on the body. Foucault questioned how powerful fields such as psychiatry was able to classify human diversity (such as intellectually disability versus “normal”) which resulted in devalued subjects. Scientific classification of people as “normal” or “impaired” serves to divide people and these labels also become accepted over time as true. The process of subjectification occurs when an individual, classified as being intellectually impaired for example, begins to accept and believe this label. When this happens, subjectification is complete. Once the “impaired” identity has been accepted by the subject, participation in identity politics becomes easier. Many people of similar identity can get together as an activist group and make their demands and rights known. However, the downside to this is that the devalued social group accepts the labels that have been assigned to them as well as the belief that they are different and lesser than their “normal” counterparts. The differentiation of human beings into valued “normal” and devalued “impaired” subjects have become accepted over time. However, this differentiation can be contested and changed and be referred to as differences. As an example, in 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from their diagnostic manual thereby resulting in same sex desire becoming a difference and no longer being a psychiatric disorder (Silverstein, 2009). This implies that many more people who are devalued and classified as “impaired” could be re- classified in less disadvantaging ways. Tremain (2002) and Tremain

(2005) deconstructed the impairment/ disability divide. Tremain (2018) maintained that impairment is an apparatus which can be used for certain strategic and political purposes. McRuer (2006) showed non-disabled people being classified as disabled thus weakening the “normal/impaired distinction. M. Shildrick (2009) and (Goodley, 2011) explored the capacity of the so-called anomalous bodies and then expanded the normative assumptions about the body. Some researchers argued that the established frameworks for categorising human diversity do not have to be accepted as such. With sufficient political pressure these frameworks can be modified or removed and substituted with less disparaging ways of responding to diversity. However, some critics believe that the issue of impairment cannot be resolved just by thinking differently.

3.23 The critique of poststructuralist disability studies

Post structural approaches to disability have been widely criticised within academia. Three main problems have been cited (Feely, 2016). These approaches have neglected the realities of the material world that the people with disabilities have to be a part of (Shakespeare, 2014). Barnes (2012) and Wendell (1996) also felt that the physical realities faced by people with disabilities were not acknowledged. They were also unable to engage productively with science and technology. These limitations have been reported by scientists and disability scholars. The philosopher Searle (1998) suggested that the knowledge produced by the material sciences on how the world works, should be acknowledged and appreciated. Post structuralism’s often wary stance on science and technology can be limiting for disability studies. The third common criticism of post structuralist approaches was that they don’t fully consider the personal experience of disability, such as the discomfort or pain (Vehmas & Watson, 2014). In not acknowledging the bodily experience of pain, poststructuralists cannot fully explain impairment or disability (Siebers, 2008).

Deleuze and Guattari (1983) moved from the traditional essentialist approach (as in “what is a body?” to actual capacities or potential (as in “what can a body do?”). Should sufficient resources be provided (change in context), capability and performance can be enhanced. As an example, a person with a disability may not be able to produce speech (a virtual capacity of the body) however, when the individual

is provided with a means to communicate (by using a speech generator) feelings can be transformed into words. As a body always exists in a material context, its capacity to perform and act is contextual and relational (context dependent). Human bodies differ from each other and they do have limitations. However, the limitations are context dependent and can be minimised or removed if the context changes. In the field of disability research, the Deleuzian approach makes the traditional approach of categorising bodies become insignificant (Wetherell, 2012). What is important is that given a change in context, the capacities and what the body can do can change.

3.24 Deleuzian materialism and science

In contrast to constructionist epistemologies, Deleuzian anti-essentialist materialism allows for useful interaction with scientific disciplines (Bonta & Protevi, 2004). It allows the disability scholars to interact productively with the material sciences, which provides us with useful information. The scientific information allows us to enhance the body's function and performance (as an example speech generating devices) and also reduce distress and pain (through medicines for instance). This non-essentialist scientific knowledge (regarding the context-dependent capacities of material entities) is, however, different from the knowledge produced by the human sciences which Foucault (1980) critiques. The human sciences categorized human bodies into fixed, unchangeable and context independent entities. The Deleuzian approach is not as limited as the post structural theories of disability were. It can usefully engage with the material world and the material sciences. It provides a materialist alternative to the social model and the critical realist approach. It also acknowledged that bodies can be context dependent and impairment does not have to signify a finality to the functions of the body.

3.25 Introducing assemblages and assemblage analysis

An assemblage is a collection of various elements that work together to produce something. Assemblage analysis determines how the complex interaction of the various elements of a process contributes to an outcome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Deleuzian assemblages are networks of elements that function together as a unit (M. Patton, 1994). This mode of thinking brings together traditionally separate concepts to form a whole (Youdell, 2011). As an example, intellectual disability comprises categories of mild, moderate and severe forms of the disability. Deleuze and Guattari

(1987) rejected this trend of thought that is vertical and linear and which is said to suppress creativity and result in predictable outcomes. Instead they offered a new mode of thought that has branches that spread out in a horizontal manner (like the growth of a rhizome) and has no central point. It is nonlinear and has multi directional branches and connections which are ongoing and never ending. Our analyses of situations therefore should follow multi directional links. In applying this mode of thinking to disability service assemblage, one might consider how the movement of capital, for instance, within the various structures have impacted on the service provision for people in a country and the reverse could also be considered (how did service provision affect the movement of capital?) The rhizome has been used to dismantle hierarchy and power structures to invite a form that is more creative, responsive and alive (J. Smith, 2010). The rhizomatic view of the world encompasses the whole inextricable combination of interrelated assemblages and linkages of humans, non-humans, material and non-material resources (L. Fox & Alldred, 2018). This enables us to see the interconnection and interaction of knowledge creation, society, culture, attitudes and values and our relationship to the material world (Tillmans, Holland, Lorenzi, & McDonagh, 2014). It has been said that rhizomatic thinking needs to be present in our everyday thoughts, as the rhizomatic field site is dynamic and alive (Adkins, 2015; Douglas-Jones & Sariola, 2011). New concepts create new thinking and description, resulting in new possibilities for action.

According to Deleuze (1998) knowledge production is divergent and not convergent. Using assemblages allows one to conduct a detailed analysis of an entity, to ask new questions, to be creative and use assemblages differently. Assemblages should not be closed systems. It should have relationships between component parts (referred to as interior) and allow for new relationships with other assemblages (exterior). Assemblages are temporal and spatial figures that continuously move and self-organize to transform and create possibilities. As an example, the disability service assemblage comprises relationships with education officials and other government officials (interior) and it could have relationships with other exterior assemblages such as links in the community to provide supported employment to young adults with disabilities. Questions about assemblages should determine what the various components were that came together to make an occurrence possible, how do the components work together and what else could such an assemblage achieve for

others or for a different outcome (Srnicek, 2007). Assemblages have the potential to transform our understanding of disability in terms of capacity and to rethink the “limits” of the human body (Kennedy, Zapasnik, McCann, & Bruce, 2013).

Assemblage analyses contributes to further technological experimentation and provides solutions to other issues such as funding or to a political campaign that works towards the rights of people with disabilities. Assemblages are tools to assist us and they can act as resources that have the capacity to change outcomes (Kennedy et al., 2013).

These models are open to much debate and revision, as there is no single way to understand and address the effects of excluding people from society based on a label of disability. It is possible that models of disability can overlap where aspects of more than one model can affect an individual’s condition. It is important to understand and include disabled people as the experts in their own lives. Critical disability studies aim to review what it means to be considered disabled, engaging with people who live this experience as the key agents of change in thought and action. A major part of this work is therefore to ensure that this field is by, not just about, disabled people. (Nothing about us, without us). In reality most of us live in the midst of ability and disability (Goodley, 2018). We occupy spaces (family, schools) in which ableism is held in esteem and dis-ableism is generated. Most schools are built upon achievement and progress. At the same time, some schools create disability and categories, where disability is more present than absent (as in special schools). Paraprofessionals (psychologists, social workers) are called upon to assist with disability. In Disability Studies literature, there has been attempts to provide a more varied, collectivist and ensembled form of human capacity. Critical disability studies can present opportunities for others. It allows for pause, rethinking of pedagogy, modification of teaching methods or re design of playgrounds. Ability has been redefined by people with disabilities, by demonstrating capacity, potential and possibility. The interdependence of people as a mode of living could be more desirable, as opposed to independence (Reindall, 1999). The inclusive education approach allows all students in schools to connect to each other (Allan & Youdell, 2018). Disability can signify oppression or possibility, depending on how we want to perceive it. Researchers and scholars should be encouraged to consider the interplay between disability and ability to appreciate the meaning of disability. Re-

thinking our ideologies will stir controversy, however, it is our ethical responsibility to engage with such matters openly and to deconstruct the seemingly well-constructed categories. There is no single correct mode of embodiment and the bodies that are further from the supposed normative standards and viewed as deficient, are simply different (M. Shildrick, 2012).

3.26 Summary of chapter 3

Several models of disability and theoretical frameworks have been proposed, towards the knowledge of disability. The medical model of disability focused on the deficits of the person and these deficits should be fixed in the individual (Williams-Whitt & Taras, 2010). The social model shifted the focus away from the individual with the problem and instead looked at the social structures and policies that disempower people with disabilities. Human rights model of disability acknowledged the rights of people with disabilities. The medical and social models were integrated into a “biopsychosocial” framework and this acknowledged the complex interaction between personal, physical and environmental factors (Luckasson & Schalock, 2013). In the capabilities approach to disability functioning and capabilities of people were highlighted. The “active” model of disability encouraged people with disabilities to engage in self-help actions. The Human Developmental Model of disability highlighted the links between impairments, health conditions and wellbeing outcomes such as poverty, not just disability. The Cultural model of disability states that both ability and disability are interdependent and both should be investigated equally, with no special focus on either one. The field of Critical Disability Studies was engaged with. Our assumptions about disability were critically evaluated and a more cautious approach to disability was suggested. Concepts such as intersectional studies, essentialism and post structuralist disability studies were discussed.

CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUAL FRAMING OF THE STUDY

“Rhizomatic analyses is seeing life and the world from the perspective of emergence, potentiality, and connections – as a complex set of assemblages that continuously connects, bifurcates, combines and transforms.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987)

4.1 Introduction

According to Deleuze (1998) assemblages can be used to conduct a detailed analyses of an entity, to ask new questions and to be creative. Questions about assemblages should determine what the various components are that come together to make good quality education possible for all, how to improve employment outcomes for the youth, the kind of solutions that are possible, how the components can work together and what else such an assemblage could achieve for students with special educational needs (Srnicsek, 2007). The Deleuzian approach reminds us that we can usefully engage with the material world to find solutions (Bonta & Protevi, 2004) and having a special educational need, need not be an end in itself. Assemblages comprises diverse elements and vibrant materials that can act as agents of change and has the ability to transform the whole (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The Deleuzian approach can be compared to Critical disability studies where there is transition from the known to the unknown, thereby creating new thoughts and the generation of new ideas to be used as new solutions to problems relating to the employment experiences of those with special educational needs. Let us employ rhizomatic thinking and use assemblages as a productive tool to transform our thinking about the key issues facing all youth regarding employment.

4. 2 The conceptual framework and the current study

The body of knowledge sought and presented in this study was from multiple sources (“the river is flooded by tributaries”) (DeBenedictis, 2019; Ngara, 2008), therefore, no single source can take all the credit. As Deleuze (1998) maintained, that knowledge production is divergent and not convergent. In the current study no single theoretical framework or model was adopted, however, concepts from various approaches were acknowledged, concepts that were considered important to this

study. The contribution of the medical model of disability was acknowledged, as the medical diagnoses of the participants in this study led to their being placed at a special school. The social model made holistic provision for the consideration of external influences on disability and it was strengths based, focusing on the needs of the affected (Cleland & Smith, 2010). This model emphasized how the social environment influenced the career choices of the participants. The contribution of the social model of disability was evident in the participants' interactions with others in their environment (school, home, work, socially) and the influence of these interactions on their thoughts and actions. Their experiences of skills training during their school years, was targeted by the researcher. Their workplace and the labour market experiences were investigated in order to determine how those with disabilities are included or excluded from work. The participants were also given the opportunity to talk about their own initiatives and attempts at creating or seeking employment. Disability studies encourages disability to be understood from the perspective of those who experience it (Curran et al., 2018). Those with special educational needs were the producers of knowledge. Here the active model of disability revealed the self-help actions that the participants engaged in, in an effort to take responsibility and control of their lives (J. Levitt, 2017a). Below is a discussion of the key factors that influence employment of the youth in general, including those with disabilities.

4.3 The economy and employment in South Africa

The South African economy has experienced low economic growth rates (compared to other emerging market countries), resulting in poor employment outcomes especially for the low skilled workers (Reddy, Borat, Powell, Visser, & Arends, 2016). The low growth of employment has not been adequate for the large number of youth entering the labour market for the first time. This has led to an escalating unemployment rate. A major inhibiting factor to sustainable job creation in South Africa is the mismatch between labour demand and supply, where high skilled workers are in demand, however, there is an oversupply of low skilled workers. Unemployment is particularly high amongst the youth (15-34 years) and this is increasing as more young people enter the labour force. As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads around the globe, it has become clear that it has the potential to destabilize

the world economy (D. Blustein et al., 2020; Nicola et al., 2020). The size and persistence of the economic impact cannot be determined at present as the pandemic is still active in many countries. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities in the labour market, inequalities that existed before the crisis, and could now be deepened (D. Blustein et al., 2020). Power and privilege determine who is at risk for precarious work, with historically marginalised people (including those with disabilities) being disproportionately vulnerable to job losses. The youth were already vulnerable within the workforce, prior to the COVID-19 crisis. Now they have become more at risk for unemployment and this affects the unemployed as well as their family members. Being unemployed shapes and affects their career development.

4.4 Education and its role on the economic growth of a country

Education is one, if not the most, important determinant of economic growth of a country (Roux, 2017; Saman et al., 2015; Woessmann, 2014). Improved education is closely linked to individual and societal development in potential as reflected in earnings, employment and economic growth (Barro, 1991; Hanif & Arshed, 2016). Education and especially higher education is converted into increased labour productivity by accumulating knowledge and skills and by making possible technological progress and innovation. Education and economy work together. There is a linear growth in the economy as the educational achievement rises. Education not only promotes economic growth but also breaks the cycle of intergenerational transmission of poverty and mitigates inequality of opportunity (Tchamyu, 2018). Education is necessary for technological advancement which results from a search for innovations (Grossman & Helpman, 1991; Romer, 1990). Education also affects economic growth at the macro-economic level by developing human capital which in turn raises productivity (Hanushek & Kimko, 2000; Woodhall, 2014). Well educated human capital has the most consistent and strongest direct impact on productivity, prosperity, development and economic growth of a country. Improving the human capital of those who are marginalised (like those with disabilities) and those who experience poverty is fundamental to ensuring that they can access jobs and earn a livelihood. Human or physical capital refers to the investments made on humans (in the form of education and skills training) which ultimately influence the economic

growth of a country (Hanif & Arshed, 2016). There is a positive relationship between human capital and the level of investment in education with growth (Keller, 2006; McMahon, 1998). Human capital development is therefore the source of economic growth (Benhabib & Spiegel, 1994). "Gross Domestic Product" (GDP) is the single most relevant variable describing the path or growth of an economy of a country (Kabundi, Neland, & Ruch, 2016). The relationship between education and Gross Domestic Product is positive indicating that education is a significant contributor to the growth of an economy (Hanif & Arshed, 2016; Pelinescu, 2015). Structural transformation for better employment is dependent on the economy of a country. Opportunities for employment for the youth will only improve as the economy of the country transforms (Bicaba et al., 2017; L. Fox & Kaul, 2017).

4.5 Key factors impacting on youth employment

4.5.1 Education

Academic success is an important prerequisite for youth employment success (Girli & Öztürk, 2017). The education system in South Africa is not providing the skills that are required of the youth to function effectively in a sophisticated economy (World Economic Forum, 2018). Low foundational skills are contributing to youth unemployment, where they do not have the appropriate skills and they experience great difficulty in the transition from education to work (Girli & Öztürk, 2017; Lam et al., 2008; J. Smith, 2011). The education level and skill base of the labour force is lower than that of many other productive economies. The quality of teaching is low and it affects the future earning trajectories of students (World Bank, 2016b). Most of the youth are unemployed as a result of their low educational levels. There is an absence of low paying jobs in the manufacturing sector that could employ the majority of those who are looking for work. Access to schools and tertiary institutions has improved however there has been low completion rates. A critical limitation on the education, training system and labour market is the inadequate quality of basic education (Cloutier et al., 2011; Filmer & Fox, 2014; L. Fox, Senbet, & Simbanegavi, 2016). The level of education and skills in this country is too low to enable us to generate sufficient growth for a sustained period (Roux, 2017). Low educational achievements prevent economic growth. Where there is widespread unemployment, there is low skill and low educational attainment. Many of the youth attempt to enter

the labour force with minimal skills due to the failures of basic and post school education (L. Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). In addition, employees require a matric certificate, which most students from special education do not have. The quality of basic education (literacy, numeracy, science), educational outcomes and the progression rates through the system must improve as this forms the basis for successful participation in post school education and in the workplace (Fredericks & Yu, 2018). Policy makers who are interested in advancing the future prosperity of the country and its citizens should focus on educational outcomes (Festusa, Kasongo, Moses, & Yu, 2016). Skills planning must focus on the unemployed, the youth, the low skilled, the marginalised (those with disabilities) and the vulnerable. The restructuring of education to improve employment is a long-term solution and should be embarked upon. However, it is also necessary to address the current needs of the youth who are seeking work (L. Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). Short term interventions must be implemented to alleviate the employment backlog and the social disadvantages that are associated with unemployment.

4.5.2 Poverty

Young adults who came from poor households experience great difficulty in accessing and maintaining employment as they have not acquired the necessary skills for the workplace (World Bank, 2012c). Poverty results in a prolonged transitional period between childhood and adulthood as the youth have few resources and means to attain adulthood (Singerman, 2007). Poverty also has multiple dimensions which intersect and constrain young people's life chances (De Lannoy, Leibbrandt, & Frame, 2015). Education is an essential and powerful instrument in reducing poverty (Woessmann, 2014). As youth attain education, they are able to access employment and relieve themselves off poverty. Reduction in poverty can only occur when knowledge, skills and capabilities are extended to those who are marginalised from economic activity by low educational skills (Spaull, 2015). Movement out of poverty is related to education, however most children in South Africa receive a low- quality education which does not develop their capabilities or enhance their economic opportunities. Low quality education becomes a poverty trap from which it is difficult to escape (Spaull, 2015).

4.5.3 Supports and resources for the youth

Many youth lack support, such as social networks and material means for socially accepted pathways into adulthood (Singerman, 2007). Many young people are not only unemployed, a large number of them also lack access to good quality education, financial resources to study, information that would empower them in their decision making around careers and to access opportunities for development. Students with a disability have been found to be limited in their career exploratory experiences, had limited decision-making opportunities and poor vocational experiences (Strauser, 2014). It is important that students are exposed to an array of vocational options to choose from. Understanding the career development of youth and young adults with disabilities requires one to have knowledge of both the individual and environmental factors (Fabian & Pebdan, 2013). The biopsychosocial model of disability (alluded to in chapter 3) acknowledged that disability is a complex entity (Üstun et al., 2003), with the individual having to interact with and function in an environment (Luckasson & Schalock, 2013). The environment could be enabling or challenging to the individual and this could influence the outcomes of the individual's efforts or actions towards building a career. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (World Health Organization, 2001) also considered the individuals' daily lives, the activities they are engaged in, their environment where these take place and their health condition (Simeonsson, 2009). The impact of disability on career development can be varied as disabilities are varied. Therefore, disability cannot be seen as a static construct with a similar outcome for all affected. Rather, it is a socially defined construct that that is a risk factor in the achievement of career goals (Pledger, 2003). The career development of all youth could follow the same processes, however, having a disability could expose individuals to unique experiences that may influence their career development (Fabian & Pebdan, 2013). In addition to workplace support (where employers can be supported to provide workplace accommodation solutions) and family support, students with disabilities require career guidance during school and post school. Individuals with disabilities must be prepared for job interviews and the compilation of a curriculum vitae which is a job requirement. Job placement or post school support (vocational centres) should be made available to students, by the state (Fabian & Pebdan, 2013). Career counsellors could maintain linkages with resources in their local communities and

assist the individuals in identifying and pursuing career goals. Students also require help in the job search and in the job adjustment process. Students are encouraged to develop a perspective on career goals and future planning and to make meaning of work towards shaping a vocational future.

4.5.4 Attitudinal barriers towards disability

Youth employment transcends mere wages and enabling livelihoods, to connecting social processes in society and creating societal transformation (Hanif & Arshed, 2016). It needs to lead to a progressive change in the mindsets of society, their values and norms and their perceptions. People with disabilities are often stigmatized and viewed in a negative light (as deviant) and they experience oppression. These attitudinal barriers can result in social exclusion and will prevent people with disabilities from accessing employment opportunities (Nolan & Gleeson, 2017). Career choices can be affected by negative social attitudes (Fabian & Pebdan, 2013). Oliver (1996) argued that disabled people are not disabled by their bodily impairments, but by the attitudes of a disabling society. The social model of disability focuses on the way society disables people with impairments. Disability studies aims at removing the perception that disability is a personal tragedy, pathology or deficiency. Disability should be seen as one of the many components of one's overall identity and is an indication of one's diversity (Aquino, 2016). People should not be labelled as deficient but rather different. From the social model perspective the social organisation of the labour market must be looked at in order to ascertain how those with disabilities are excluded from work (Barnes & Mercer, 2005). This could involve studying the employee's experiences in the workplace and the labour market (Foster, 2007; Foster & Fosh, 2010). With awareness, education and diversity training, the attitudes of employees towards the youth with disabilities, can change. The "accommodation or adaptation" that is sometimes required for them in the workplace should not viewed as a negative event but rather as productive. According to critical disability studies, there is no single correct mode of embodiment and the bodies that are further from the supposed normative standards and viewed as deficient, are simply different (M. Shildrick, 2012).

4.5.5 Transition to work programme for the youth

In South Africa the transition from school to work is not an easy path for most youth as it is characterised by a period of unemployment that can last for months or years (L. Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). Youth who do not have labour market related qualifications (often those with disabilities) are particularly affected by this difficult transition, a factor that perpetuates disadvantage to them. Policies, programmes and interventions must consider the crucial stages in an individual's life cycle, such as the transition from childhood to adolescence and from youth to adulthood (Viner et al., 2015). Adolescence is the period in which children are approaching social and economic independence and they need to acquire the skills necessary to successfully undertake their adult roles socially and in the workplace. This period of rapid growth and potential is also a period of considerable risk as social and learning contexts have immense influence over them. It is also a period of opportunity for cognitive, socio-emotional and skill development as the brain is developing (Curtis, 2015). Major brain development, brain plasticity and rapid pubertal maturation of all organ systems make adolescence a period of great importance and potential for intervention (G. Patton & Viner, 2007). The discovery of continued brain development through adolescence and into the mid-twenties is great for intervention programmes that can be implemented during this period, with the potential for success (Viner et al., 2015). Policy makers need to determine what kinds of interventions will work best for students with special educational needs, and what is the best time to implement them (Dahl, 2004). One of the major goals in the education and training of learners with disabilities is to prepare them for independence as adults (Cheong & Yahya, 2013). This should include their entry into competitive employment, vocational training, postsecondary education and supported employment programs as a bridge from school to work. For youth with disabilities, the education system should provide effective transition into adult employment (Kraemer & Valentini, 2018; Lodkowska, 2013). Early career interventions within school settings have been shown to improve work outcomes of youth with disabilities (Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Scholl & Mooney, 2003). In keeping with the tenets of the social model of disability, the learning environment of the student should be enabling, empowering and developmental (Shakespeare, 2014). Without effective and meaningful transition programmes, those with disabilities will remain marginalised with poor career outcomes (Lawson &

Shields, 2014). Transition to work should be closely linked to and a component of general education (Woessmann, 2019).

4.5.6 Skills/vocational training at school level and post school

A study by Cheong and Yahya (2013) revealed that vocational education is lacking in the special education system. More vocational skills are required to meet the needs of the economy as well as the employment needs of the youth (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). Major efforts are required to enhance the skills and employability of young people who do not have a matric certificate or post-secondary education (like those with special educational needs) (L. Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). Education should provide all students with the skills they require to lead healthy, productive and meaningful lives. The outcomes on youth employment are dependent on education and skills with respect to quality, quantity and relevance (Betcherman & Khan, 2015). Skills are the product of formal general education, formal and informal vocational education and training. The World Bank Report of 2018 describes three broad categories of skills which are cognitive, socio-emotional and technical. All of these skills need to be promoted so that education can encompass a wide range of competencies to enable students to meet the demands of a changing world context (Winthrop & McGivney, 2016). Vocational skills improve employability for young people and complements general education (Biavaschi et al., 2013). Vocational education programs should ensure that students gain sufficient general skills that enable them to adapt to future changes in skill demand. (Woessmann, 2014). Acquiring occupation-specific skills to meet employers' demands and firm-related work experience creates closer links with the labour market and facilitates transition into employment (Buheji, 2019).

Skills also enhances capabilities in society. The capabilities approach (Sen, 1985) to disabilities maintains that all individuals should be equipped with a threshold of capability and this can be achieved if appropriate social policies are designed and implemented. Capabilities are regarded as a kind of freedom and an individual must be able to have a choice in this. Students must be given the opportunity to exercise self-determined behaviour during curriculum planning, according to their interests and strengths (Hughes et al., 2013). Critical Disability Studies value the notions of

interdependence, varied and distributed competence and the possibilities of human potential of those who are less able. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) progressed from the traditional essentialist approach (as in “what is a body?” to actual capacities or potential (as in “what can a body do?”). The focus should be shifted from what the person cannot do, to what the person can do. Should sufficient resources be provided (change in context), capability and performance can be enhanced. The youth can be active social agents (active model of disability) in addressing unemployment (Hanif & Arshed, 2016). Through the instrument of informal activities (as in entrepreneurship), they can create economic activities that can transform their individual circumstances and society. The capabilities approach highlights the opportunities or skills that individuals can create for themselves (Sen, 1985), however, only a supportive economic and social environment will contribute to expanding this capability (Dejaeghere & Baxter, 2014). The environment can present with social and structural constraints that may prevent expansion of capabilities, especially for those who marginalised.

4.5.7 Employment experiences of the youth

Youth with disabilities have been found to have less work experience than their peers during high school and often encounter many hurdles when trying to become independent (E. Carter et al., 2009; Wolf-Branigin et al., 2009). Limited work exposure prematurely forecloses career options. They may not have the entry level job experiences that contribute to developing work attitudes, interests and vocational self-concept. Paid work during the school years makes the youth more competitive in the labour market, they acquire more work skills, they develop and maintain their work and career performance and expectations, they become more confident of and believe in their abilities, and widen their business contact networks that can in turn generate more future work opportunities for them (S. Allen et al., 2000; Burgstahler, 2001; Gold et al., 2013; Shandra & Hogan, 2008). Paid employment experience prior to leaving school is one of the strongest predictors of successful post school adjustment for youth with disabilities (Luecking & Fabian, 2000). Working while at school increases the chances of finding work (L. Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). Work experiences also provide opportunities for exploration as well as personal feedback pertaining to vocational preferences and aptitude (Fabian & Pebdan, 2013). It also

sets the stage for identifying longer term career goals. Many employers now expect to see previous work experience on the curriculum vitae of students. Employment experiences should be part of the vocational programme in school.

4.5.8 Post school higher education/training

More than half of all pupils in South Africa drop out of high school before completing matric (De Lannoy et al., 2015). As a result, many of them are unable to access higher education and training. For many youth with disabilities, the end of their schooling does not translate into successful transition into continued post-secondary learning. The nature of work in our society is undergoing evolution whereby most jobs will require post-secondary education (Carnevae, Smith, & Strohl, 2011). This implies that higher education is not a luxury for students upon school exit, but is essential. Having higher education benefits all students, including those with disabilities (M Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2012). Higher education includes any education or training post high school, including vocational training. Having some form of higher education can assist students in obtaining jobs. There is a link between economic growth and higher education, where the number of students in higher education has a significantly positive outcome on economic growth (Dănăcică, 2011; Ljungberg & Nilsson, 2009; Mariana, 2015). In South Africa, much more needs to be done to create post-secondary educational opportunities for all youth with disabilities. The curriculum content of the technical, vocational education and training (TVET) programmes should be reviewed, relative to the needs of the society and of the economy (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018).

4.5.9 Using assemblages to transform education and employment

From the above discussion it was clear that education was the critical factor that determined the growth and achievement of individuals and the country. Most of the factors that influenced the employment of the youth (with and without disabilities) were related to education. Education therefore needs to be the target of discussion, transformation and development. Assemblage theory allows us to re-think education and its processes. Assemblages have the potential to transform our understanding of education and disability in terms of capacity, to rethink the “limits” of the human body and to seek solutions to a different outcome (Kennedy et al., 2013).

Assemblages and linkages indicate the strong need for a trans-disciplinary integrated analysis of the key factors contributing to youth unemployment, together with policies and supportive interventions that aim to improve educational outcomes and to increase youth employment. In this way evidence of what works can be determined, gaps in the system can be identified and revised systems can be implemented. Critical disability studies value the notions of varied and distributed competence and the possibilities of human potential of those who are differently abled, so that they too can be included in the education and economy of the country (Ben-Moshe & Magaña, 2014).

4.5.10 Summary of chapter 4

This chapter outlined the key factors that were associated with unemployment amongst the youth (both with and without disability). Education was found to be the primary factor that influenced most of the associated factors (poverty, transition to work, skills and vocational training, employment experiences, post school/ higher education experiences). Educational levels of people also determine the economic strength of a country as well as the employment outcomes. There is a need for a trans-disciplinary integrated analysis of the key factors contributing to youth unemployment, together with policies and supportive interventions that could increase youth employment.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

“The research process was viewed as an “assemblage machine” that linked elements together to produce an outcome. The assemblage machine comprised the bodies, the events studied, the tools and the researchers and operated in all aspects of the research process.” (N. Fox & Alldred, 2013).

5.1. Introduction

The concept of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) challenged our thinking in how we viewed and conducted research as it lent itself to different rhizomatic forms and assemblages. In this study the rhizome acted as a tool of perspective, in the research methodology and in the data analyses. Unexpected linkages and assemblages were tapped into to gather data. It allowed the researcher to be open to seeing (dis)connections, not anticipating them before they were researched or “shutting them” in the final report (“free the rhizome and topple the arborescent order”) (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Research was viewed as an “assemblage machine” that linked elements together to produce an outcome (L. Fox & Alldred, 2018). The research-assemblage comprised the bodies (participants), the events studied (the phenomenon/participants ‘experiences), the tools (semi-structured interviews) and the researcher (N. Fox & Alldred, 2013). This machine operated in various stages of the research process. This chapter outlined the methods used to achieve the aim of the study, including the procedures pertaining to the selection of the participants, collection of the data and the analyses of this data. Quality in qualitative research was discussed according to the concepts of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ethical consideration formed an important component of the research process (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014).

5 .2. Research approach

As the present study focused on the understandings of the participants’ post school career experiences, a qualitative interpretivist phenomenological approach to the study was taken. Below was the rationale behind the choice of such an approach.

5.2.1 Epistemological stance

According to (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999) the research process (a paradigm) has three major dimensions which are: ontology (the researcher's definition of truth and reality), epistemology (what is considered as knowledge) and methodology (the methods used in collecting the research data). Ontology and epistemology form the foundation of the research process. Our epistemological assumptions and their associated ideologies and values influence what we do, how we do it and the knowledge that we generate (Chamberlain, 2015). Research entails a continual search for new knowledge and truths to improve situations (Nowell, 2015).

Epistemology concerns the nature, sources, knowledge production and limits of knowledge (Chamberlain, 2015). According to Nonaka and Toyama (2015), knowledge creation is a dialectical process where contradictions are worked through during dynamic interactions among individuals and the environment. Knowledge creation is also a transcending process whereby individuals move from the old into a new self by acquiring new knowledge. In the process, new structures for interaction are created which can create new possibilities or constraints. Within the pragmatic philosophy, knowledge is constructed according to the reality of the past and present world we experience and live in and how we create knowledge for the future (Nowell, 2015). Knowing requires multiple perspectives to be considered and knowledge could be varied and contradictory to our present thinking. By acknowledging diverse ways of knowing as truths, we can attain a greater understanding of larger complex truths. Multiple sources of knowledge can converge to provide workable solutions to social problems and gain a greater understanding of people and the world that we live in. In this study I sought to discover how knowledge was gained by the participants in their interaction with the world post school.

The knowledge creation process occurs through paradigm shifts which moves current thinking away from established codes, norms, rules or practices (Haynes, 2012). Like the rhizome that grows in different directions and creates new perspectives, one's own thinking and one's pre-existing understanding is constantly revised with new findings resulting in the construction of new meaning and new knowledge (Haynes, 2012, 2014). To completely understand the world, we must try to understand it from many ways of knowing ("the river is flooded by tributaries") (DeBenedictis, 2019; Ngara,

2008). The Global North cannot explain all the ways of knowing without acknowledging the culture, uniqueness and indigenous lifestyle of the Global South (Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013). It is said that Africans have their own histories to use as epistemological and ontological models to inform their understandings of disability and other aspects (Santos, 2015). Like it's people, gaining knowledge is collective and community orientated. Knowledge and its methods of investigation cannot be separated from people's history, cultural context and worldview as this acts as the theoretical framework within which knowledge is gained, evaluated and understood (Chamberlain, 2015; Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013). Southern African scholars have argued that "Ubuntu" is part of their worldview, a philosophy of shared collective humaneness and responsibility (Chataika et al., 2015). Hence the epistemological gaze taken in this study was one framed by Ubuntu. The participants were given the opportunity to share their knowledge about their post school career experiences according to their contexts. The factors that could have contributed to their knowledge creation were acknowledged (cultural, economic, background and other social factors that they encountered). I, as the researcher, acknowledged that the participants' experiences were real, active and complex, but they contained meaning (Bevan, 2014). I embarked on a process to uncover the meanings they had created for themselves based on their experiences and I wanted to know how their meanings were created.

5.2.2 Interpretivist paradigm: Justification for working in this paradigm

Qualitative research may be located in any one of three paradigms: positivist, interpretivist and critical (Khan, 2014). Positivism (also known as the scientific method) uses experimental designs and gathers data in a quantitative form (Riyami, 2015). The positivist view of the world is objective. This challenged the present study which involved subjective human interaction and meaning creation, which could not be quantified. The critical theory paradigm rejects a neutral stance and emphasizes action for reform and changing lives. Change however is a long- term process and occurs in stages. For these reasons the positivist and critical paradigms were not suited to this study.

The interpretivist paradigm within qualitative research was suited to exploring the perspectives, feelings and the experiences of the participants, what lay at the core of

their lives and their lived experiences of their post school careers (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Interpretivism (also called the constructivist paradigm) believes that realities are multiple and socially constructed (Riyami, 2015). I attempted to capture several perspectives and view the participants' experiences from different angles. A pattern of meaning was generated from their narratives and an attempt was made to obtain an "insider's view" which is also referred to as the "emic perspective", of their experiences (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020). A deeper understanding of the phenomenon was sought (Cresswell, Hanson, Clerk, & Morales, 2007). This paradigm recognized the importance of the broader social contexts in the participants' lives as meaning was created from a wider social interactive context in which they lived (Hennink et al., 2020; Maxwell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Neuman, 2000; Potrac, Jones, & Nelson, 2014). The participants were encouraged to talk about other influential factors in their lives such as their work, friends and family.

5.2.3 Qualitative approach: Justification for the use of the qualitative approach to this study

There are two major research approaches which are: the qualitative approach and the quantitative approach (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Quantitative research attempts to quantify social phenomena and entails the collection of quantitative or numerical data. Qualitative research attempts to understand the meaning of social phenomena and entails the collection of data in the form of words. It allows for an understanding of the participants' perspectives, meanings and interpretations that they ascribe to behavior, events or objects (H. Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017; Punch, 2013). Choice of a research approach should be about what it can do for a study and about the functions of its methods, tools and techniques (L. Fox & Alldred, 2018; Johnston, 2014). The decision to approach a research study from a quantitative or qualitative angle depends on the nature of the research questions (Johnston, 2014). The research questions in this study required a non-numerical response and a verbal description of the participants' post school career experiences. A qualitative approach to the study provided such data and was therefore adopted (Yates, 2004). It was exploratory in nature and sought to explain "how" and "why" a particular social phenomenon existed in their context (Polkinghorne, 2005). This research approach "freed the rhizome" and opened new possibilities for action and thought (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Qualitative research

attempted to understand their behaviour and experiences, however, understanding occurred from two perspectives (Hennink et al., 2020). One perspective was from that of the researcher using my own frame of reference and this is called “understanding.” The other perspective was from the study population which is referred to as “verstehen”. This referred to understanding from the participants’ perspective, in their own context and describing this using their own words. During the data analyses stage of the study the two perspectives of understanding were undertaken and both influenced this process. Direct observations of the participants’ natural settings were not possible, (Punch, 2013; Walia, 2015) however, their stories of their experiences in social settings were listened to. A qualitative approach allowed me to gauge how they interpreted and made sense of their experiences as well as how they created their own social realities, given their contexts. It provided an understanding of their behaviour, emotions and attitudes. This approach acknowledged that their behaviour was fluid and changed with time, place and context. It was acknowledged that the participants would differ in their constructions of reality. It investigated their experiences and contextual factors that could have marginalized them (Gentles, Charles, & Ploeg, 2015). Considering that the participants had a disability and attended a special school this could have hindered their choices and decision-making. For the above reasons, the qualitative approach was suitable for this study.

5.2.4 Phenomenological research

Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry emanating from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes a phenomenon in question which in this study was the lived experiences of individuals pertaining to their post school careers (Cresswell, 2014). The aim was to understand human life experiences (Bredart, Marrel, Abetz-Webb, Lasch, & Acquadro, 2014). This approach was chosen to explore the participants’ post school career experiences and how they made sense of it within their contexts (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). This approach acknowledged that meaning and knowing were social constructions which changed over time (Grossoehme, 2014). This approach enabled me to investigate the meaning of the participants’ experiences in a world lived by them. I set out to determine what rhizomatic assemblages they employed to navigate their journey into the world of work. I wanted to know about their rhizomatic view of the world and the linkages that

they created in their minds and practically about their experiences. The phenomenological perspective acknowledged that the participants had different realities which influenced the sense and meaning they attached to their experiences (Merriam, 2009).

5.3 Selection of participants

Sampling refers to the process of selecting individuals to participate in a research study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). The intended population for this study was youth with special educational needs who exited the special school. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling (McBurney & White, 2007). Purposive sampling is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities that he/she possesses (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). This sampling method enabled me to focus on key informants (former students with special educational needs) who had experience of the issue under study (Anney, 2014). The participant must have been able to provide verbal information on the topic of study and be willing and available to participate. The criteria used in the purposive selection were: The former students should have had an intellectual disability and attended a special school for the intellectually disabled. This was to ensure that all of them had a similar disability (Coons & Watson, 2013). They had to have attended the same school so that they were exposed to a similar school environment (Byers, Mahat, Liu, Knock, & Imms, 2018). The students must have received permission from their parents to participate in the study and they themselves must have agreed to participate (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015; Dow & Boylan, 2020). Obtaining informed consent was an important step in qualitative research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). All of them must have completed their schooling during the past six years (between 2010 and 2016). They must have applied for and attempted to access the world of work. This would have enabled them to have knowledge and talk about the topic under study and answer the research questions (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017).

A special needs school was selected, through convenience sampling (Naderifar, Goli, & Ghaljaie, 2017), as part of the purposive sampling process, where the potential participants would have met all of the selection criteria. As this study was a qualitative phenomenological study, the number of participants were not material to the sampling process. Rather the criteria for inclusion was of greater relevance

towards understanding the phenomenon under study. Some of the challenges that were encountered during the process of recruiting youth for the study were the differences in the types of their disabilities (this could have altered their experiences) (Coons & Watson, 2013), the inability to trace them once they had left school and their inability to attend the interview due to availability. Considering the challenges of recruiting youth with special educational needs for the study, I conveniently selected a school with students who had special educational needs as the students would have been available to participate (Naderifar et al., 2017). These criteria ensured that the participants selected had common experiences regarding the phenomenon under study (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). This school acted as the base from which I purposively recruited youth with special educational needs who could be traced and located. The youth with special educational needs who completed their schooling within a six- year period (between 2010 and 2016) formed the target sample because the longer the period after completion of school, the more difficult it was to locate the individual (Rupande, 2015). All youth with special educational needs, who left school within the six-year period was then targeted for inclusion in this study. Only twelve participants agreed to be interviewed. Two were selected for the pilot study and ten for the main study.

5.4 Recruitment strategy

Approval for the study was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Attached appendix A) (L. Dempsey, Dowling, Philip, & Murphy, 2016). Consent was requested from the school principal (Appendix B). The names and contact telephone numbers of all the parents of students who exited the school between 2010 and 2016 were requested from the school management team at the research site. Students with intellectual disability are regarded as being part of a “vulnerable” population who are prone to being stigmatised or marginalised (Dow & Boylan, 2020). They may not have fully understood the implications of their participation due to their intellectual deficits (Moeschler & Shevell, 2014). For these reasons, their parents were involved in the decision making to participate in the study (Appendix C). They were contacted telephonically. I identified myself and explained the reason for having contacted them. I informed them about the nature of the study and how they were expected to contribute towards it. Those parents and their children who expressed an interest in

participating in the study were sent letters of information providing a brief summary of the study as well asking them if they would allow their children to participate in the study. The parents and their children were requested to complete the letter of informed consent (Appendices C, E). Those who consented to participation in the study were recruited. Ten participants were assigned to the main study and two to the pilot study. They were given dates on which to attend the semi-structured interviews.

5.5 A description of the study participants

The participants were former students of a government funded special school which catered for those affected by intellectual disability. Working with students with intellectual disability requires one to have knowledge about their characteristics and their individual variations (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015). Their deficiencies and competencies must be considered in methodological choices and processes of the study. There is considerable heterogeneity amongst them regarding the degree of deficiency and their abilities. This could have influenced the manner in which they were able to participate in an interview (Brodin, 2009; Kebbell, Hatton, Johnson, & O’Kelly, 2001). Intellectual disability is a developmental disability which presents in early childhood (Moeschler & Shevell, 2014). This disability is characterised by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour. Adaptive behaviour refers to: motor skills (gross and fine), eating and toileting skills; conceptual skills (involving receptive and expressive language, reading and writing skills, handling money); social skills (social interactions with others, social reasoning and comprehension) and practical skills (involving household chores, dressing, bathing, food preparation, washing of dishes) (Tasse et al., 2012). Most of the participants lived with one parent, aunt, siblings or with a grandparent. From the information provided, it appeared as if their socio-economic background ranged from “average” to “below average.” Most of them came from an African cultural background with most of the participants being male, and one was female. The participants’ limitations in the areas of intellectual functioning and understanding and expressing language influenced the methodological choices that was made in this study. These were discussed in the various stages of the study. However, it was important to use appropriate strategies to gather their discourse in the best possible

conditions and with full knowledge of their limitations and competencies (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015; D Corby, L Taggart, & W Cousins, 2015b).

5.6 Data collection

5.6.1 Data collection method

i. Semi structured individual interviews

Qualitative research allowed me to study the participants' experiences by using a specific research method such as in-depth interviews. This allowed for a more private environment to facilitate the sharing of in depth information (Bredart et al., 2014). I had initially planned to conduct focus group interviews as this method of data collection was deemed more appropriate for the participants in view of the nature of their disability. However, the participants were unable to meet on a common date and time to make that possible. Therefore, the data collection method was changed to individual semi-structured interviews so that they could attend the interview at a date and time that was suitable for them. An interview occurs when an interviewer (I as the researcher in this case) obtains information through direct interchange with a participant who is expected to possess the information or knowledge that is sought (DePoy & Gilson, 2008). Face to face interviews were preferred as more and a high quality of information could be obtained in this way (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Face to face interviews were considered best suited for vulnerable populations such as those with special educational needs (L. Dempsey et al., 2016). This method of data gathering gave me sufficient time to establish rapport with the participant and to clearly articulate the relevant issues at hand (L. Dempsey et al., 2016). The participants were more likely to understand the questions and respond appropriately during the face to face semi-structured interview, as compared to a telephone or mail interview. In the interview method of data collection I could prompt for information that could not be observed (Dow & Boylan, 2020). This method of data gathering enabled a thick, rich and detailed description by the participants of the social phenomena experienced by them (Kendall, 2014). The semi-structured interview provided the participants with the much needed flexibility to explain their thoughts and to tell their stories in their way (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017; L. Dempsey et al., 2016). It also allowed me to interject where it was deemed necessary to ensure that the participant understood the question, to clarify the information provided or to request

more information. I was able to clarify ambiguous answers with the participant. Follow-up information was sought from them. For me as the researcher, the semi-structured interview acted as a “research machine or assemblage” that linked the participants’ utterances to produce something called data (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). This machine revealed their whole inextricable combination of interrelated assemblages and linkages of themselves to their environment. This enabled us to see the interconnection and interaction of knowledge creation with and within their society, the influence of culture, attitudes and values towards them and their relationship to the material world (Tillmans et al., 2014). The interviews provided an enriching experience for me where personal contact with the participant created opportunities to enter their lived world and to gain new insights about them (Kvale, 1996). The interviews yielded much useful information about the participants’ beliefs, feelings and perspectives pertaining to the research topic. I could delve deep to understand the pertinent social issues at hand (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). I wanted to know about the linkages and assemblages that they used to navigate the spaces that they did and the encounters and relationships that they had with those around them.

The interviews did have disadvantages where they were time consuming and I may have asked questions that did not elicit the desired responses. To overcome this possibility, at the end of the interview the participants were given an opportunity to add to the conversation as they desired. Some participants may have felt intimidated by being alone with the interviewer and this could have negatively affected their responses. I tried to make them as comfortable as possible by engaging in casual conversation at the onset of the interview and establishing rapport with them (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The participants’ responses could have also been misconstrued or untruthful during the semi-structured interview (Greeff, 2011).

5.6.2 Data collection instrument

A semi-structured schedule of interview questions was formulated in order to elicit data from the participants (Appendix F) (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). This schedule of questions acted as my assemblage that enabled me to gather data on the topic. The questions were related to the aim and objectives of this research study. There were six main (open-ended questions) (*tell me about...*) with specific questions (*what work did you do?*) related to each main question. The open-ended questions were

broad and allowed freedom and flexibility for the participant to tell his or her personal story (L. Dempsey et al., 2016). The use of open-ended questions however, could have resulted in low levels of responsiveness in students with intellectual disability (Sigelman, Budd, Spanhel, & Schoenrock, 1981). Dent (1986) found that more specific questions produced more detail. Some students with intellectual disability, however, can respond to open-ended questions (Booth & Booth, 1994; Dudley, Calhoun, Ahlgrim-Delzell, & Conroy, 1997; Finlay & Lyons, 2000). Both open-ended and specific questions were included in order to accommodate for the possible lack of detail in the responses. The phrasing of the questions was an important consideration during the construction of the interview schedule. The questions were kept simple, clear and direct in order to facilitate the interview and the acquisition of credible data (N. King & Horrocks, 2010; Mouton & Babbie, 2007). Simple questions were advantageous to the participants as some of them could have had difficulty with complex questions, owing to the nature of their disability (Finlay & Lyons, 2001; Kabzems, 1985; McConkey, Morris, & Purcell, 1999). Although there was a set of questions, they were used as a guide during the semi-structured interviews, and not strictly adhered to (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). The schedule of questions provided a focus and boundaries for the study yet remained flexible (Hofisi, Hofisi, & Mago, 2014; J. Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). The implementation depended on how the participant responded to the question (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). The questions were read out to the participants and available in printed English and isiZulu for those who wanted to read it. The individual semi-structured interview was approximately thirty minutes in duration. The participants were given more time to answer if it was deemed necessary (Finlay & Lyons, 2001).

5.6.3. The need for an interpreter

Verbal exchanges in a common language creates a more favourable environment to obtain rich data (Langdon & Cheng, 2002). In a multilingual society, like South Africa, it was appropriate that the participants were interviewed in and answered questions in a language that they felt comfortable with (Mouton & Babbie, 2007). Most of the participants' first language was isiZulu. The parent consent and information forms were translated into isiZulu in order to ensure that they fully understood the information that was provided (Appendix D). The interview schedule of questions was also available in isiZulu in order to ensure full understanding of the questions

(Appendix G). The services of an interpreter for the interview was available (Appendix H), however, the participants indicated that they understood and preferred speaking in English and they were comfortable with that. The medium of instruction in their former school was English and they indicated that they were familiar with the language.

5.6.4 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted one week prior to the main study. The two semi-structured interviews were conducted at the research site. The results of the pilot study were not used for analyses. The outcome of the pilot study informed me of any modifications that needed to be instituted in the data collection instrument in order to obtain optimal information from the participants (McBurney & White, 2007). The questions may have required adjustment due to the participants not understanding them. Conducting the pilot studies also enabled me to gain and practise interviewing skills prior to embarking on data collection. I had the opportunity to explore the language, determine the clarity of the questions and practise active listening which was an important aspect of conducting the semi-structured interviews (McGrath, Palmgren, & Liljedahl, 2019). Attentive listening to the way in which the participants responded provided valuable information on whether the questions were being understood in the way it was intended.

5.6.5 Data collection process

i. Planning the semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview was carefully planned, the purpose being to explore variables that were related to the objectives of the study, in a permissive and non-threatening environment (Evans & Rooney, 2011). The optimal semi-structured interview format was planned in order to elicit rich responses and also to put the participants at ease (Brayda & Boyce, 2014). The data obtained from the semi-structured interview had to be rich and relevant in order to achieve quality and credibility (Charmaz, 2006). Planning increased my confidence to undertake the semi-structured interviews and to concentrate on what the participants were saying (Bredart et al., 2014). I read literature concerning the subject area, as well as information on how to conduct qualitative interviews (McGrath et al., 2019). I familiarised myself with the semi-structured interview questions to facilitate a better

flow of the conversation (Bredart et al., 2014). To ensure a high-quality interview, I trained myself by modelling, rehearsing and roleplaying asking the questions (Roulston, deMarrais, & Lewis, 2003). I also had the advantage of having had many years of experience in conducting interviews with students with special educational needs. This enhanced my active listening skills as well as developed my strategies in communicating with them in a manner that they understood (Robertson, 2005). I familiarised myself with how the data recording equipment functioned in order to prevent any disruptions to the data gathering process owing to my inability to manipulate the equipment.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted at a venue that all the participants were familiar with and could get to it without much difficulty (Dow & Boylan, 2020; Perry, 2004). All the participants requested to meet at their former school which was familiar and accessible to all of them (Dow & Boylan, 2020). A comfortable, quiet and disturbance-free room was selected (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015; McGrath et al., 2019). The quiet environment was not only relaxing to the participants but also ensured good clarity of the recordings which were achieved with a Sony ICD-PX333 recording device or dictaphone (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). The audio recordings provided a permanent recording of the discourse and this did not pose much of a disturbance to the interview situation (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015; Denscombe, 2007). With open ended questions, it was important to record the answers exactly as provided. The responses were not summarized, paraphrased or corrected for grammar (Mouton & Babbie, 2007). The disadvantage of the audio recording was that it captured only the verbal communication and missed non-verbal communication and contextual information. Therefore, the audio recording was supported by field notes, with the participants being informed of the reasons for taking notes. Field notes were the recorded account of what the researcher observed and it was descriptive and non-evaluative. This supported a full and accurate transcription and conveyed meaning during the data analyses stage of the study (Gorman & Clayton, 2005).

ii. Considerations when interviewing students with special educational needs

The inclusion of students with special educational needs in research requires facilitation (Sigstad & Garrels, 2018). Difficulties in conducting interviews with those with intellectual disability have been documented (Coelho & Saunders, 1996; Finlay

& Lyons, 2001; Gow & Balla, 1994; Lindsey, 1994). However, not all of them encounter difficulty in answering questions during interviews. It is important to be aware of the sources of potential challenges so that the voices of those with special educational needs can be heard more clearly, they can be included in our studies and I can validate my interviewing procedure by applying supportive techniques (Finlay & Lyons, 2001). Problems with their communication have been reported (Abbeduto & Hagerman, 1997; Bedroisian, 1993; Dow & Boylan, 2020; McLean, Brady, & McLean, 1996). These included their lack of understanding of complex grammatical structures or concepts and their difficulties in adequately expressing their thoughts and meaning in an interactional context, due to their lack of vocabulary or weak memory (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015). Some researchers have cast doubts on whether they are able to provide rich descriptions in an interview situation (Corby et al., 2015b). Whilst it is important to acknowledge the limitations of students with intellectual disability, it was important to have included them in research as their voices needed to be heard and they needed to be given the opportunity to express themselves in the best way they could (Sigstad & Garrels, 2018). People with intellectual disabilities are a heterogeneous population and there are no ready communication related solutions for each sub group of people with specific challenges (Finlay & Lyons, 2001). Some techniques have been proposed to enhance the effectiveness of interviewing those with intellectual disability, however, more research is needed on strategies to improve questioning them (Coons & Watson, 2013). These techniques may not be applicable to all of them. In view of their reported communication and other related difficulties, during my interaction with the participants, I employed facilitation strategies (as will be described later) to enhance our interaction and to support them in their communication attempts. It was important to adopt interviewing techniques that maximised the success of the interviews (Corby et al., 2015b).

iii. Considering interviewer effects

Interviewer effects could have been present during the data collection process, which I needed to be aware of. The characteristics of the researcher (Breakwell, 2000), such as language could have had an effect on the interviewing process. An interpreter was available to assist with the language difference between me and the participants. Additional effects could have been interviewer bias during the semi-

structured interview (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). This could have influenced the tone in which I asked the questions resulting in skewed information provided by the participant. In order to overcome this possibility, I tried to maintain a non-biased tone when asking the questions. I was aware of the cultural and power dimensions that could have had an effect on the participants' responses (McGrath et al., 2019). Some of them may have expected the interview to be difficult or seen me to be in a position of authority or power. In order to reduce the participants' fear or anxiety in the situation, they were re-assured that there was no right or wrong answer to the questions. All their responses were valuable (S. Carter & Henderson, 2007; Fontana, Frey, Denzin, & Lincoln, 2005) Also, with the semi-structured interview I could not have been certain of completely understanding a context presented by the participant as I would have responded based on my life experience and beliefs. Therefore, I would not have been able to completely investigate and present the findings within the full context. I had to be aware that I was the co-creator of the data and needed to be aware about how my role could have impacted the data collection process (McGrath et al., 2019).

iv. Conducting the semi-structured interview

The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to elicit the participants' accounts of their experiences and their interpretation of meaning. The semi-structured interview occurred in three stages, in one session. The initial stage set the scene with the establishing of rapport and providing information on the reason for the interview and how it would proceed. This was followed by the body of the semi-structured interview where the main open-ended questions were posed to the participants. The final stage concluded the semi-structured interview, with closing remarks. The open ended questions were asked in the body of the semi-structured interview as asking these questions at this stage of the interview was found to yield more richness to the participants' responses (Bredart et al., 2014; Ogden & Cornwell, 2010).

I began the semi-structured interview by establishing rapport with the participants and attempted to gain their co-operation, thereby facilitating open and honest communication with them (Brayda & Boyce, 2014; Dow & Boylan, 2020; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Rapport was seen as an important ingredient in successful qualitative interviewing as it facilitated information sharing between the researcher and the

participant (D Corby, L Taggart, & W Cousins, 2015a; N. King & Horrocks, 2010). Key to establishing rapport was a sense of proximity to the participants and my relationship with them (McGrath et al., 2019). I had an advantage in this aspect as I was familiar to them because I had previously worked with them at the school that they had attended. This made rapport building with them easier. Building rapport also put them at ease (L. Dempsey et al., 2016) and increased credibility by communicating to them that their information was important and valued. The more they felt at ease the greater the chances were that they would apply themselves to listening and responding to the questions at hand (Finlay & Lyons, 2001). I opened the conversation by thanking them for participating in the study. I stated what the study was about and why I was interested in their points of view, making it a less threatening situation for them (Bell & Waters, 2014). The participants were provided with a context for the interviews through a briefing and a debriefing session before and after the interview (Kvale, 1996).

The researcher introduced the information that was sought and explained the purpose of the interviews (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2016). The participants needed to know what was expected of them, how the interview was to proceed and what their roles were. Some of the issues mentioned in the informed consent letter were reiterated. Given that the participants were a vulnerable population, I spent additional time to stress the voluntary nature of their participation and that they could stop the conversation at any time or choose not to answer a question if they were not comfortable with it (Dow & Boylan, 2020). They were reminded that the semi-structured interview was going to be recorded and their accounts, events and some quotations would be used to compile the final report of the study. They were made aware that the paper-based data did not reveal their identities and was stored in a locked cupboard at the research site and would be shredded after a period of five years. The dictaphone recordings were to be stored away and be erased after five years.

v. Maintaining the conversation

The participants were requested to provide a full account of their own views and experiences and not provide answers that they thought might have been expected of

them (N. King & Horrocks, 2010). The semi-structured approach promoted the conversational nature of the conversation between me and the participants.

Interpersonal skills were an important consideration during the conversation (Kirkevoid & Bergland, 2007; Rogers, 1965). I remained calm and patient and gave the participants sufficient time to express themselves, understanding that they could experience difficulty in expressing themselves. A gentle manner allowed participants to finish what they were saying and let them proceed at their own rate of thinking and speaking. This contributed to a positive relationship (Britten, 1995; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) between us based on equality, trust and involvement (W. Walker, 2011). The participants were allowed free expression, in their own way, without being judged as the aim was to explore their experiences and not judge how they expressed them (Charmaz, 2006). I expressed acceptance, interest and concern by listening to the participants and acknowledging their experiences (Robertson, 2005). During the body of the semi-structured interview, the researcher used the interview schedule as a guide to ask the main questions (*tell me about*). More specific questions were asked where the responses to the main questions were inadequate. Probe (*what do you mean by that?*) and follow-up questions (*what did they say?*) were also useful in eliciting more detailed or complete responses to open ended main questions (Doodey & Noonan, 2013). The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed me to probe areas of interest and follow the participants' concerns. As the interview proceeded, the questioning process was guided by the content of the participants' responses. A more flexible approach had the potential to facilitate the participants' expression of experiences that were important to them (Sigstad & Garrels, 2018). The flexibility also allowed me to explore issues that emerged during the conversation with them. It also enabled me to adjust the questions to the participant's level of understanding and knowledge of the issue as they could have had a deficit in this regard due to the nature of their intellectual disability (Ponelis, 2015). There was openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to facilitate follow-up on the answers given (N. King & Horrocks, 2010).

My communication style was important during the interviewing process as I had to adapt my methods where it was required. In view of the participants' limitations, I needed to ensure that the questions were phrased in a manner that was understood by them and were sensitive to their possible communication difficulties (Bedoin &

Scelles, 2015; Dow & Boylan, 2020). The sentences were constructed simply (Lowe & de Paiva, 1988). The use of questions that referred to specific activities or events in their lives, rather than abstract concepts was recommended as these were more easily understood (Booth & Booth, 1994; Smyley & Ellsworth, 1997). Questions about emotions could have posed a problem to students with special educational needs (Booth & Booth, 1994; Lowe & de Paiva, 1988; Malik, Ashton-Schaeffer, & Kleiber, 1991). Feelings influences one's behaviour and is an integral part of life experience and could not be excluded (Austin & Sutton, 2015). I assisted them in describing their emotions by providing emotion-related words (if required) which they could choose from. Periods of silence were accepted as this gave the participants adequate time to process their responses and it was a time for ongoing reflection (McGrath et al., 2019).

It was just not adequate to allow them to speak and listen to them during the semi-structured interview. I listened actively to the content of what was being said and sought to understand the many nuances of meaning in an answer. I attempted to remember and retain what the participant had said, recalled earlier statements, asked for elaboration and created links about what was said during different parts of the interview. Interpreting, by clarifying and extending the meanings of the participants' statements, was an important role of the interviewer. Communication techniques derived from counselling practice were employed during the semi-structured interview (Sigstad & Garrels, 2018). These techniques assisted the participants in their understanding of questions and in expressing themselves, in view of the nature of their communication deficits. Prompts (*tell me more about that job*) were used to encourage expression. Questions were rephrased where necessary (Britten, 1995; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Finlay & Antaki, 2012). Repeating, paraphrasing and summarising their responses encouraged them to elaborate on their answers (Robertson, 2005; Sigstad, 2014). This also helped me to determine if I understood the participant correctly and if not, the participant then had the opportunity to correct the statement. This served to improve the quality of the data gathered and enhanced the dependability and credibility of the study. The communication strategies that were employed may have contributed to richer descriptions, however, they could have threatened the validity of the study (Sigstad

& Garrels, 2018). Validation strategies to counter these threats were necessary. As an example, in order to prevent putting words into the participant's mouth, when paraphrasing or summarising, I used the participant's own words.

The interviewing process encompassed both the verbal and non-verbal (body language) aspects which I needed to be aware of (Bredart et al., 2014). I ensured that my body language (body movements, posture, gestures, facial expression, voice tone) was congruent with my verbally communicated interest in the participant. I also paid attention to the participant's body language (for signs of resistance, discomfort, uneasiness or misunderstanding) which could have indicated that the interaction was not going well and needed alternate management (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015; Boutin, 2018; Dow & Boylan, 2020). It was important to have been sensitive to the feelings of the participant. If the participant was not comfortable with the question, the option of not answering it or discontinuing the semi-structured interview was made known to them.

vi. Closing the semi-structured interview

The role of the researcher also included bringing the interview to a close (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). The interview ended on a positive note and gave the participants the opportunity to provide feedback (L. Dempsey et al., 2016). An open-ended closing question asked if there was anything else the participant would have liked to add to the conversation (McGrath et al., 2019). This gave the participant an opportunity to express final contributions to the research topic as well as issues that were not addressed by the researcher. Participants could have provided comments, asked questions or dealt with issues that they had been thinking about during the interview. The recording equipment was kept running until the very end of the interview (unless the participant requested otherwise) as it is not uncommon for interviewees to mention something relevant and significant at that stage (Bredart et al., 2014). The participants may have experienced some tension or anxiety because of being open about personal and emotional experiences. Debriefing occurred at this stage, during which the participants were given the opportunity to work through their experiences related to the research (Strydom, 2011). The participants' feelings were

discussed and the researcher rectified any misconceptions that may have arisen during the data collection phase. If the interview opened up personal or sensitive disclosures, the interviewer recommended appropriate referral for counselling (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). The participants were given an opportunity to request removal of comments from their recordings (the recording was played back to them), with such an offering being re-assuring to the participant. It was advisable to end the semi-structured interview on a positive note. I wished them well for their future and thanked them for their participation. It was deemed appropriate to compensate participants for their time spent or reimburse them for costs incurred in attending the semi-structured interview. Each participant was given a remuneration of R40 to cover their travel expenses (Smithson, 2008).

5.6.6 Data analyses

Interpretivists generate a pattern of meanings from the data collected. The audio recordings were transcribed and organized to form coherent narratives of the participants. The narratives were read several times for the purpose of knowing the data and for developing emerging themes from it. It was then read again and notes made about significant observations. A discourse analyses approach (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010) to reading and engaging with the transcript was taken. Discourse analyses as an analytical approach focused on the content of the transcripts in dialogue with the context and type of disabilities that the participants presented with so that the nuanced meanings could be distilled and engaged with during the data analyses process. Themes, patterns or trends were identified in the data and quotes from the participants were included (Parahoo, 2014). In identifying the themes and sub-themes within which the data was presented, the transcripts were coded using different colours of highlighters. Coding of data refers to the categorization of the phenomenon of interest (Bryman, 2004). Coding is a mechanism for thinking about the meaning of one's data and for reducing the vast amount of data (M. Miles & Huberman, 1994). The codes were tentatively named as themes and subthemes and through a process of refinement formed the themes and sub- themes within which the data was presented and analysed. In thematic coding a more interpretative approach was adopted. Codes were linked to concepts cited in the literature. One piece of data could be coded in more than one way. The researcher did not just search for overt content but latent content as well. More general theoretical ideas

were considered in relation to the codes and data. The frequency of occurrence of certain words was also important in content analyses. Interpretation followed where the researcher determined what the significance of these codes were, for the lives of the people under study. What did it mean for them? The findings of the data was related to the research questions and the literature research. (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2016). The thematic qualitative data analyses acted as a machine to organize and reduce non- numerical data, making it more manageable for systematic reporting (N. Fox & Alldred, 2013). Complexity was reduced to simplicity. Relations and affects (feelings) were revealed in assemblages in the data, as well as the capacities of bodies (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). These were related to the objectives of the study to determine what rhizomatic actions the participants engaged in and what the outcomes were (processes, flows and interactions). I also needed to know how the participants were situated within the assemblages and what their roles were. Aggregations/themes within research -assemblages were identified and their effects explained. The outcomes were unpredictable and had the ability to transform systems and create new ways of thinking.

5.7 Ethical considerations during the research process

Ethical issues are important as they relate directly to the integrity of the research process (Bryman, 2004). Ethics also potentially affect all stakeholders in research (the researcher, participants, academic institution, policy makers)(du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2016). The treatment of people on whom we conduct research and the actions that we engage in with them should be of concern to researchers. As the researcher and the research instrument (Sanjari et al., 2014), I was accountable for all my actions during the research process. Although one of the aims of research is to seek the participants' truth, reality and knowledge, preservation of their moral rights as human beings dominate over social benefits of research (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2014). Therefore researchers should be governed by a set of ethical guidelines that should assist them to make appropriate decisions and pursue proper actions during the research process (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012; Sanjari et al., 2014). As the participants in this study had special educational needs arising from intellectual disability, extra care and caution was taken in order to protect their rights (Coons &

Watson, 2013). Procedural, situational and exiting ethics were identified and were followed in all stages of the study (Tracy, 2010).

5.7.1 Procedural Ethics

The researcher made all efforts to be honest and respectful to all individuals who were affected by the research actions or reports (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). The participants were not coerced into participating in the study (Denscombe, 2007). Their participation was voluntary and they were provided with sufficient comprehensible information which was expected to influence their decision to participate (Sanjari et al., 2014). Informed consent was obtained from the participants and their parents (Orb, Eisenhower, & Wynaden, 2001; Sanjari et al., 2014). Their parents were involved in providing consent as the participants may not have fully understood the research process and what their role was (Coons & Watson, 2013). Their capacity to take decisions on their own may not have been adequate. They were informed about the nature of the study, the participants' role, the identity of the researcher, the objective of the research and how the results would be published and used (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015). This was done in a letter format as well as auditorily, in simple and comprehensible language (Coons & Watson, 2013). The consent process was ongoing during the research process as this provided greater protection and freedom of choice for the participants. This meant that they could withdraw from the study at any stage, without penalty. They were made aware of their contributions to the study, confidentiality and security of data (L. Dempsey et al., 2016). The personal identities of the participants were not disclosed, in order to protect their identities (Bredart et al., 2014). Permission to record the interviews were obtained from the participants (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). The interests of the participants were protected and the researcher ensured that they were not physically or psychologically harmed in any way (N. King & Horrocks, 2010; Sanjari et al., 2014). Confidentiality of the participant information was maintained by not disclosing the data to others and by securing it in a locked cupboard at the venue of the study (Sanjari et al., 2014). In order to safeguard the participants from undue exposure, the data was kept for a period of five years in a locked cupboard and the paper-based data would be shredded thereafter.

5.7.2 Situational ethics

During the data collection stage, the researcher constantly reflected on the research procedures and ensured that ethical decisions were taken with the best interests of the participants in mind (Polkinghorne, 2005). The participants were provided a context for the interviews during briefing and debriefing session before and after the interviews (Kvale, 1996). Some of the issues mentioned in the informed consent letter were re-iterated at the beginning of the focus group discussions and individual interviews. This was an attempt to ensure that the participant had an adequate understanding of what was about to happen, why and the procedure that was to be followed. They were reminded of the audio recording and that they could withdraw from the research at any time (without penalty), by informing the interviewer. The participants were re-assured that the questions were not difficult, there could be no wrong answers and it was their perspectives which were being sought (Perry, 2004). Effective listening by the interviewer, during the interview, was an important means of support to the participant (N. King & Horrocks, 2010). It was possible that participants could have experienced emotional discomfort or stress during the interview (Cresswell, 2009). The interviewer paused when the participant displayed signs of distress or discomfort. The participant was given time to recover and resume with the interview or was given the option of leaving the interview. If further support was required the participant would have been referred to a registered counsellor.

5.7.3 Exiting ethics

Ethical considerations continued beyond the data collection stage to include the manner in which the researcher shared the results with others. This was an important consideration in order to prevent unintended consequences. The researcher attempted to present the results in a thesis format, in a neutral manner that would be of benefit to the participants and the relevant stakeholders.

5.8 Quality in qualitative research

The issue of quality in qualitative research cannot be assessed in a single or uniform way (Chowdhury, 2015). Qualitative research is an artistic exercise and requires a creative and imaginative approach to assessing its quality (Sandelowski, 1993; Tesch, 1990). Researchers are often confronted with flexible realities where the subjective responses of the participants may shape the research process. Human

accounts can no longer be accorded validity on the basis of their authenticity, but data must reveal how they are situated within assemblages (Juelskjaer, 2013). Here the issue of quality is more relevant as it relates to the participants' everyday reality. While the flexible nature of qualitative studies should be acknowledged, it can be judged from various perspectives. The most common are those proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) namely: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. These concepts support trustworthiness and will be discussed further below.

5.8.1 Credibility of the research findings

Credibility referred to the value and believability of the research findings and the accuracy with which the researcher interpreted the data that was provided by the participants (Anney, 2014; Leininger, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Tatano Beck, 2006). This involved two processes: conducting the research in a believable manner and being able to demonstrate its credibility and trustworthiness. The credibility of a study rested on the procedures implemented and the self-awareness of the researcher throughout the research process (Mantzoukas, 2005; Rodgers & Cowles, 1993). Measures were instituted in an attempt to enhance credibility of the research process (Weicke, 2007). Individual interviews were conducted to obtain data on the research topic (Evans & Rooney, 2011). The participants were given the opportunity to provide their own meanings to and a thick description of their experiences (Anney, 2014; Tracy, 2010). This provided an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). The researcher tried not to influence the participants' thoughts. Cultural language differences were acknowledged and accommodated for with the availability of an interpreter. Field notes were taken to include observations and events that may have occurred during the data collection stage. Transcripts were checked for errors in transcription. Quotations of actual conversation were included in the data analyses report in order to provide evidence of the depth of the semi-structured interview content as well as to indicate the accuracy of data interpretation and reporting (Bredart et al., 2014). Although attempts were made to enhance credibility, the findings could have been influenced by the researcher.

5.8.2 Confirmability of the findings

Confirmability referred to how well the data collected supported the findings and interpretation of the researcher. It indicated how well the findings flowed from the data (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2016). The researcher described the research process fully and others who look at the data should arrive at similar conclusions as the researcher did (Collis & Hussey, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Peer debriefing is an important strategy to confirm the research findings (Bitsch, 2005). I sought peer debriefing from a fellow researcher who was requested to comment on my research findings and conclusion (Anney, 2014). A further strategy to enhance confirmability was member checking. Member-checking involved giving the participants an opportunity to listen to their recorded interviews to ensure that they were accurate and therefore credible (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Koch, 1994; Sandelowski, 1993; Stake, 2006). This enhanced the credibility of the findings. The participants could have informed the researcher if they wanted to alter, affirm or retract any statements made by them (Gibson & Brown, 2009). This allowed them the opportunity to verify their responses. The voices of the participants were included in the analyses and interpretation (in the form of quotes) of the data to confirm the findings (Anney, 2014). The description of the accounts was kept close to the original data, the analysis included key factors and the relationships among them and the interpretation yielded new insights. In order to ensure accuracy, the researcher recorded the verbal accounts of the participants and then transcribed them. Contrary or discrepant information was not excluded from the analysis (“free the rhizome and topple the arborescent order”). Rich and descriptive terms were used to convey the findings during the interpretation stage of the research. In this way the results could be more realistic and richer and open to (dis)connections (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Gibson & Brown, 2009). The shortcomings or limitations of the study and their potential effects were included.

5.8.3 Dependability of the findings

Dependability referred to the stability of findings over time (Bitsch, 2005). It referred to the quality of the process of integration that took place among the data collection method, data analyses and the interpretation of the data (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2016). Peer examination of my research process helped me to achieve

dependability. An audit trail also helped to achieve dependability. This was achieved by outlining the decisions made throughout the research process, by providing a rationale for the methodological choices and interpretative judgements of the researcher (Anney, 2014). Koch (1994) believed that while readers may not share a researcher's interpretation, they should nonetheless be able to determine the means by which it was been reached. The audit trail was achieved through detailed notes relating to the contextual background of the data, records of observations and the motivation and rationale for all methodological decisions made (Anney, 2014; Rodgers & Cowles, 1993; Ryan-Nicholls & Will, 2009). During the results and interpretation stages, participants' actual expressions were included to support the findings. The researcher continuously revisited and reviewed the data and the analyses thereof in an attempt to ensure that reliable and dependable interpretations were made.

5.8.4 Transferability of the data

The term "transferability" referred to the degree to which the findings of a study can be transferred to another context (Anney, 2014). To determine transferability, the original context of the research must be adequately described so that judgements can be made (Koch, 1994). It was the responsibility of the researcher to provide detailed descriptions for the reader to make informed decisions about the transferability of the findings to their specific contexts (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; McKee, 2004; Stake, 1995). The emphasis was on creating 'thick' descriptions, including accounts of the context, the research methods and examples of raw data so that readers could consider their interpretations (Dawson, 2009; Popay, Rogers, & Williams, 1998). Ultimately, the reader could determine whether or not the findings were transferable to another context (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). As I provided a detailed account of the study and the participants were selected purposively, it facilitated transferability (Anney, 2014). In the final report, detailed and appropriate descriptions were presented so that readers could make informed decisions about the applicability of the findings to specific contexts. The necessary details included accounts of the context and examples of raw data so that alternative interpretations could be considered. For this purpose, direct quotes from the participants were provided in italics (Houghton, Casey, & Shaw, 2012). The researcher attempted to achieve transferability by presenting the text in a clear and comprehensible manner.

This research study consisted of a limited number of participants and therefore the findings of the study should be viewed with caution and not be generalised to a wider population. These findings can, however, serve to inform interested people about the experiences of a group of students with special educational needs, during their journey to access work and training opportunities.

5.9 Reflexivity of the researcher

Reflexivity was a process of ongoing internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of the researcher's positionality and how this affected the research process and outcome (Berger, 2015). Reflection allowed me to become aware of what factors could inhibit my ability to see and interpret during the research process (Russell & Kelly, 2002). I realized the degree of personal influence that could be exerted, either intentionally or unintentionally, on the research process and findings (Shenton, 2004). In most qualitative research, the researcher is considered part of the research instrument (Rodgers & Cowles, 1993). My own pre-conceptions, previous personal and professional experiences and pre-study beliefs could have influenced the research process and a balance should have been maintained between the personal and the observed (Berger, 2015; Malterud, 2001). In this study the participants were prompted, probed and encouraged to express their experiences. Bracketing was practised where I attempted to put aside personal beliefs and judgements about the situation and was open to data as they were revealed (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). However, it was acknowledged that qualitative researchers were not separate from the research process but were present in all aspects of it and were essential to it (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). I could not exclude myself from data the collection, analyses and reporting of the research as I was an integral part of the study, with my own worldview. Also as a qualitative researcher I could not distance myself from the people with whom I did research (Holloway & Biley, 2011). This motivated me to think about how the origins of one's own thinking and how one's pre-existing understanding is constantly revised with new findings, resulting in the construction of new meaning, and how this in turn affects one's research (Haynes, 2012, 2014). Reflection on the process of the research and understanding how one's own values and beliefs could influence all steps of the research process, adds credibility to the research (Jootun, McGhee, & Marland, 2009).

5.10 Meaning-in context

Here the researcher determined the extent to which the data gathered revealed the participants' lived experiences and their understandings of life events. There were open-ended questions that enabled the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of the participants without predetermining their views through rigid questions (Yates, 2004). The interviewer attempted to respond to issues that arose during the course of the interview in an effort to understand the perspective of the participants on the topic under study. Several interviewing techniques (prompting, probing, paraphrasing) were employed in an attempt to elicit rich description from the participants (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015). The participants expressed their meanings through their voices, however, their meanings could have been distorted while listening to them (Holloway & Biley, 2011). The researcher does not always represent the voice of the participants. The participants could have also crafted their responses to appear amenable to the researcher or to protect their self-interests (M. Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Merely listening to and the researcher recording their stories was not adequate as the researcher too needed to tell her story so that the two stories merged to form new collaborative stories (F. Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). I sometimes contributed to the participants' responses and added to their stories, thereby influencing their stories.

5.11 Recurrent patterning in the data

This referred to the documentation of repeated experiences, events or expressions in the participants' lives. I ensured that there was enough data to support the themes that were identified. Recurring ideas from the data were organised into themes which were later used as headings in the results section of this dissertation. The researcher re-read the data and looked for data that supported the themes that helped outline the analysis (Namey, Guest, & Thairu, 2008). The researcher discussed the themes in the write-up of the study. Data that did not support the themes was also considered for comment (M. Miles et al., 2014).

5.12 Saturation of the data

This phenomenon occurred when the researcher became closely involved with the topic under study and used “thick” description to extract as much meaning as possible from the data. A description of the relevant aspects of the participants in the main study was provided. This provided a deeper understanding of the participants’ backgrounds. The interviews provided an enriching experience for the researcher where personal contact with the participant created opportunities to enter the participant’s lived world and to gain new insights (Kvale, 1996). The interviews yielded much useful information about the participant’s beliefs, feelings and perspectives pertaining to the research topic.

5.13 Summary of chapter 5

In this chapter the entire research procedure was outlined. The aim of the study was to explore the post school career/training and employment trajectories of students with special educational needs. A qualitative interpretive phenomenological approach to the research study was adopted Yates (2004). Twelve participants were selected: ten for the main study and two for the pilot study. Convenience sampling allowed for easy access of the participants and for the use of the school as a research site (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the participants for the study. Willing participants were recruited. The participants were former students of a government funded special school which catered for those affected by intellectual disability. Semi structured individual interviews were conducted to collect data. The data collection instrument was a schedule of main and specific questions related to the aim and objectives of the study. A pilot study was conducted one week prior to the main study. During the data collection process, the interviews were audio recorded. The recordings were transcribed and organized to form coherent narratives of the participants. A discourse analyses approach (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010) to reading and engaging with the transcript was taken. The data was coded and themes and patterns were identified. Quality in qualitative research was discussed according to the concepts of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Other important considerations during the research

process were: reflexivity, meaning in context, recurrent patterning and saturation. Research ethics were also employed throughout the research procedure.

CHAPTER 6: OUR STORIES

“Narratives are a way for humans to experience the world, going beyond the simple description of their lives but to reflect and reconstruct meaning about themselves. Narratives reveal individual experiences and shed light on their identities and the images they have of themselves.” (Muylaert, Sarubbi, Gallo, Neto, & Reis, 2014)

6.1 Introduction

The data presentation and analysis were presented across two chapters (six and seven). Chapter six presented the process of working with the data to produce the narratives of each of the participants, developing an analytical framework to analyse the data, the presentation of the participants' narratives and concludes with an analysis of the narratives. Chapter seven used the objectives of the study to thematically analyse each of the stories of the participants illuminating the opportunities, challenges and emotions as they prepared for the world of work and transitioned into the world of work either as employees or entrepreneurs. Chapter eight of the thesis engaged theoretically with the key findings of the study and responded to the research questions that guided this study. Hence chapter eight was also considered as being part of the data analysis.

6.2 The participants and the school that they attended

In this study the researcher interviewed twelve former students with special educational needs who attended the same public special school for many years. The school catered for students with special educational needs. Their learning programme that was implemented was differentiated to meet the educational needs of the students as they were intellectually impaired. Intellectual disability is characterised by marked limitations in an individual's intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour (conceptual, social and practical skills) (Moeschler & Shevell, 2014). Limitations in individual functioning represents a substantial disadvantage within a social context (Schalock & Luckasson, 2013). The receptive (understanding) and expressive language of these learners were limited (Koritsas & Lacono, 2011). They could understand simple questions and statements relating to themselves and their experiences. Their utterances were simple. Some participants provided short answers to the questions, whilst others provided more information. The variation in

the length of the responses was evident in the vignettes. Most of the students experienced difficulty in reading (Koritsas & Lacono, 2011). The learning curriculum comprised literacy, numeracy and life skills. At age fourteen they were introduced to skills training. The skills offered at this school were cooking, gardening, arts and crafts and home maintenance. The choice of skills taught depended largely on the availability of resources, infra structure and teaching personnel. The severity of the child's disability also determined the choice of skill taught. Those students with severe intellectual disabilities were taught simple practical skills that they were able to learn. Most of the students fell within this category.

Some of these students were selected as participants in the study and the framework that guided the study was the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health- Child Youth (ICF-CY) (World Health Organization, 2001). This classification system provided a holistic approach to special educational needs (Castro & Palikara, 2018). In special education, it effects the provision of services, goal setting and allocation of resources to students, depending on the contexts in which they have to function. In the school setting, all allied health professionals and the educators could interact with each other using the common language of the ICF-CY to determine the most needed interventions and environmental supports for students. It can also influence social policy in special education and leadership in the labour market (Machaj et al., 2013). During the data collection and analyses process in this study, the interaction between the participants and their environment (home, family, social, work) unfolded.

One of the major goals in the education and training of students with disabilities is to prepare them for independence as adults (Cheong & Yahya, 2013). Milsom (2007) maintained that students perform better when they are equipped with skills required to undertake new tasks, as required in the workplace. School to work transition refers to the period where secondary school students are prepared to exit the school system and enter the adult world of work. Vocational training should be a major component of the transition from school to work. In the final years of school students should be prepared (in the form of practical job training and orientation) for a smooth transition from school to work (Kim & Dymond, 2010). Transition planning is important for students with special educational needs because it is the route to

successful post-school outcomes which includes economic empowerment, community participation and a better quality of life. In this study the former students of the special school were given an opportunity to voice their thoughts and perspectives on the topic of study. The themes that emanated from this study reinforced some previous research findings.

6.3 Working with the data

The audio recordings were transcribed and organized to form coherent narratives of the participants. The narratives were read several times for the purpose of knowing the data and for developing emerging themes from it. A discourse analysis approach (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010) to reading and engaging with the transcript was taken.

Discourse analysis as an analytical approach focused on the content of the transcripts in dialogue with the context and type of disabilities that these participants presented with so that the nuanced meanings could be distilled and engaged with during the data analysis process. Themes, patterns or trends were identified in the data and quotes from the participants were included (Parahoo, 2014). In identifying the themes and sub-themes within which the data was presented, the transcripts were coded using different colours of highlighters. Coding of data refers to the categorization of the phenomenon of interest (Bryman, 2004). Coding is a mechanism for thinking about the meaning of one's data and for reducing the vast amount of data (M. Miles & Huberman, 1994). Stories were constructed from the data, using a first-person voice, to capture the essence of the emotions of the participants as they experienced their journey into the world of work. In order to provide appropriate support for the young people and to ensure that they are being included and not left behind we need to listen to the voices of these young people (Pallisera et al., 2016). In this study young adults with special educational needs were given a voice regarding their post school career and employment experiences as they experienced their journey into the world of work.

6.4 Process of data analysis

The codes were tentatively named as themes and sub-themes and through a process of refinement formed the themes and sub-themes within which the data was presented and analysed. In thematic coding a more interpretative approach was

adopted. Codes were linked to concepts cited in the literature. One piece of data could be coded in more than one way. The researcher did not just search for overt content but latent content as well. More general theoretical ideas were considered in relation to the codes and data. The frequency of occurrence of certain words was also important in content analyses. Interpretation followed where the researcher determined what the significance of these codes were, for the lives of the people under study. What did it mean for them? How did their narratives highlight critical moments in their trajectory to seeking employment and being employed? The findings of the data was related to the research questions, objectives and the literature research (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2016).

6.5 Narratives of the participants with special educational needs

The narrative is the objectification of thought and the externalized thought is transmitted through oral reporting (Muylaert et al., 2014). Narratives are representations and interpretations of the world and they are techniques to generate stories. One of the functions of the narrative is to contribute to the historical construction of reality and, based on past experiences, promote the future (Muylaert et al., 2014). The participants' oral narratives reframed their lived experiences pertaining to their post school career experiences. Their narratives also contributed to new knowledge, altered their social realities and created new questions. The narrative interviews not only reconstructed the life history of the participants, but assisted me to understand the contexts in which they were constructed and the factors that created change and motivated their actions. Below were some of the participants' narratives that I listened to. Not all of their narratives were included.

6.5.1 Siya's story

"I began my schooling at the special school when I was nine years old. My aunty told me that when I was in primary school I could not cope and I had failed my grades. She took me to the special school. At the special school we learnt how to read and write. We also learnt maths. At school we could not choose what we liked to do. We had to do what the teacher told us to do. When I was older, about 15, I remember we did some woodwork. I made a shelf for the files in the office. I made a cupboard at home too. I made a Wendy house to do business, before I left the school. I rent out the Wendy house to a man and he pays me. I also learnt self-discipline and other

things to help me in my future. Self-discipline is important to do the job or you can't work. Respect also...it is important to respect the people you are working with. I liked to learn about sound and music. I want to get my own sound system and hire it out for functions or the church. I wish I could learn about sound at school. The teachers were kind and patient with us. My aunty allowed me to build my Wendy house at home. I wanted a job because I wanted to be responsible for myself and start my own thing one day. While I was at school I did not work. My first job after school was at the fish market. The pay was very less. Then my friend told me about a welding job. I got the job and worked there for two years, but it was difficult because on hot days I had to work with fire. The cutting of wood that I learnt at school helped me in my welding job. The people I worked with were very good to me. They taught me the job. In 2017 I started my job as a caregiver at the school. I am very happy with this job. I have no problems working here. I want to learn new things in my job and become a teacher aide. I think we should teach our special children more skills that they can use to earn money later. It is not easy for children from a special school to get a job because we don't have a certificate to show anything, what we learnt, so they won't give us a job. My friends from the same school are still looking for a job."

6.5.2 Bradley's story

"I started at the special school when I was about eight years old. My aunty told me that I was having problems at the normal school and I could not read. At the special school I learnt cooking and gardening. We did a little woodwork. I enjoyed the gardening the most and wanted to carry on with it when I left school. The teachers were good to me. I did not work while I was at school. After I left school I learnt about graphics. My mum's friend arranged a personal tutor for me and he did not charge me because of my disability. So, I learnt to do some things on the computer like changing a black and white picture to a colour one and adding things to a picture like flowers. My family members tried to find a job for me. Then I was offered a job between road sweeping and parks and gardens. I chose the parks and gardens because I enjoy this and also because my aunt told me it is a government job and it will be better. My local councilor helped me to get this trainee programme at the park. I went for an interview; I took my school certificates and I was accepted. The people I work with are friendly, they are good to me and they help me to learn my job. We

clean the park, do landscaping, plant flowers and vegetables, put compost and chemicals. After my training I will become permanent. Then I can become a supervisor of the park and then train other people to do the job. In the future I want to buy a house of my own. I want to have a lovely garden and plant things. I also want to get my driver's license. I would also like to read better on my cell phone. My aunty and uncle help me. I need to read for my job too. I am on the youth committee in my area and I do community work. We help the youth and teach them about prostitution, drugs and throwing babies in the bin. Because I was in a special school, I could not apply for many jobs. The people think that we don't know anything. But the gardening I learnt at school helped me."

6.5.3 Lunga's Story

My mother told me that I came to the special school when I was ten years old. She said I was having a lot of problems at the normal school and the teachers told her to find a special school for me. They said I can't stay at that school anymore. At the special school I was happy, the teachers were patient, but my friends used to tease me. We did writing, maths and other things. We did a bit of woodwork, gardening, beadwork and washing the buses. We could not choose what we liked. All the boys did the same work. When I left school, I could not find a job. I went to so many places near my house. They said they are full and they don't have jobs. They asked me what grade I was in and for my CV. When they saw I was in a special school they said no its fine...we need this and that and they made an excuse. It was difficult because I came from a special school. When you give your CV and they read it, you can tell from their face...it changes. Some of them say they will call you and you know they won't call you back. I tried about 5 to 6 places. It makes me sad. When you come from a special school and you looking for a job, some people undermine you. They say aiy he's just a slow learner...we don't need slow learners like you. They don't look at you like you are smart. I can learn but it's like there's no chance for you. About 5 years went by and I did nothing. I could not help my mother to buy food or buy for myself. Then I went to the I Can college for 1 year. I liked it there, the people taught us well. I had some difficulties but I finished the year. I could not get a job after that. I waited for a long time. Then my step father said don't just sit, you must go to the security company. I did that. I did 3 days of training and then I wrote a test. I thought I will fail because I can't read well, I was scared. My father said no they

will help you...and they really helped me. I passed. Then I got a job at a shop. I am a security guard. This is my first job after 6 years, since I left school. The people I work with are understanding and good people. They don't discriminate and look at me like I am a slow learner. My parents support me in everything I do. My job can be dangerous because of robbers with guns. But my mother told me to pray hard to be safe. I also want get my driver's licence but I need to save money first. I just want a stable and permanent job so I can help my mother to buy food and build her house bigger. It is very hard to get a job. It is not easy.

6.5.4 Tswele's story

I came to the special school when I was 8 years old. My sister said that reading was a big problem in the other school. I could not pass because of the reading. At the special school we did some baking and cooking and some sports. We could not choose what we wanted to do. All of us did the same thing. When I left school, I did not cook or bake. At school the reading was confusing for me. I went to the psychologist. I had some reading lessons, then the money got finished and I stopped going. Then I went to the doctor. He scanned my head and found nothing wrong. Then he gave me pills for reading. It did not help. I did not work when I was at school. When I finished school, I went for my driver's licence. My friend was teaching me on his laptop. I drive my father's van. I deliver stocks, beer and drinks. I even drive to Joburg to deliver stuff. My father pays me but I need the right job. I want my own plumbing job. When I was still in school, I was thinking about plumbing. I went to the college to find out about the course because someone told me they know how to teach children like us with a problem. Last year I did the plumbing course at the college, theory and practical. I finished it. It was hard but the teachers at the college were very patient and helpful. The lady showed me how to read and learn it. They said I must take pictures to help me. My sister also helps me with my CV. Now I need to get a job to get plumbing experience. I'm worried about that now. If I don't get a job, I can't do the trade test and be a qualified plumber. I am trying everywhere, even my father is trying to get a plumbing job for me. My dad has been supporting me but I don't like my father to do everything for me. I am driving for him because I can't get a plumbing job. But I can do anything...fix gates, paint the house, fix cupboards, drive a big truck. I just want a job of my own, anything, so I can buy a house and a car.

One thing that makes me sad is the reading. If I can read, I can get a job anytime. Also, I don't have a grade from my school, that is the problem.

6.5.5 Akona's Story

I came to the special school when I was 7 years old. I stay with my granny. My granny took me to this school because I failed grade one two times and the school said I have to leave. The other school said that I have to go to a special school. At the special school I wanted to read, but the teachers did not teach me to read. The other things that I did was cooking, sewing, beadwork, drawing. I liked my teachers. I did not go out to work when I was at school. We did not choose subjects. We had to do what the teacher told us to do. We also did some maths and writing. When I finished school, I wanted to work but I couldn't find a space. I wanted to earn some money to buy things for myself. I am a girl and I need some things for myself. I went to the KFC and they said they had no space. I spoke to the manager. She asked me what grade I did. I told her I went to the special school. She said there was no job. I felt very bad. I tried other places too. They said no. Then I sat at home for 3 years. I cleaned the house. Then the school phoned me. They asked me if I wanted to look after the children in the school, be a caregiver. I said yes. I was very happy to get a job. I did not know anything about the job. Maybe if I learnt how to take care of children when I was in school, it will be easy. But I can learn the job slowly. The people I work with will teach me. They are good. I would like to be a social worker one day. But because I can't read, I will never be a social worker. I would like to learn to read. I also like to learn to do beadwork, make earrings and necklaces. I think the children at the special school should do sports and learn to read. Their parents must keep them safe and teach them things. Jobs are hard to get. My friend from the special school is sitting at home for 4 years now. She can't get a job. Maybe with a special school it's hard to find a job.

6.5.6 Banda's story

Hello. My mother said I came to the special school when I was 8 years old. She said the other school was too difficult for me. I was not managing. I was happy at the special school. We learnt numbers and some writing. When I was in the senior phase, we did some beadwork, cooking, sewing and woodwork. My teachers were nice. I did not work while I was at school. After I finished school, I tried to look for a

job. I got a job in a call centre but they said I was too slow in typing so they fired me. Maybe at the special school the children should learn to type. I also tried at the shop. They asked me what grade I was in. Being in a special school was a problem because most of them don't understand about a special school. Most of the people don't actually believe me when I tell them I went to a special school. They say I'm lying; they say no it can't be. So, I started to cook...something that I did at school. I started to cook at home and my family loved it and they ask me what I'm gonna cook next. Then I started to cook for other people, for events. I charge them money. They buy the ingredients. I used to cook in a container, for a lady. Then she said she doesn't need me anymore and I didn't have a job. I didn't have any training in cooking. I learnt cooking from the food channel on tv. I watch it over and over again because I can't read a recipe or a book. Therefore, I can't do any cooking course because of the reading. My family supports me in my business. I can't work in a restaurant or hotel because they want a qualification. I wish I just had the papers to prove that I can cook. I could earn a salary every month like some of my friends. My friends say they can organize me a job but the problem is the grade and the special school. They want grade 11 upwards. I cannot lie on my CV about my grade. I feel sad when they say no to me because I don't have a grade. I don't feel nice, I am disappointed. It's just hard looking for a job. It is harder when you were in a special school and you don't have a qualification. The children in the special school must learn skills and some reading. I like to work, get a nice stable job instead of just staying at home all day. I also do modeling to earn some money. I have an agent who takes pictures of me. They said my vitiligo is good for modelling.

6.5.7 Vusi's story

I went to the special school when I was 9 years old. My mother said the teachers at the other school used to call her to school all the time because of me. The work in that school was hard for me and I couldn't pass, she said. So, I started in the special school. My teachers were kind. I learnt some numberwork. We did some writing. When I grew bigger, we did some beadwork and woodwork. I liked this. The teachers were patient with us. When I left school, I learnt how to fix gearboxes at a garage. I liked this job very much. The people there were nice. I was happy there. Then when I went back there in the new year, the garage closed down and there was nobody there. I was very sad and upset. I was waiting to start work in January and then there

was nothing. I had no job. I was worried because my dad passed away then and we had no money. I tried other places for a job. Any job. I go about three times a week looking for a job. It is costly because I need taxi money to go all over. They say I must leave my CV and they will phone me. I'm still waiting. Nobody phoned. Some say there's no job. Maybe because I went to a different school. I feel very sad because I want to work. It is not easy to get a job because I am trying all the time. At school we learnt some beadwork. So, I'm trying that now. I am making bangles and necklace to try to get money for me and my mother. I take it to a shopping place where there's people. I walk up and down to sell my things. It is not easy to sell because the people say they don't have money. They say they will buy at the end of the month. Some of them want another colour so I have to make it for them because I need the money. I don't sell a lot. With the little money that I make, I give my mother taxi money, I buy groceries for the house, I also have to buy the things I need to make the necklace. I also make wooden spoons to sell. I go and find the trees for the wood. I cut the branch with my bush knife and I use my sandpaper to make it nice. I still like to get the motor mechanics job. I will keep trying every week.

6.6 Analysis of the stories of the participants

The stories of each of these participants were somewhat similar in the challenges and opportunities in searching for, getting a job and striving to retain their jobs or entrepreneurial activities. Their stories were also very revealing in many respects, as they aspired for and wanted to be in a job. In this analysis, I drew from across the stories of these participants to reveal the issues related to their trajectories in aspiring for and obtaining a job, commencing with their reflections on being in a special needs school, in search of a job and being in a job.

6.6.1 Being in a special school

Most participants reported being happy in their special need's schools. Some indicated that they were told that they were not performing well in their previous school and that they had to be moved to a special school to continue with their education. They, thus, knew that they were different from their peers. They could not read or pass every grade like their peers. This was an important issue in that when they finally began their journey into finding employment, they recognized that they were different and that their chances of getting a normal job as their peers would be

a difficult one. For many individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, it is during their adolescent years that they begin to recognize differences in achievement between themselves and their typically developing peers (Jones, 2012). This realisation may lead to feelings of inadequacy, frustration, or isolation (Evans, 1998). Some of them felt sad and despondent about their future and obtaining a job.

In their special needs schools most reported being comfortable, supported and their teachers treated them very well which suggested that they had experienced some level of discomfort in the previous school to enable them to recognize that that they felt happy in this special need school environment. It is possible that they felt excluded in the larger mainstream school and they could not cope and compete with the children of normal abilities in the general classroom. The special school environment provided a secure and stress-free learning environment for the students. There was small group teaching and they felt more emotionally safe in this environment. Small group learning situation was found to be more secure and accepting of children with special educational needs (Meynert, 2014b). Their self-esteem also improved in an attentive environment. They were eager to learn in a supportive environment. Children feel comfortable in this environment because they can learn at their own pace without any pressure (Meynert, 2014b).

The focus of their learning was largely on skills development for vocational interest. The learning experiences of school are important if children with disabilities are to acquire the skills that will enable success in obtaining employment. Furthermore, the aspirations of young people need to be fed and not suppressed by a system that may be discouraging, deficient or inflexible (Mulderij, 1996). Relevant vocational training should be a major component of the transition from school to work in the form of practical job training in the final years of school (Kim & Dymond, 2010). Students with disabilities who have engaged in vocational or community based work are more likely to obtain and maintain their employment (Lindstrom et al., 2011). The challenge that these participants reported was that there was a limited number of subjects that were offered to them and some participants felt that the curriculum did not meet some of their interests. This is an expectation as special needs schools do offer a limited number of subject offerings based on its capacities, staffing and financial resources. Special schools often have isolated and restricted curricula that prevent students from learning a wide range of subjects that are perceived to be important for

successful participation in the economy (Shah, 2007). Small staff compliment and insufficient curricular expertise also restricts the range and content of the curriculum (Jenkinson, 1997). The scarcity of personal and educational resources (infra structure, equipment) impacts on educational outcomes (Gamero & Lassibille, 2016; Urwick & Kisa, 2014), with greater levels of resources being linked to better outcomes (Alcázar et al., 2006; Visser & Juan, 2015). Despite this, the participants appreciated the practical learning exposure in various domains of skills development, some had learnt values that favoured them in their search for work. The participants had intent to be useful beyond schooling and used the opportunity to learn somethings that they could use when out of school so that they could sustain themselves. Hence, they acknowledged that their school experience prepared them, albeit minimal emphasis, for beyond schooling. Certification was a problem as they received none except for a school leaving certificate if they had fully completed their school education.

6.6.2 In search of work beyond schooling

Having attended a special school appeared to have placed the participants at a disadvantage with regards to obtaining employment. Labour market discrimination appeared to have taken place. Some employees were reluctant to employ some of the participants because they attended a special school. They felt excluded and undermined and made to feel as if they were incompetent. People tend to make assumptions about disabled people as being less capable and less hardworking (L. Lengnick-Hall, M. Gaunt, & M. Kulkarni, 2008) and less productive (Harcourt, Lam, & Harcourt, 2005). Therefore, people with disabilities are often not considered for employment (Harcourt et al., 2005). The participants also experienced difficulty in obtaining appropriate work that was comparable to the training that they received in school. Special schools often have isolated and restricted curricula that prevent students from learning a wide range of subjects that are perceived to be important for successful participation in the economy (Shah, 2007).

Some participants' interests and passions regarding work were met, post school, whilst others were not. It was important for them to be employed in a job that they enjoyed. Many of them were forced to take on different kinds of jobs just so that they could earn a living. Their jobs were often not permanent, were high risk to their safety

and not well paying. Young people with disabilities who do find work tend to have low pay, less skill and insecure jobs that offer little opportunity for advancement (Scarpetta, Sonnet, & Manfredi, 2010). The positive outcome of having different jobs was their exposure to different work environments and it was preparation for a long-term career. Their success at obtaining employment depended largely on their social network (friends, family). Informal contacts through social networks have been seen as an important source of information in the search for a job. About one third to half of job matches are made possible by friends and relatives (Ioannides & Loury, 2004; Topa, 2011). A high employment rate amongst the social networks increases the possibilities for a successful job match for unemployed social network individuals through the sharing of information about job opportunities (Cappellari & Tatsiramos, 2015).

6.6.3 Being in a job

Most of the participants engaged well with their employers and they were treated well by them. It has been found that people with disability are rated positively in terms of being likeable and socially accepted (Nota, Santilli, Ginevra, & Soresi, 2013). They received support and ongoing developmental opportunities from them. It is important for people with disabilities to receive the same opportunities for support and development as their non-disabled counterparts (Henry et al., 2014). Mentoring can also assist them to advance in their careers (McDowall-Long, 2004). The participants aspired towards, growth, learning more about the job and permanency in the work environment. Their aspirations for work and growth were similar to those young people without a disability (Emerson et al., 2009). It appeared as if they needed to show that they could learn and improve just like everybody else. Acts of benevolence were also evident. They felt the need to support their families with their little earnings. The participants expressed appreciation for the guidance, encouragement and practical support that they received from their families and they wanted to help them in return (Baldwin, Evans, Etherington, Nichols, & Wright, 2015). The participants also expressed their wish to be like their employed friends, with a permanent job and earning a regular salary. It was as if they wanted to work so that their abilities could be acknowledged (Lindsay, 2010; Lysaght et al., 2012).

6.7 Summary of chapter 6

In this chapter a brief description was given of the participants and their schooling background. Working with the data and the process of data analysis was alluded to. Some narratives of the participants were provided. A brief and general analysis of their narratives included their experiences of being in a special school, their search for work and being in a job.

CHAPTER 7: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

“Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead.” —Louisa May Alcott. 2005

7.1 Introduction

Having presented the narratives of the participants on their experiences of accessing the world of work in the previous chapter, I now focussed more specifically on the objectives of the study within this chapter. Hence this chapter was organized according to the objectives as set out in chapter one. The aim of the study was to explore the post school career and employment trajectories of students with special educational needs. The objectives set against this aim helped to coherently present the findings of the study in its various facets from determining the participants experience of schooling through to searching for jobs and concluding with future aspirations as a productive being. The chapter was organized in a way that integrates the appropriate data for each of the objectives, consolidating a finding through the analysis of the respective data and the discussion of the findings. This integration presents a more holistic understanding of the research process from which key findings emerged. These key findings were then the subject of engagement in the next chapter with a focus on some theoretical explanations around these key findings.

7.2 Data organization and analysis

The data for each of the objectives was in the form of vignettes developed from the interview extracts and from the narratives presented in the previous chapter.

Vignettes have been created using the expressions of the participants. It was used as a narrative form of presenting the research findings (F. Erickson, 2012).

Researchers appear to differ on a specific definition of vignettes in terms of what function it should serve, its composition and its purpose (Kandemir & Budd, 2018). It was concluded that vignettes can be used to address a variety of research designs and to fulfil the requirements of the individual research projects. Like the way literary writing is a creative effort, the vignette can be used by the researcher to steer away from traditional scholarly methods and venture into a more versatile style (M. Miles et

al., 2014). Vignettes provide a window through which the reader can examine, analyze and gain understanding of the lived experiences of people and the meaning they ascribe to their experiences (Pitard, 2016). Considering that a qualitative phenomenological approach to this study was adopted, the use of vignettes to gain insight into the participants experiences pertaining to the area of study was appropriate. It added depth and support to the stories that the participants shared with me. Each objective statement was followed by a group of vignettes, drawn from the semi-structured interviews with the participants. These vignettes were then the subject of discussion for each objective. The vignettes, therefore, captured and highlighted the experiences of the participants as they encountered that slice of their life. Within each objective, identified themes formed the sub-structure of the data analysis. These themes were resonated against a backdrop of relevant literature. Quotes from the participants' responses were used to illustrate the common themes that emerged relating to their experiences.

7.3 Objective 1: participants' school experiences

The specific objective related to the participants' school experience is:

- **To explore the participants' school experiences in preparation for the world of work**

The intention of this objective was to obtain some insights about the participants' retrospective views about their schooling and their learnings achieved in relation to their experiences of trying to get a job. Hence the vignettes were viewed within this context and at their current positions in relation to their work situation (unemployed/self-employed/in employment).

Vignette 1

Tswele: "At school we learnt cooking, knitting, baking and sewing. I forgot it after that"

Bradley: "At school I learnt cooking, gardening and some woodwork. I liked the gardening. I am now a trainee casual worker at the park where I do lots of gardening. I will become permanent soon."

Banda: “We did cooking, beadwork, sewing and woodwork. My teacher taught me to cook. I used the cooking after I left school. I could not get a job so I started to cook to earn money. I cook for people now and their events. I buy the ingredients and I charge the people money.”

Siya: “At school I learnt self-discipline and other things to help me in my future. Self-discipline and respect is important to do the job or you can’t work. I learnt wood work too. While at school I made a shelf for the files in the office. Then I made a cupboard at home. I also built a Wendy house to do business, before I left the school. While still at school I wanted to learn about being a sound system person. They did not teach me that. I will find someone to teach me about it. I like to have my own sound system so I can hire it out for parties or for the church.”

Vusi: At school I learnt how to do beadwork and woodwork. Now I do this to earn money, while I am waiting for another job to fix cars which I really want to do. I make necklaces and wooden spoons and sell them at the shop.

The themes that emerged from vignette 1 were:

- Relevant skills should be taught to students
- Consider student preferences in respect of skills that they would like to learn (self-determination)
- Character skills of students can affect their academic outcomes
- Entrepreneurship was a means of creating self-employment

These themes were discussed below.

7.3.1 Relevant skills should be taught to students

According to Wiger et al. (2015) the outcomes of youth employment are dependent on education and skills with respect to quality, quantity and relevance. They further argue that education should provide all students with the skills they require to lead healthy, productive and meaningful lives and claim that it is important to achieve

“fitness for purpose” when deciding on a programme to teach skills to learners as the skills must correspond to the goals (Wiger et al., 2015). Drawing from the vignettes of the participants, the school education that they received were useful practical skills that they could use beyond their schooling. They also appreciated the exposure to different productive skills that they could use after completing school. Finally, they appeared to be hopeful from what they learnt in their schooling stint. *Bradley, Banda, Siya and Vusi* reported that they used some of the skills (cooking, gardening, woodwork) that were taught to them at school. *Banda* continued to cook as a means of income after leaving school. *Bradley* used his gardening skill that he learnt at school and went on to become a trainee worker at the local park. *Siya* used his woodwork skill to make cupboards and build a Wendy house which he conducted business from. *Vusi* used his beadwork and woodwork skills acquired at school to sustain himself in the interim while waiting for a job to repair cars, which was his passion. Identifying relevant skills to be taught to learners at school level can be achieved through a participatory process with the learners and educators, taking life experiences and preferences into account (Wiger et al., 2015).

7.3.2 Student preferences in respect of skills to be learnt

Promoting self-determination (making choices, problem solving) of adolescents with disabilities has become an important consideration in secondary education and transition services as self-determination has been linked to post school outcomes (M Wehmeyer et al., 2013). Promoting self-determination and allowing children to voice their interests and likes is an important factor when designing a skills programme and it has been linked to better school outcomes (Wiger et al., 2015). Whilst the choice of skills specialization was limited, the participants were comfortable and appreciative of their learning exposure. They found value in the learnings obtained whilst at school and this value was expressed in their search for work, in their current work environments or as self-engaged. *Bradley*, who enjoyed gardening at school continued his passion upon leaving school and obtained an apprenticeship at a local park (parks and recreation division of the local municipality). *Banda*, who enjoyed cooking, excelled at it and went on to cook for a living. *Siya* loved the sound and music business and he was disappointed that this was not taught at school. He was now going to seek out someone, perhaps a respected community member who wants to support the youth, to teach him the skills related to his passion (Chigunta,

Schnurr, James-Wilson, & Torres, 2005). Giving students the opportunity to express what kind of skills they would like to learn is important (Wiger et al., 2015). These students continued their passions after leaving school. Student designed participation and guidance to identify their interests and abilities and match them with a trade or vocation should be one of the best practices when designing a skills programme (Wiger et al., 2015). The knowledge of school teachers and parents regarding the abilities of the young adults in their care, is also valuable for the professionals working with them as they prepare them to enter competitive employment (Holwerda et al., 2015). Student interests and abilities should be identified and developed. At the school that the students attended, the skills programme was limited and therefore they did could not choose skills that they preferred.

7.3.3 Character skills as non-formal or incidental learning

Character skills of a student (work ethic, motivation, integrity, innovation) will influence how much is gained from a programme (Wiger et al., 2015). Evidence shows that non-cognitive character skills can predict a wide range of life outcomes, including educational achievement and labour market outcomes (Heckman & Kautz, 2013). Employability skills include personal skills beyond just hard skills and knowledge required of a profession or a job (Suneela, 2014). Soft skills like, amongst others, care, communication, safety, trustworthiness, agility and professionalism are increasingly what employers are looking for in a potential employee (Jackon, 2014). Some or most of these soft skills are not taught explicitly within a programme design, but are largely acquired on the job learning. The participants indicated that they acquired some of the soft skills, largely character building in nature, while learning within their school curriculum. The school education did provide opportunities to learn these soft skills and these soft skills, in some cases, attracted employers' attention with a view to keeping them employed in their enterprise. Some of the soft skills learnt by the participants (like respect and hard work) while at school was useful to them in the post-school, work situation.

Some employers believe that character skills are more important than academic skills (Duckworth & Carlson, 2013). *Siya* attached much importance to the qualities of self-discipline and respect for others, both of which he believed he learnt at school. His learning went beyond just the skill that was being taught to him. He later realized that

these qualities of self-discipline and respect helped him in his interaction with others in his workplace. He expressed gratitude for this. Obtaining goals such as school success and excelling in a job requires impulse control, hard work and the ability to manage one's emotions (self-regulate) (Ivcevic & Brackett, 2014). These traits have been consistently linked to academic achievement (Poropat, 2009). Longitudinal research has found that self-control is vital to success in almost every aspect of life, including academic achievement (de Ridder, Lensvelt-Mulders, Finkenauer, Stok, & Baumeister, 2012; Duckworth & Carlson, 2013; Mega, Ronconi, & De Beni, 2014; Mischel, 2014; Moffitt et al., 2011). Programmes to develop children's self-control have been developed with positive outcomes (Piquero, Jennings, & Farrington, 2010).

7.3.4 Entrepreneurship (while still at school) was a means of earning a living.

Siya, who learnt woodwork at school, built a structure (while still at school) and rented it out to earn an income. He displayed entrepreneurial characteristics early in his life. Entrepreneur education and training has been recommended in order to provide students with skills that will help them establish and sustain a career in business and for job creation (Osuala, 2010; Turker & Selcuk, 2009). It has been suggested that the schooling system should develop entrepreneurial attitudes, skills and knowledge in learners (Mahadea et al., 2011; Sandrock, 2011). This type of knowledge increases the chances of one's success as an entrepreneur. It is unclear from the vignettes whether entrepreneurial skills were taught explicitly to these participants in schools, but some of participants displayed entrepreneurial inclinations and attitudes which they linked to their school experience. Some participants related this learning to a particular teacher (*My teacher taught me to cook*) and some to opportunities (*making a shelf for the office*) created (opportunistic learning moments within school). This was an example of entrepreneurial tendency being encouraged and supported by the schooling system (Sandrock, 2011).

7.3.5 Summary of the results of objective 1: To explore the participants' school experiences in preparation for the world of work

The participants expressed mostly positive learning experiences from their school education. These experiences allowed them to either secure some form of work or some entrepreneurial activities from which to derive an income. The school education

that they received comprised useful practical skills that they used after completing school. Some participants wished they had learnt skills that they loved. Some of them learnt soft skills which employers tend to favour, especially in a complex work situation and working with and amongst people (Seetha, 2014). Some of participants displayed entrepreneurial inclinations and attitudes which they linked to their school experience.

7.4 Objective 2: To determine the nature of the participants' career/training and employment opportunities post school.

This objective was based on the assumption that all young people (with or without disability) aspire to independence, control over their lives, to earn money to survive, to have a home and to other material comforts of life (Yueng et al., 2008). In order to attain these, they need to be employed (Jang et al., 2014). Employment makes up the majority of the adult life and is an important component of the transition into adulthood (Fussell & Furstenberg, 2005). Skills enable young people to acquire a job more easily (Kautz et al., 2014). In South Africa there is no transition plan or programme in place for students with special educational needs, post school. Upon school exit, they have to create their own future. If they have the financial support of their family, they could enrol in a private institution for some form of training, as there are few state funded training facilities for students with intellectual disabilities. Internship programmes are lacking. In the absence of training or skill, they are forced to seek employment or become self-employed. Some institutions of higher education do provide support services for disabled students, however, the range of disability support services is limited to few disabilities (Department of Education, 2001b). Vignette 2 provided some insights into the post school activities of the participants.

Vignette 2

Bradley: "I did graphics training at home with a private tutor, in my first year after finishing school. I was more interested in parks and recreation. I went to my local councilor and spoke to her. I did my CV (with all my certificates of achievements from school) and went for an interview. Then I got a job in the parks and gardens section in the municipality. I am a casual worker but I will become permanent soon. I am also on the local youth committee. We meet with the ward committees and discuss problems that are happening in the area (like prostitution and child abandonment). We run programmes for the youth.

Lunga: “First I went to the ‘I Can College’ They teach you how to work in the workplace. I waited for 5 months for a job. There was nothing. Now, I work for a security company. I had 3 days of training and I wrote a test.”

Tswele: I got my license after I finished school. I drive my father’s van. I do delivery. I buy stocks from the shop and deliver to my fathers’ business. I did a plumbing course at the Mayville college. I did phase 1 and phase 2. I have to get experience before I do my trade test. I don’t know who will give me experience. I have to get a plumbing job because I can do everything about plumbing.

Vusi: I learnt how to fix cars but I can’t get a job. I go 3 times a week looking for a job. Fixing cars is what I love. I am now making jewelry and wooden spoons. I sell it at a shopping mall. I give my mother taxi money. I buy groceries for the house. I have to buy the things I need to make my jewelry.

Banda: I worked at the sheltered workshop for many years. We had easy jobs to do and they paid us money for it. It was less. I want another job with more money.

The themes that emerged from vignette 2 were:

- Some participants undertook training in order to secure jobs.
- Some participants had intermittent work.
- Some participants engaged in sheltered workshop employment.
- Some participants became entrepreneurs.
- Some participants waited for long periods to secure jobs

7.4.1 Training undertaken by students to secure jobs

In a study carried out in the Limpopo Province in South Africa, it was found that youth who had some form of training or work experience were less likely to be unemployed (Dagume & Gyekye, 2016). From the participants’ accounts it appeared that they realized that in order to obtain a job, they needed to have a credential, skill or some form of training. *Bradley, Lunga, Tswele* and *Vusi* underwent training in their respective fields. Some of them had trained in more than one field. *Bradley* undertook private training in graphics but pursued a trainee programme in parks and gardens in the local municipality. He displayed much initiative and determination in enquiring about his field of interest from the local councillor and others. *Lunga* initially attended a private college that offered students with disabilities training in skills that are required in the workplace (I Can Corporate Solutions, 2017). Although he

obtained some training at the college, this did not enable him to find a job. He then undertook a security training programme in order to secure a job as a security guard. On completion of his training he obtained a temporary job at a shop. *Tswele* undertook a plumbing course at a private institution. He completed the course however he was unable to secure an in-service training opportunity which he needed in order to qualify to write his trade test and obtain a job thereafter. In the interim he obtained his driver's licence and became a driver for the family business. *Vusi* had some training in repairing cars, however, he was not successful in gaining employment with this skill.

All the participants attempted to obtain training in some field, largely from private institutions. This suggested that students with special educational needs have limited government managed training opportunities for them. It appeared as if these participants wanted to be skilled in the hope that they could obtain jobs, however, not all of them were successful even those with training. In South Africa there is no guarantee that graduates will find work as many of them are jobless (H Bhorat et al., 2013). It has been reported that postsecondary education can help individuals obtain employment and higher level occupations (Butler, Sheppard-Jones, Whaley, Harrison, & Osness, 2016; Cheatham et al., 2013). However, in South Africa there is no formal transition programme that facilitates the movement of students with special educational needs into further training options post school. There are limited post school training opportunities for them. Attending a private training institution is an option for those who can afford it, as *Tswele* did.

7.4.2 Some participants had intermittent work

Youth with disabilities have been found to have less work experience than their peers during high school and thereafter and often encounter many hurdles when trying to become independent (E. Carter et al., 2009; Wolf-Branigin et al., 2009). They often also have temporary employment or part time work and therefore paid less (Pagan, 2009). *Siya* held several jobs of short duration before he obtained the current one. His services were terminated in two previous jobs and he left two other jobs because he was not satisfied with the salary. *Tswele* also took on different jobs in order to remain employed. It was apparent that the participants experienced difficulty in

obtaining and maintaining steady employment. They often changed jobs for various reasons.

7.4.3 Some participants engaged in sheltered employment.

Banda engaged in sheltered employment for many years. He worked at a sheltered workshop supervised by a social worker and others. He was given manageable tasks to complete and paid minimally. He expressed his desire to earn more money. Sheltered workshops are said to be safe alternatives to the larger labour market option and they are less demanding in terms of work expectations (L. Hoffman, 2013). They are also able to provide work commensurate with the abilities of the individuals. According to J. Robinson (2000) paid employment is important to people with disabilities as it enhances their self-esteem and quality of life. One of the common issues of concern regarding the employment of people in sheltered workshops is that they are paid sub-minimum wages (L. Hoffman, 2013). Hence *Banda* left the workshop job in search of a better paying job.

7.4.4 Some participants became entrepreneurs.

Vusi was unable to obtain a job in motor vehicle repairs, which he trained in and loved. He reported going out three times a week to look for a job, but he was unsuccessful. He had to become an entrepreneur and made costume jewellery which he sold at a local mall. This gave him an income in the interim to support his household and sustain his business. It was apparent that *Vusi* did not give up on seeking employment but he started his own business. Entrepreneurship is being encouraged across the world as a means to facilitate economic participation amongst young people (I. Dempsey, 2009; United States Agency for International Development, 2013). Youth must consider self-employment as an option instead of persisting towards wage employment, especially when this is difficult to come by.

7.4.5 Some participants waited for long periods to secure jobs

Lunga waited for five months for a job and he was unsuccessful. He then undertook a security training programme in the hope that that training would enable him to obtain a job, which he did later obtain. *Vusi* learnt how to repair cars but he could not find employment one year after he left school. He resorted to self-employment. *Tswele* could not find work experience after he completed his plumbing course so, in the

interim he worked as a driver in his father's business and as a painter in the neighbourhood. In terms of employment and participation in the labour market, people with disabilities are an underemployed sector of the workforce and they have long periods of unemployment (Colella & Bruyère, 2011). Young adults with disabilities experience great difficulty in finding and maintaining employment (Holwerda et al., 2015; Lindsay, 2011). Young adults with special educational needs often do not have any form of qualifications or preparation for the world of work and will therefore not be considered for employment (M. Engelbrecht et al., 2017b).

7.4.6 Summary of the results of objective 2: To determine the nature of the participants' career/training and employment opportunities post school.

Some participants engaged in private training programmes (where parental financial support was available) in order to secure jobs whilst others waited for long periods to obtain jobs. Others held several short-term jobs, whilst some attended sheltered workshops. Some participants became entrepreneurs because they could not find employment. It was evident that the participants wanted to work and made attempts to seek training or employment. It was not an easy journey for them as they tried to traverse the bumpy path in search of work. They had a need to work and earn a regular income so that they could feel a sense of self-worth.

7.5 Objective 3: To explore the participants' adjustment to the world of work, for those who were employed.

Vignette 3

Bradley "I am a casual worker at the park. The people I work with are friendly. They are happy with me and I am happy there. They are patient with me. I am on a training programme. At first, they showed me the basics. Then my supervisor taught me the different tasks like trimming, weeding, spraying, digging, planting. It is not hard."

Siya: "I got a job at the fish market. I had no problems there. Then I started welding. It was difficult but they taught me the job. They helped me a lot. The boss was very good to me and I had no problems there. They still phone me to come back to work there. In my present job I am very happy".

Lunga: "I am a security guard at the shop. The people I work with are nice. When I made a mistake, the manager told me the do's and the don'ts. Then I listened to him and said it won't happen again. Then he saw that I'm serious and then he really treated me well after that.

Those who work with me are very understanding, good people. They don't discriminate. They don't look at me like I'm a slow learner".

Banda: "I cooked for a lady in Pinetown. I had no problems there. Then I cook for clients. They say they going to pass on my number to their friends...for events. Most of the people don't actually believe me when I tell them I went to a special school! They say I'm lying. But they enjoy my food and I get along well with them!

Akona "I am a caregiver at a school. I am very happy with my job and the people I work with. The children respect me and I understand them. I wake up early to come to work. I feel at home.

The following themes emerged from vignette 3:

- The participants reported positive feelings in their current work environments
- The participants received support from their work colleagues.

The above themes from vignette 3 were discussed below

7.5.1 The participants reported positive feelings in their work environments

All the participants appeared to have adjusted positively to their work environments. There were no negative reports. All the participants were happy in their current work environments. They reported that their employees were patient, helpful, supportive and non-discriminatory towards them. *Lunga* was pleased that he was not treated like a "slow learner." *Banda* had clients who were satisfied with his cooking and were not affected by the fact that he attended a special school. He shared a good relationship with them and he made them happy with his fine culinary skills and this in turn made him happy. *Akona* was eager to go to work each day as she was happy with her work colleagues and the respect that she received from the students. *Siya's* previous employer missed him and wanted him to return. This made him feel wanted and valued. The participants were aware that they came from a different schooling background as their peers. They also appreciated not being looked upon as having less ability, because they attended a special school. Consequently, they appreciated being treated well by their work colleagues and clients. Being accepted and treated

with respect and kindness by their employees and others, were important to them. A supportive workplace culture resulted in positive outcomes for the participants (LaMontagne et al., 2014). They experienced psychological wellbeing and happiness which contributed positively to their mental health.

7.5.2 The participants received support from their work colleagues

All the participants received much support and understanding from their work colleagues. Their colleagues assisted them in transitioning into the job, exercised patience and guided them where it was required. *Bradley* was a trainee who required much assistance in learning his new job and he was grateful for the help that he received from his supervisor. *Lunga* made mistakes at times, however he was grateful for his employer's response to his mistakes and he learnt from his experience. *Banda* was well supported by his clients in his cooking business and they helped him to expand by passing on his contact number to others. The participants were respected, were eager to go to work and felt that they were treated well and fairly, without discrimination. Young people with disabilities require appropriate supports that would maximise their opportunities towards independence (Stokes et al., 2013). A supportive environment greatly enhanced their ability to perform tasks efficiently and confidently. A supportive workplace culture also promotes good mental health of its employees, resulting in a feeling of happiness. The majority of persons with disabilities can live independent and productive lives, especially if they are provided with opportunities, resources and supportive environments that allow them independence, dignity, self-sufficiency and responsibility (Marumoagae, 2012).

7.5.3 Summary of the results of objective 3: To explore the participants' adjustment to the world of work, for those who were employed.

The participants adjusted well to their workplaces. They reported positive feelings of happiness and acceptance. They were pleased with the support that they received from their colleagues, as they adjusted to the workplace and learnt their new jobs.

7.6 Objective 4: To identify enabling factors that assisted the participants in obtaining and maintaining employment.

Vignette 4

Bradley: “My mum’s friend came to help me with the basics of graphics. I had other job offers but my aunt advised me to take on the one with the parks and gardens because I will be more secure with a government job in the long term. I can progress in my job and get a housing subsidy later, she said. My mum and I went to our local councilor to ask about the job. Mum helped me with my CV. I went for the interview and I got accepted. The people are good to me in my job. I want to read better for my job. I want to train others to do the job.”

Tswele: “My teachers at the plumbing college were very patient and helpful with me. They did not get angry because I could not read. They explained everything and told me how to learn it and to take pictures with my phone. My sister helps me with my CV and comes with me. She took me for reading help. My mother is happy with what I’m doing. Even my father is trying to get me a plumbing job in the municipality. He paid for my studies. My friend was teaching me on the laptop and helped me to get my driver’s license. I deliver to my neighbour’s tuck-shop and my father’s business. He also wants me to get my code 14 truck driving license. He knows someone who will teach me to draw. My neighbor teaches me to fix gates and other things. I can now also paint a house, fix cupboards and cut wood.”

Banda: “I cook for a living now. I learn from the cooking channel and I record the programmes. I started by cooking for my family first. I cook every day, they love it! My family supports me in my cooking business. Last week I cooked for my neighbor. I cook for other people now, for events and functions and they pass my number on to their friends so I get more business. They phone me when they need me. In the townships I can build something and cook.”

Lunga: “My stepfather told me about the security job. He said don’t just sit. You must go and find out. I was scared. I thought I will fail the security course. He told me they will help me. They really did and I passed. My mother said focus on the security job. My manager and others at work are good to me. They are understanding. My job is dangerous but my mother said I must pray to be safe everyday”

Siya: “My friends and my family helped me to find jobs. My brother will help me in my new job. You will get a job if you are willing to learn and are hardworking. I was not choosey about

jobs. I took anything. I tried to learn and I was able to do it and the people there helped me. A teacher came to look for me, regarding a job offer. The next day I went to look for him. He offered me the job as caregiver. I accepted it. The people here are good. I want to learn new things in my job and become a teacher aide.”

The following themes emanated from vignette 4:

- Family support enabled the participants to seek and maintain employment.
- Social/community support enabled the participants to acquire skills and to obtain and maintain employment.
- Academic support from the lecturers enabled the participants to study towards a qualification.
- Workplace support enabled the participants to maintain their jobs and to be happy in their work environments.
- Self-determined behavior enabled the participants to gain skills and find employment.
- Positive character skills assisted the participants to obtain and maintain employment.

The above-mentioned themes were discussed below:

7.6.1 Family support enabled the participants to seek and maintain employment.

Young people with disabilities require relevant support structures that will assist them in achieving independence (Stokes et al., 2013). Support systems are resources and strategies that promote the development, education, interests, personal well-being and functioning of an individual (Buntinx, 2013). Supportive parenting, familial relationships and community support enhance attainment of independence (Heckman & Mosso, 2014). This was evident in the participants' narratives. Many of the participants lived with and were supported by their wider families and siblings. Most of them reported family support during their search for employment and subsequently as well. It appeared as if family support encouraged and motivated them to persist in their endeavours. This made them brave and more confident to

pursue training and employment. They spoke fondly of all those who assisted them in their journey to obtain employment. *Bradley* received assistance from his mother during the enquiry, application and interview stages of his job. He was guided in making enquiries from relevant and influential individuals, in compiling his curriculum vitae and in managing his job interview. *Tswele* was accompanied by his sister on some interviews. He appeared to require support in this regard. She also helped him in acquiring reading lessons as they felt that this was important during his job applications. His father funded his studies and gave him a role in the family business while trying to secure a plumbing job for him. His father encouraged him to learn as many skills as possible (such as drawing and painting). The family of *Banda* supported all his attempts at becoming an entrepreneur in the cooking business. The stepfather of *Lunga* encouraged him to undergo training to become a security guard as he was unemployed for many months. He encouraged him to believe in himself. *Lunga* expressed his apprehension to his mother about his personal safety due to the nature of his job (a security guard). His mother re-assured him and advised him on how he could manage his fear. He expressed his reliance on his brother to assist and guide him in his new job. *Siya* also reported that his family helped him to find jobs. Supportive parenting and familial relationships enhanced their attainment of independence, in keeping with previous research findings. Parental involvement was a vital part of successful interventions for the participants. Parent involvement is a lasting feature in the lives of children with disabilities (Heckman & Mosso, 2014; Martinez et al., 2012). Encouragement and the provision of opportunities to practise independence and parents having high expectations improves the outcomes for the disabled child (Davies & Beamish, 2009). Parents with higher expectations provide their child with more opportunities, support, and encouragement to function more independently (M. Wehman et al., 2014). Many of the participants were supported in their career endeavours by their families and they were expected to make efforts towards gaining employment.

7.6.2. Social/community support enabled the participants to acquire skills and to obtain and maintain employment.

Community members play an important role in supporting young people with a disability. The participants enjoyed the support of neighbours and friends. They spoke proudly about all the people who helped them to attain employment. *Bradley*

received graphics lessons from his mother's friend who understood his special educational needs. The local councilor facilitated meetings with influential people to assist Bradley to obtain his trainee position. *Tswele's* friend assisted him in obtaining his driver's license by teaching him the required information on his laptop. Neighbours offered their time and skills to *Tswele* by teaching him how to fix gates, paint and make cupboards. He thereafter used these skills to earn money. *Banda* received support from his neighbors and friends for his cooking business. His friends helped him to expand his business by referring other clients to him. It was evident that community support played an important role in the career development of the participants. The culture of collective wellbeing as expressed in "ubuntu" was apparent. For people in the African culture, "Ubuntu" is a part of their worldview, a philosophy of shared collective humaneness and responsibility to one another (Chataika et al., 2015). The community understood their need to acquire a skill and a job and they supported the youth in this.

7.6.3 Academic support from the lecturers enabled the participants to study towards a qualification

Tswele was pleased with the support he received from his lecturers at the college. He reported that they were patient with him and understood his reading difficulty. They taught him alternative ways in which to learn the material (took pictures with his phone) and they provided additional explanations to assist him. Although *Tswele* experienced reading difficulties, with personal assistance from his lecturer, he succeeded in passing his theory exam. Students with intellectual disabilities experience cognitive challenges that impacts their ability to read (Connor, Alberto, Compton, & O'Connor, 2014). Reading failure impedes the academic progress of students and restricts future work opportunities for them (Girli & Öztürk, 2017). Teachers can assume a vital role in the transition to employment, by providing suitable educational guidance and training in preparing the young adult for the workforce (Eisenman, 2007; Holwerda et al., 2015).

7.6.4 Workplace support enabled the participants to maintain their jobs and to be happy in their work environments

Most of the participants displayed social intelligence (Niemiec, Shogren, & Wehmeyer, 2017) as they adjusted well socially and in their jobs. They did not report

any problems in their work environments and they were happy with the people they worked with. They appeared to be aware of what to do to fit into other situations such as the workplace and how to maintain good relationships with others. The participants were supported and taught tasks that they were unable to perform, by their work colleagues. *Bradley, Lunga and Siya* reported that the people in their workplaces were good to them. Personalized training of disabled employees can give them career satisfaction and positive work outcomes (Fornes, 2006, 2008). Mentoring can also assist them to advance in their careers (McDowall-Long, 2004). It has been found that a person with a disability can develop into a well-adjusted and productive worker in an atmosphere of acceptance, co-operation and goodwill.

7.6.5 Self-determined behavior enabled the participants to gain skills and find employment.

The participants often acted independently to direct their own future and this enabled them to gain skills and to find employment (self-determination). Self-determination refers to the act of making choices, solving problems and behaving in a self-regulated manner (M Wehmeyer et al., 2013). The participants exhibited these actions of self-determined behaviour and perseverance (grit), even in the face of difficulty. It has been found that the degree of grit an individual displays is more highly correlated with positive life outcomes than academic achievement (Duckworth & Eskreis-Winkler, 2013). Some of them undertook a training course or studied at a college. This was often their own choice, indicating their desire to acquire new knowledge or a skill in pursuit of a job eventually. The participants exhibited initiative and determination to establish their careers. They sought assistance from others and accepted guidance positively. *Bradley* approached the local councillor and other influential people so that he could be accepted into the training programme. While waiting for job experience, *Tswele*, obtained his driver's license and worked as a driver. He was happy to learn other skills as well, in the interim. *Banda* realized that his inability to read will not allow him to enroll for a formal cooking qualification, so he advanced his cooking skill by repeatedly watching the cooking channel on television. He used his auditory and visual senses to compensate for his inability to read and write. Self-determination (the act of making choices, solving problems and self-advocating) was active among the participants. Self-determination is an essential part of success in the workplace for people with disabilities and it is a product of the

individual and the environment (M Wehmeyer et al., 2013). The role of self-determination in promoting positive academic, social, and adult outcomes for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities has been highlighted (Hughes et al., 2013). Successful postschool outcomes including greater probability of employment and independent living are related to higher levels of self-determination (Agran & Hughes, 2008). Therefore, it is important to empower people with disabilities with essential self-determination skills to assist them to seek out or create opportunities for success.

7.6.6 Positive character skills were displayed by the participants

Positive character skills (positive attitude and behaviours) such as “conscientiousness, perseverance and openness to experience” are important attributes in the workplace (Kautz et al., 2014). Many of them displayed these enhancing characteristics which enabled them to work hard and persevere despite their challenges (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015). Some employers believe that positive character skills are more important than academic or technical skills. These positive skills enabled them to navigate their journey to employment. All the participants displayed much perseverance and courage in their attempts to study, search for opportunities and to seek employment. *Bradley* made several efforts to seek out the relevant people (councilor) whom he knew could help him the most, to attain the job that he desired. He eventually succeeded. All the participants showed a strong willingness to work, indicating that they wanted to engage productively in society. They displayed resilience after losing some of their jobs and then persisting to seek others. An openness to experience was seen as many of them wanted to learn more skills or start different jobs (Kautz et al., 2014). Humility was also evident as *Siya* said that he was willing to take on any job as he just wanted to work. Most of them displayed the skill “agreeableness” in the workplace as they socialized well with their colleagues and did not report any problems. They were conscientious about their jobs and willing to learn new tasks (*Bradley: I want to train others to do the job Siya: I want to learn new things*). They appeared to have understood the work culture and the need to be co-operative. Most of the participants displayed a desire for independence and self-reliance which was perhaps their way of establishing their identity (Hong, 2015).

7.6.7 Summary of the results of objective 4: To identify enabling factors that assisted the participants in obtaining and maintaining employment.

The participants enjoyed the benefits of many enabling factors along their journey towards employment and whilst in employment. They received much family and community support that enabled them to seek and maintain employment. Academic support from their lecturers, enabled them to study successfully, despite their challenges. Workplace support enabled the participants to maintain their jobs and to be happy in their work environments. Being happy was important to them. Self-determined behavior was evident and this enabled the participants to gain skills and find employment. Positive character skills enabled the participants to pursue training opportunities, to obtain jobs and to adapt to the workplace culture. The responses from the participants confirmed the need for support structures for people with disabilities and how this enabled them to experience success (Marsay, 2014).

7.6 Objective 5

To identify the challenges that the participants faced in search of and during employment.

Vignette 5

Siya: “It was not easy to get a job because I went to a special school and I don’t have a certificate to show anything. My friends also have this problem. The pay in my first job was very less, so I left. As a welder in the next job I had to work with fire even on very hot days. But I needed the money. I did many small jobs before I became a caregiver at a school.”

Banda: “It is hard coming from a special school because we don’t have a qualification. I tried looking for other jobs but they did not take me. They said I was too slow in typing. Some asked what grade I finished. Others said they can organize me a job but I don’t have a grade or a qualification. I can’t lie on my CV. Most of them don’t understand about a special school. I now cook for a living. I can’t read so I learn to cook from the food channel by watching and listening. My clients don’t believe that I went to a special school. I wish I had the papers to prove to the restaurant or hotel that I can cook well. They won’t take me without a qualification. I can’t even do cooking courses because I can’t read. I don’t feel nice about this because all my friends have nice paying jobs.

Lunga: “At the I can college maths was difficult. I enjoyed the cooking, washing and sweeping. After that I could not get a job. It is difficult coming from a special school. I tried to find a job at the shops

but they said they are full. Some asked about my grade and my CV. When they saw I was in a special school they made an excuse. They read your CV and you can tell from their facial expression, it changes. They undermine you. They say aiy he's just a slow learner. It's like there's no chance for you. I can learn. Some of them say they would call you and you know they won't and they did not. My present job as a security guard is dangerous but I need it. I got this job after 5 years.

Tswele "I am happy about my life, only reading is my big problem. I tried many things and went for brain tests. I went to the psychologist and doctor and even took pills. I took reading lessons but stopped because of money. I tried everything. Nothing helped. Not being able to read makes me sad. At the college I was very good with the practical part. The theory was difficult because of the reading. If I can read, I can get a job anytime because I can do anything. Now I need job experience so I can go for a trade test in plumbing. I don't know where I will get this. I am asking everybody for help. The trade test is very expensive. All my friends are working with nice jobs."

Akona: "When I finished school, I looked for a job at the shop but they did not have a space. I wanted to earn money. I feel bad. I wanted to be a social worker but I don't know how to read. At school I did not learn to read. I want to read. After 3 years I got a job at the school. My friend is at home for four years now without a job.

The themes that emanated from vignette 5 were:

- Inability to acquire work or experience, even with a qualification.
- Some participants were skilled at a task but did not have any official document to prove this.
- Attendance to a special school was a barrier to employment for them.
- The absence of a grade level, skills, a qualification or a certificate of achievement upon completion of schooling, was a barrier to obtaining employment.
- Poor ability or inability to read was a setback for some participants in studying further and in obtaining employment.
- Some participants believed that employees did not have sufficient knowledge about a special school.

The above-mentioned themes were discussed below

7.6.1 Inability to acquire work or experience, even with a qualification.

Most of the participants experienced difficulty in obtaining jobs, whilst those with some form of training experienced a similar difficulty. After having left school, the participants used their own personal resources to search for jobs or acquire some form of training. They did not report any post school employment support service that could have helped them. Some took on any job that was available whilst others were not successful at employment for long periods. *Tswele* obtained his plumbing qualification but could not secure work experience in order to undertake his trade test. He was despondent and was concerned about whether he would find work experience. In South Africa, before a student can become a qualified artisan in any trade, certain requirements have to be met (Artisan Training Institute, 2019). A trade test is the last stage before becoming a fully qualified artisan. Before the trade test can be undertaken, the relevant qualification in the theory aspect must be obtained from an accredited training provider and the student must have at least 4 years of relevant on the job practical experience (Sibaya Skills Training Centre, 2015). *Tswele* completed the theory part of his course. He was struggling to secure work experience. This could be due to the high rate of unemployment amongst the youth in South Africa (at 52,65 percent) (Trading Economics, 2019). Just 1,8 percent of persons with disability are employed (Soeker et al., 2018). *Tswele* could have been one of many youth with disabilities who experienced great difficulty in accessing the world of work, even with training. It is possible that *Tswele*, like many other youth, was attempting to make his transition into the labour market in a period of national economic downturn (South Africa was sliding into a recession at that time) and of high national rates of unemployment.

7.6.2 Some participants were skilled at a task but did not have any official document to prove this.

Banda expressed his desire to progress to a larger establishment such as a restaurant or a hotel as a chef, however, he could not acquire a formal qualification from an accredited institution (he could not read) to prove his culinary skill to the relevant employers. He believed that he would never be able to attain this and became despondent about his future. *Banda* established his own cooking business after having no success in obtaining a job. He skilled himself in cooking by watching the food channels on television. His learning strategy was to record and watch them

repeatedly. He now cooks for individuals and for events and he is well known for his culinary skills. Having attended a special school and not having any formal qualifications *Banda* was vulnerable to multiple exclusions, from work, socially and in other spheres of life (T. Shildrick, Macdonald, Furlong, Rowden, & Crow, 2012). He was unable to access jobs in larger establishments owing to his inability to prove his skill by writing or reading. This limited his growth personally, financially and in other respects. The outcomes on youth employment are dependent on skills (World Economic Forum, 2018). Perhaps students who are deficient in reading, can be assessed in an alternate way in order to enable them to achieve a qualification which they can use to access jobs (Connor, Alberto, Compton, & O' Connor, 2014).

7.6.3 Attendance to a special school was a barrier to employment for many of them

Some employers were reluctant to employ the participants because they attended a special school and had an intellectual disability (*Lunga: When they saw I was in a special school they made an excuse.*) They were deemed not competent enough. Labour market discrimination was evident here. As a result, the participants felt excluded, undermined and lost all hope of being given a chance to prove themselves as people who can work and perform tasks. Frequent barriers that prevent disabled people from accessing employment are attitudinal barriers (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2014). Some employees prejudge the capability of disabled people and are therefore not considered for employment (Harcourt et al., 2005; M. Lengnick-Hall, P. Gaunt, & M. Kulkarni, 2008). The classification of these participants as “intellectually impaired” appeared to have disadvantaged them and prevented more inclusive practices (Nilholm et al., 2013). Special schooling influences employment, labour market outcomes and wage perspectives (Higgins & Bruggemann, 2014). Students attending special schools for intellectual disabilities are subject to significantly reduced curricula and are therefore likely to exit school with fewer marketable skills that will reduce their employment outcomes. Further advancement through the education system is also impeded for them. Special school implies low quality education and therefore employers are likely to prefer graduates from regular mainstream schools even if the skills are similar. Studies have demonstrated positive effects of inclusive school environments on post school outcomes such as employment, as opposed to being in a special school (E. Cimera, 2010; D. Test et al., 2009).

7.6.4 The absence of a school grade level or a certificate of achievement upon completion of schooling, was a barrier to obtaining employment.

Prospective employees enquired about the grade level that they attained, the skills that they had acquired or a school leaving certification. These participants did not have a grade level upon completion of school and therefore could not fulfil a requirement of the job requirement. They also did not receive a school leaving certificate outlining the skills that they had acquired (*Banda: "It is hard coming from a special school because we don't have a qualification or a certificate."*) They were not considered for employment. This was a common concern amongst many of the participants. Many of them did not even attain the basic level of numeracy and literacy and this restricted work opportunities for them (Girli & Öztürk, 2017; McArthur et al., 2016). Having attended a special school and not having any qualifications these students were therefore vulnerable to multiple exclusions, from work, socially and in other spheres of their lives (T. Shildrick et al., 2012). Employees must be made aware of the benefits of employing people with special educational needs who have favourable character skills that can benefit the workplace (Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014).

7.6.5 The participants were unable to read

Many of the participants believed that their inability to read was a setback for them. Students with intellectual disability often have difficulty in learning to read (Koritsas & Lacono, 2011). *Banda* could not undertake formal training courses in cooking due to his inability to read (*I can't even do cooking courses because I can't read.*) Not having a credential prevented him from working in a larger establishment. *Tswele* expressed that although he was confident to undertake any job, his inability to read was an impediment to finding employment (*Not being able to read makes me sad. If I can read, I can get a job.*). *Akona* expressed her longing to become a social worker, however, due to her inability to read she could not pursue her ambition (*I did not learn to read. I want to read.*) She reported that she did not learn to read at school, possibly implying that this was where she should have learnt to read. Some participants experienced feelings of inadequacy due to their inability to read. *Tswele* expressed much sadness and a strong desire to be able to read. He began his interview with confusion and frustration at not being able to read well and made several references to it throughout the interview. He had undergone extensive

invasive tests and other evaluations, by several professionals, to determine the reason for his inability to read. He also took medication for a period of time and attended a reading programme in the hope that this would help him to read. Not being able to read is associated with feelings of anxiety, depression and low self-concept (Christie & Yell, 2008; McArthur et al., 2016). Their inability to read set them apart from their mainstream school counterparts. Most of the students with intellectual disabilities can learn to read with the implementation, by educators, of evidence based instruction in reading and instructional strategies (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2017; McArthur et al., 2016). This could have implications for the curriculum where teaching reading should therefore be given greater priority and attention.

7.6.6 Some participants believed that employees did not have sufficient knowledge about a special school.

Banda was of the opinion that employees and his colleagues lacked in knowledge about the functioning of a special school and the curriculum that is offered (*Most of them don't understand about a special school.*) According to him the employers could not understand why he did not have a grade level upon exit from the special school. This disadvantaged them as it resulted in his exclusion from employment and other opportunities to progress. This has implications for the school leavers and the type of school leaving reports that they are issued with, indicating a need to provide more useful information on the student's skills. Employers also need to be empowered with knowledge about students with special educational needs and the kind of school curriculum they are exposed to. Diversity training could be beneficial to them. Organizational staff needs to be educated about disability and its implications for a person in a work environment (Vornholt et al., 2018).

7.6.7 Summary of the results of objective 5: To identify the challenges that the participants faced in search of and during employment

The findings showed that the participants encountered several barriers and challenges in their efforts to obtain training and paid employment, post school. Some were unable to find work, in spite of having a qualification. Some were skilled at a task but could not obtain credentials to prove their skill. Attendance to a special school was a barrier to employment and it was a form of discrimination for them. Not having a grade level or a certificate of achievement upon completion of schooling,

restricted their options for employment. Poor ability or inability to read was a setback for some participants in studying further and in obtaining employment. Some participants believed that employers did not have sufficient knowledge about a special school and this disadvantaged them.

7.7 Objective 6: To determine the participants' desires, aspirations and expectations regarding their career, employment and achievements for the future.

Vignette 6

Bradley: "I want to eventually become a supervisor at the park. I will be in charge of this park and I will train new people. I love gardening and planting. I wish I had my own house where I could plant and landscape. They told me in the future I will get a housing subsidy so I can buy a house. I want to help my granny because she is old and cannot walk. My next goal is to get my driver's license. I will get a vehicle to drive later. I will also do more community work. I am on the youth committee for 2 years now. We assist with youth problems in the community, like drugs, prostitution, teenage pregnancy and abandoned babies. We arrange talks for the youth. I like to help people."

Siya: "I like being a caregiver to the children at school. But I want to learn more about the buses and become a teacher aide. I want to help out with other things not just my job. For the children, I want to see them learning how to make things that they can sell to earn a living later. The teachers must teach them skills that they can use to make money later. I too can teach them some skills. For the parents, they must love and take care of them and not doubt them. Don't stop believing in your child because he has a disability and think he has no future. He does have a future. He can learn to do something. Besides the teachers, parents too must teach their children to cook or bake so they can start a business. I also want to do my own sound business. It must get bigger. I want to use it in my church. I want to learn more about sound. I will find somebody from nearby to teach me'.

Tswele: "I did my P1 and P2 in plumbing. Now I have to do my trade test. I want the right plumbing job so I can be independent. I want to buy my own clothes. I don't want my father to do everything for me. I save my money and I buy my own things. All my friends are working and I am not. I feel bad. I also want to drive trucks, get my code 14 license. My friend taught me on the laptop and I got my licence. There's nothing I can't do. I can do plumbing, drive, do deliveries, fix gates, paint houses, make cupboards, anything. In the future I want to see myself high. I want a job, a house and a car.

Banda: "I want to stick to cooking. One day I would like to have my own restaurant. In the townships I can build something, cook everyday and get money. I also want to model. They want me because I have

vitaligo. It would be good to get paid every month, like my friends. The children from the special school should learn skills and some reading because they need to sign forms.”

Lunga: “I just want a stable permanent job. I would like to go to a bigger company maybe and become a manager of security. My job is not permanent. I want to work so that I can extend my mother’s house. I want to get my driver’s license. It will open more doors for me. But I need to save money for it.”

The themes that emanated from vignette 6 were:

- The participants’ desires were to obtain a stable, permanent job like their peers and receive a regular salary.
- The participants had personal goals which they wanted to fulfil.
- The participants had career goals which they wanted to achieve.
- Some participants expressed their desire to be independent.
- The participant’s beliefs were important.
- Some participants felt a sense of obligation to their families.

The above-mentioned themes were discussed below.

7.7.1 The participants’ desires were to obtain a stable, permanent job like their peers and to receive a regular salary.

It was found that young people with a disability have the same aspirations and hopes as other young people (Stokes et al., 2013). All the participants desired stable employment and a regular salary (*It would be good to get paid every month, like my friends.*). They wanted their abilities to be acknowledged and they were willing to work (*I just want a stable permanent job.*) (Billstedt, Gillberg, & Gillberg, 2005; Lindsay, 2010; Lysaght et al., 2012; Newman et al., 2009). In some studies, people with an intellectual disability reported that working was an important part of their lives and many of them wanted to have paid regular employment (Holwerda et al., 2015). They wanted to work and earn a salary like their friends. Emerson et al. (2009) have found little overall difference between young people with and without a disability in aspirations such as desiring more training or education and earning money. However, for young people with disabilities and those who are out of school, their daily lives constitute much uncertainty about their future and this impacts on their

aspirations, however, their aspirations still do matter as it has an important role in their everyday lives.

7.7.2 The participants had personal goals which they wanted to fulfil.

Some of the participants had personal interests which they wanted to follow. Self-determination and the freedom to pursue their declared interests and preferences is important for students (Agran & Hughes, 2008). Some wanted to obtain their drivers licenses and own cars. In this way they would be like their friends who drove cars. *Bradley* had a passion for gardening and he wanted to own a home with a garden wherein he can plant his favorite flowers and crops (*I wish I had my own house where I could plant and landscape*). *Siya* had a passion for sound and music. He wanted to acquire his own sound system that he could hire out at a fee (*I want to do my own sound business*). He needed a paying job to enable him to buy his equipment and fulfil his dream. *Tswele* dreamed about driving trucks and he wanted to obtain the relevant license for this (*I want to drive trucks, get my code 14 license*). *Banda* wanted to one day own his own restaurant which was an ambition that he wanted to achieve. This was success for him. *Lunga* wanted to extend his mother's house because the current one was too small for her (*I want to work so that I can extend my mother's house*). Most of the participants had high personal aspirations for themselves (*In the future I want to see myself high. I want a job, a house and a car*). Aspirations do matter, even if all of them are not fulfilled. Aspirations shape young people's lives, their present and future plans and their current realities (Crivello, 2015).

7.7.3 The participants had career goals which they wanted to achieve.

Emerson et al. (2009) have found little overall difference between young people with and without a disability in aspirations such as desiring more training or education. Their desires for aspects such as financial security and self-fulfilment, were the same desires that young people without a disability have (Wyn, Smith, Stokes, Tyler, & Woodman, 2008). All of the participants had personal and career goals which they were determined to achieve and they wanted to persevere at it. *Lunga* indicated his desire (*I would like to go to a bigger company maybe and become a manager of security*). *Bradley* also had his career goal (*I want to eventually become a supervisor at the park. I will be in charge of this park and I will train new people*). For him

becoming a supervisor was similar to a promotion and it would give him greater responsibility and a sense of achievement and progress. Siya wanted to become a permanent teacher aide (from the current position as a helper) and also learn more about the buses that transport the students (*But I want to learn more about the buses and become a teacher aide. I want to help out with other things not just my job*). It appeared as if they wanted to prove to themselves and others that they were capable of achieving more. They wanted to expand their roles, learn and take on more responsibilities. Tswele too had a plan for his career (*I did my P1 and P2 in plumbing. Now I have to do my trade test and get the right plumbing job*). The aspirations of all these participants were determined by the resources and support that was available to them (Yates & Roulstone, 2013). Less resources and opportunities restrained them from achieving more.

7.7.4 Some participants expressed their desire to be independent

It was not unusual that each participant had a deep desire for independence and self-reliance. These students felt that in order to establish their identity, they needed to prove themselves in their jobs and personally and this included becoming independent (Hong, 2015). Bradley wished to own a home (*In future I will get a housing subsidy so I can buy a house*). Others wanted to obtain their driver's licenses and their own vehicles (*My next goal is to get my driver's license*). This could give them the independence that they desired. Tswele was decisive about his wish to have his own job, house and car, to be independent and not rely on his father for his survival needs (*I can be independent. I want to buy my own clothes. I don't want my father to do everything for me. I save my money and I buy my own things*). He was spendthrift with his money and wished to support himself. He did not want to continually be a financial burden to his parents and therefore wanted to have a stable job. He had learned not to ask for items that were beyond his family's means (Crivello, 2015). A sense of autonomy can be seen in the desires and actions of most of the participants. They wanted to act according to their own interests and abilities and without undue influence from others (M. Ryan & Deci, 2017; M Wehmeyer et al., 2003). These participants, with the support from their families, made decisions about what was important to them and set themselves goals to be achieved. They acted on their interests and abilities and this made them feel good about themselves. Autonomy is a basic psychological need which when experienced

enables individuals to experience positive psychological benefits (Ferguson et al., 2014). Their volitional and self-initiating behaviours (attempts towards autonomy) were supported by their parents and siblings and this made them feel good (Deci, 2000; R. Ryan, 1995).

7.7.5 Feeling a sense of obligation to one's family

Some of the participants felt a strong sense of obligation to their families and expressed a desire to help their parents and others in their families, financially or through acts of kindness. Their sense of humanity could be seen in their love for and gratitude towards those who had supported and helped them in their journey towards independence. They showed kindness to family members. *Bradley* wanted to be of assistance to his granny (*I want to help my granny because she is old and cannot walk*). *Lunga* was indebted to his mother (*I want to work so that I can extend my mother's house*). Generally, the participants expressed appreciation for the care, love, guidance, encouragement and practical support that they received from their families and they wanted to help them in return (Baldwin et al., 2015).

7.7.6 Summary of the results of objective 6:

All the participants expressed goals and desires for the future. Their desires were to obtain a stable, permanent job like their peers and receive a regular salary. They had personal and career goals which they wanted to fulfil. Some participants expressed their desire to be independent. Some of them held firm beliefs about empowering children with disabilities, with skills. Some participants felt a sense of obligation to their families and they wanted to be of assistance to them, especially financially.

7.8 General summary of chapter 7

The aim of this chapter was to obtain thick, rich data on their post school career trajectories and how they interacted with their environment to achieve what they desired. In objective one they alluded to positive school experiences that assisted them later in the workplace. In objective two, they spoke about their desire to work and the difficulties they encountered in acquiring work. Some tried to obtain a skill by engaging in a training programme. In objective three they informed me of their positive work adjustment experiences where they experienced happiness and good feelings. Objective four allowed them to talk about the enabling factors of family, community, academic and workplace support that they enjoyed along their journey to

find work. Objective five revealed the many challenges that they experienced on their pathway to independence. They experienced discrimination and exclusion because of their special educational needs. Objective six provided them the opportunity to disclose their personal and career goals which they hoped to attain. These were discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 8: CREATING POSSIBILITIES

“The rhizomatic view of the world considers the whole inextricable combination of interrelated assemblages of individuals and groups and includes: humans, non-humans, material resources, non-material resources. The rhizome offers a novel way of perceiving our world and, in doing so, enables us to consider the interconnection of knowledge construction, society, culture, attitudes and/or values.” (Tillmans et al., 2014)

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I attempted to understand the findings of this study within the conceptual framework that was proposed in chapter three and within the realm of qualitative research, which this study was embedded in. This study explored the insights provided by the participants and the meanings that they attached to situations pertaining to the topic under study (Corbin & Strauss, 2010; H. Levitt et al., 2017). I explored their career trajectories, the forces they encountered, their lines of flight and how they intersected. It must be noted that their narratives were not just about their lives, but it let us into the goings on of the society and culture that they lived in (Q. Wang, Kim, & Qingfang, 2015). Therefore, experiences alone do not determine how we interpret them. Experience, identity and context interact with one another to produce meaning, as it did for the participants (Cook, 2012). The interaction of these variables became evident later. Critical disability studies have advocated for disability to be understood from the perspective of those who experience it (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011). Their voices should be heard (*Nothing about us, without us*). The participants with special educational needs revealed their lived realities during interviews and the outcomes of the objectives of the study were related to the theoretical framework and other perspectives presented in chapter three. Rhizomatic analyses are frequently being used in educational and other research to challenge traditional structures of power, to give voice to those who are less heard and to expose sensitive topics in different ways (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

8.2 The potential of the rhizome

In Disability Studies literature, there has been attempts to provide a more varied, collectivist and ensembled form of human capacity (Ben-Moshe & Magaña, 2014). Ability should be redefined by demonstrating potential and possibility in all individuals. We should pause, rethink of our efforts to provide all people with opportunities to live and prosper. This can be achieved by re-engineering our thoughts to achieve a different outcome. New ideology could be considered, one that allows for multiple ways of being (M. Shildrick, 2012). From a botanical perspective, the rhizome is an underground root system that has branches (proliferations) that spread out laterally in multiple directions, can connect in unforeseen ways and has no central point. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe the rhizome as a structure that is non-hierarchical and open -ended. From a philosophical perspective, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) viewed the rhizome as a “collective” of constantly changing, interconnected multiplicities, with no control system and which acts as a stimulant for altering the nature of one’s reality. The rhizomatic view of the world encompasses the whole inextricable combination of interrelated assemblages and linkages of humans, non-humans, material and non-material resources. This enables us to see the interconnection and interaction of knowledge creation, society, culture, attitudes and values and our relationship to the material world (Tillmans et al., 2014). This structure describes organizational activity, but also allows for re-appraisal of power and control (Lawley, 2005). Akin to the growth of a rhizome, rhizomatic mapping depicts a number of points that elaborate, shape and challenge each other. Readers are encouraged to create their own interconnecting routes (assemblages and linkages) or separate them (Hagood, 2009). These roots and connections are described as fluid, ubiquitous and networked. We do not know how far those off shoots extend as they grow to introduce new ideas that are dynamic in nature and non-linear. It is the proliferation of its growth that lends itself to the creation of new life (ideas). It also shows us how everything is interconnected in the process. Assemblages are resources that trigger action (Kennedy et al., 2013). It has been said that rhizomatic thinking needs to be present in our everyday thoughts, as the rhizomatic field site is dynamic and alive (Adkins, 2015; Douglas-Jones & Sariola, 2011). New concepts create new thinking and description, resulting in new possibilities for action.

In this chapter I employed the concept of the rhizome as a tool (metaphor) to present a non-linear analysis of the narratives of the participants and to further understand the various complexities in their lives, that may be material as well as discursive. A metaphor can open the way for new understanding and it has the power to create a new reality (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). The concept of the rhizome was used by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to explore new ways of thinking, to challenge hierarchies and deprivilege centres of power and authority. They were concerned with the conceptual changes that could result from rhizomatic thinking. Nomadic thought was encouraged where one should break free from traditional ways of thinking and working and adapt and constantly evolve in thought and action as the need dictates (Mackness, Bell, & Funes, 2016). Theoretical space was created and experience was linked to theory. I wanted to create a new epistemology, in which the concepts came alive instead of just being. The objectives of the study were used as a structure to further illuminate the findings and to explore the assemblages and linkages in the lives of the participants. Interview quotes (in italics) were included in the interpretation of the data. In this way could better empathize with the participants and be a part of the rich description that they offered (Kendall, 2014).

8.3 Objective 1: To explore the participants' school experiences in preparation for the world of work

In the outcome of objective one the participants expressed largely positive learning experiences from their school education. These positive experiences allowed them to either secure some form of work or some entrepreneurial activities (*Siya; I made a shelf for the office and a cupboard. I built a Wendy house to do business*) from which to derive an income. Some participants learnt soft skills (*Siya: self-discipline, respect is important to do the job*) which employers tend to favour, especially in a complex work situation and working with and amongst people (Suneela, 2014). Some wished that they could have learnt skills that they liked (*at school I wanted to learn about a sound system so I can hire it out*).

8.3.1 Becoming a rhizome researcher

I set out to become a “rhizome researcher” to determine what created those positive feelings in the participants. I wanted to go beyond the constructed binary of either/or and reconstruct and reframe my thinking, to generate new perspectives (Clarke & Parsons, 2013). I too wanted to grow in a rhizomatic fashion. I wanted to identify the

assemblages and linkages in the participants' experiences. I saw the school environment as the field site. The school community (teachers, students, support staff) was the actors who initiated and created events and altered trajectories of the students. The concept of the rhizome acted as a tool to understand the various factors that contributed to the participants' positive feelings. I attempted to find the off-shoots for positive feelings. An assemblage analyses was conducted to identify what the linkages were that held their feelings together and how they interacted with one another (multidirectional links). Was it the teachers, was it their friends, was it the activities that they engaged in that brought about those good feelings? These assemblages were not meant to be hierarchical in nature, but deserving of equal respect and consideration (Clarke & Parsons, 2013). Also, these assemblages were resources used by the participants to achieve their desired outcomes. However, these findings were not static, rather they were dynamic in nature and could have changed with other researchers. Their school experiences were an "inextricable combination" of their own attitudes, values and actions as well as of those around them (teachers, peers, other staff). These positive feelings could have arisen from the activities that the participants engaged in as well as a combination of other factors at the school. What were these factors and what was I missing (different affects)?

8.3.2 School as a rhizome

School could be seen as a non-human entity (venue) for providing human feelings of stability, predictability, safety and enjoyment for these young people (Tilbury, Creed, Buys, Osmond, & Crawford, 2014). School was an innovative and productive assemblage for them. I needed to ask: what did school do for them? It expanded their imagination and horizons, raised their education and created future aspirations for them. The classroom was an assemblage with human (teachers, students) and non-human (writing implements, writing surfaces, educational materials) entities (Freitas, 2012). The classroom as a rhizomatic assemblage included many kinds of agents (off-shoots), none of which were more important than the other, but supported each other. The human and non-human elements interacted with each other to create positive feelings in the participants. Participation in school was not just about utilitarian gains such as grades, certificates or jobs. Education is an experience that spans many years of one's life, an integral part of daily life and a critical activity that

facilitates positive child to adult growth and development. Students should have the opportunity to enjoy school even if they are not academically strong (as in the case of these participants). Schooling provided an avenue for social development through participation in group activities, socialising during recess time, establishing friendships and relationships and developing a feeling of school belonging and pride (Gilligan, 1998). Their rhizomatic school site was dynamic and alive. All of these elements could have contributed to their positive feelings at school. As an unknown author once said: "Education should not be about the filling of a pail but rather the lighting of a fire." At all levels of education, learning should be exciting and ignite a spark in the students. Teachers too, greatly contributed to the care and support of children, creating positive relationships between them. This could have enhanced the students' engagement with schooling (B. Allen & Vacca, 2010). School engagement was the student's sense of being part of the school, a positive attitude, level of teacher support and care, established friendships, motivation to learn, compliance with school rules and participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

8.3.3 Maintaining positive feelings of students

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage where the youth try to construct an identity as capable and socially integrated individuals who want to learn and develop (M. Wang & Fredricks, 2014). Active engagement in school promotes the development of skills, competencies and values that will facilitate successful transition into adulthood. School engagement is achieved by the interaction of behavioural (participation in academic activities), emotional (identification with the school, a feeling of belonging, enjoyment of learning and success at it) (Voelkl, 1997) and cognitive components (self-regulated learning) (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). These three components operate within students and they determine their response to learning and how they feel and think. The self-system model (a motivational framework) posits that the extent to which adolescents are behaviourally, emotionally and cognitively engaged with school will determine how they cope with difficulties and obstacles in school. The participants in this study had a positive sense of engagement with the school and they felt connected to the institution resulting in positive reactions from their teachers which in turn made them feel good (M. Wang & Fredricks, 2014).

Strategies for enhancing and maintaining the school engagement of young people is important so that they can be provided with social, life- skills and intellectual rewards that positive school experiences can offer (Fredricks et al., 2004). We as teachers and support professionals should question our daily practices and implement alternatives that would meet our students' educational needs. As the capability model of disability maintains that every student should be capacitated with a threshold of skills that can be acquired (Mitra, 2018). Making connections (off-shoots) at school yielded a satisfying school experience that offered them rewards later in life. Raising or maintaining educational aspirations is crucial for students as it justifies their effort in trying to learn (*Siya: I want to learn more, not just about my job*). This kept them motivated and feeling positive. Student motivation was fundamental to engagement and a feeling of connectedness. As a rhizomatic plant needs to be kept close to the surface to flower, so does student engagement in the classroom need to be at the forefront of the teacher's planning in order to bring out the best in them. As the concept of the rhizome suggests, analysis should take place in a multidirectional manner. The rhizome's multiplicity refers to the range of strategies and alternative teaching methods that can be employed, thereby linking many related facets together. The assemblage theory encourages new ways of approaching situations and considering other possibilities in a more fluid form. Challenges to traditional ways of teaching and learning lie at the heart of rhizomatic learning. Teachers need not be the only ones to impart knowledge (unidirectional), but they should gain knowledge from students and use this to create new structures and opportunities for them. One needs to listen to the thoughts of the students to determine their needs and preferences (Wiger et al., 2015). *Siya* alluded to his entrepreneurial inclination (*I built a shelf and I want to learn more about sound*) and this could have been further developed had his preferences been known and incorporated into the curriculum (Mahadea et al., 2011). Rhizomatic learning challenges the traditional ways of teaching and learning and ultimately leads to curriculum modification.

Like the growth of the rhizome, one has to be open to new possibilities and new ways of being (L. Fox & Alldred, 2015). Teachers need to ask: what more can we do to assist the students to be better prepared for the world of employment when they leave the safe haven of the school and how can we do it differently? Perhaps they could have been taught a greater variety of skills that could have benefitted them

later, be it in the work place or in self-employment. The participants did not have work experience while at school. Curriculum composers need to consider the value of work experience in preparation for the world of work. Rhizomatic teachers explore new ideas, they work in the middle to synthesize students' interests, needs and the curriculum goals (creating more assemblages). Teachers can create a lived curriculum that facilitates new ways of becoming, even among constraints (Clarke & Parsons, 2013). The curriculum needs to constantly reconstruct itself, just as the rhizome responds to changing environmental conditions, to make it flexible with multiple entry and exit points (Tillmans et al., 2014). This approach to education could create positive feelings in students and respond to their educational and emotional needs.

8.3.4 Positive youth development perspective

The “positive youth development” perspective has been proposed and has moved from a view of adolescence as problematic to a focus on the strengths of the youth and what they can achieve (Crocetti, Erentaite, & Zukauskien, 2014). Within this model, the “Five Cs” were highlighted and should be used to develop the youth (Porter, 2010). These five components were: competence, confidence, connection, character and caring. Competence refers to one's ability in the social, academic and vocational realms. Confidence is an internal sense of positive self-worth. Connection denotes a positive bond with the people around the person (home, school). Character refers to respect for people and rules and having a sense of right and wrong. Caring indicates a sense of sympathy and empathy for others. The positive youth perspective has been proposed as a model that can be applied to youth. This model can also be applied to students with special educational needs by engaging them in activities to promote the five Cs (such as civic or voluntary work). This approach seeks to identify and build actions based on the strengths of youth, thereby enabling youth to follow a positive and empowering trajectory in life.

8.4 Objective 2: To determine the nature of the participants' career/training and employment opportunities post school.

The participants' career paths could be likened to the growth of the rhizome. Like the rhizome that extended itself in multiple directions, so did their career paths. Their paths were dynamic and fluid (*Vusi: I love to fix cars but I now make jewelry and spoons*) and created new possibilities for them (*Siya: I want to learn more*). The

outcome of objective two indicated that some participants engaged in private training programmes (where parental financial support was available) in order to secure jobs whilst others searched or waited for long periods to obtain jobs. Others held several short-term jobs, whilst some attended sheltered workshops. Some participants became entrepreneurs because they could not find employment. It was evident that the participants wanted to work and made attempts to seek training or employment. It was not an easy journey for them as they tried to traverse the bumpy path in search of work.

8.4.1 Career trajectory as a rhizome of experiences

Career development is a complex, multi-faceted lifelong process of an individual's career experience. Career development is likened to the growth of the rhizome. The trajectory of a career can grow in different directions, not necessarily linear in nature. All of them provided accounts of their attempts at entering the world of employment (*Lunga: I work for a security company; Tswele: I did a plumbing course at the college* Here too; their career trajectory comprised an "inextricable combination of interrelated assemblages". Their jobs, their capabilities, their actions and interactions with others constituted their assemblages. *Tswele's* career took this route (*roof?*) when he *branched* out into different paths when he could not obtain practical plumbing training (*I became a driver, I fixed gates, painted*). None of these rhizomatic branches was an end to itself as *Tswele* moved from one to the other and also wanted to go back to his original preference. Such is the nature of assemblages; they are open ended and productive and can produce different outcomes (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Career development for individuals with disabilities presents restrictions on career choice owing to their disability (Hershenson, 1996). For these participants, establishing a career and finding employment was important to them too.

A life course perspective to work considers people's work paths (Korhonen, Zittoun, & Komulainen, 2019). This occurred in various settings and within diverse spheres of experiences for the participants. Work itself was an assemblage for them. It created new reality and made new connections for them. Work shaped their lives and became a resource and a tool for those engaged in making sense of their work paths. Paid employment was a fundamental stage of transition into adult life. Work

enabled them to meet their needs. It is made up of about one third of one's conscious experience from which one derives a sense of identity, establish relationships and develops one's self esteem (Markiewicz, Devine, & Kausilas, 2000; Pierce & Gardiner, 2004; M. Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014). It is also a means through which individuals survive, obtain power, connect socially with others and gain self- determination and well-being. Therefore, obtaining paid employment was important to the participants.

8.4.2 Providing capabilities to students

The capabilities approach to disability highlighted human functioning and capabilities (Mitra, 2018; Nussbaum, 2006). If people's lives are evaluated according to the capabilities they possess, we should therefore strive to equip them with as much abilities or skills as is required, so that they can be included in society. Furthermore, these skills need to be relevant to the needs of the labour market in order to enable employment (Woessmann, 2014). The concept of the rhizome is the tool that we can utilize to work with the different stakeholders (education, health, public works, business etc) to ensure that the capability of students at school level are enhanced (by way of academic and skills and socio-emotional development) and providing opportunities for developing capabilities post school (apprenticeships etc). In this way their threshold of abilities can be achieved. Like rhizomatic growth, there should be no hierarchy amongst the various stakeholders in education of students, but equal partners who can collaborate with each other to produce favourable outcomes for training and employment of young people. The opportunities to develop capability should not be thwarted by financial constraints of students. Many of the participants could not afford to enrol in private institutions for some form of training, resulting in their being disadvantaged. This is where disability intersected with socioeconomic status to yield poorer outcomes for those who were affected by poverty or who were not financially able. The main political and social goal should ensure that every person (disabled or non-disabled) should receive above a threshold level of capability. This can be achieved for most people with disabilities if appropriate social policies are designed and implemented. For those who will not be able to reach this threshold, however, attempts should be made to strive for as many thresholds as possible or create new solutions for them

(rhizomatic solutions). Effective education and training is necessary to equip people who have disabilities with appropriate marketable skills (Marsay, 2014).

8.4.3 Being proactive, creating assemblages and new possibilities

The active model of disability maintains that people with disabilities should not be powerless and passive to act on the restrictions that disability imposes on them. Those with disabilities should control and take responsibility for their own lives and limit the effects of their own disabilities. They are encouraged to engage in self- help activities. Like the rhizome that grows off shoots and assemblages, the participants were innovative and thought of new ways of being and created their own assemblages. There were multiple entry ways into the assemblages thereby facilitating transformation in their thoughts (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Many of the participants in this study tried to help themselves in their circumstances. *Bradley* sought out the people who could help him obtain the job that he desired (*I went to my local councillor and spoke to her*). He worked on his curriculum vitae that was required for his application. He was also willing to take lessons in graphics, an additional skill that could facilitate employment for him (*I did graphics training at home with a private tutor*). *Tswele* engaged in several productive activities (*driving, delivery, painting, making cupboards*) while waiting for job experience. *Vusi* could not get a job so he became an entrepreneur (*I make jewellery and wooden spoons and sell it*). It therefore can be seen that the participants were proactive in efforts to help themselves in the interim. They created their own interconnecting routes (*roots?*) to create career paths for themselves.

8.5 Objective 3: To explore the participants' adjustment to the world of work, for those who were employed

For the participants, gaining entry into the world of work was a milestone that they achieved. For most of them it was their first working experience and their first encounter to have met the demands and expectations of a work environment. People with disabilities and the people around them negotiate their interactions in order to yield an outcome that they see as being good. The outcomes may appear to be ordinary, but they are important as they determine how disabled people view themselves and how they are viewed by others (Curran et al., 2018). In the workplace the daily lives of disabled people can result in both obstacles (such as the

physical environment) and opportunities that will influence their adjustment to the workplace. Obstacles and opportunities can create disabling and enabling environments. During this objective it was important to determine what factors made it possible for the participants to adjust to the world of work. What were their linkages and assemblages that helped them to adjust? Were there many offshoots for them? Did they create their own interconnecting routes to adapt to the workplace? Let us illuminate the workplace rhizome as the assemblages that they used could have influenced their adjustment there (Foster, 2007; Foster & Fosh, 2010).

8.5.1 The work adjustment process

Work adjustment is defined as the product of the interaction between the employee and the work environment (Hershenson, 1996). As with the social model of disability, the role of the environment is highlighted. Work adjustment for individuals with disability is important as their career and employment choices are limited. According to a theory of work adjustment (Hershenson, 1996), three components are present in it. The first is task performance which is the quality of one's work output. The second is the behaviour and personality of the employee. The third is work satisfaction according to the employee. Regarding the quality of their work, most of the participants reported that they did not have any problems pertaining to this and they were willing to learn the job (*Siya; They are happy with me; They phoned me to come back there to work*). An individual's social wellbeing at work is influenced partly by their personality and own characteristics (Bryson, Forth, & Stokes, 2014). As an example, the characteristics "openness to experience" (*Siya: I want to learn more about the buses*) and "conscientiousness" (*I took any job. I tried to learn and I was able to do it.*) were displayed by the participants. These two "big five" dimensions of personality were shown to influence feelings of job satisfaction and happiness. Most of them displayed the skill "agreeableness" in the workplace as they socialized well with their colleagues and did not report any problems. They appeared to have understood the work culture and the need to be co-operative. Some understood the importance of soft skills such as "discipline", in the workplace (*I learnt self-discipline and respect to help me in the future*). Their positive character skills helped them to engage in self-help actions and take control of their lives, as proposed by the active model of disability. Pertaining to their work satisfaction, most of the participants were happy with their jobs. They met all three requirements of work adjustment.

8.5.2 Feelings of happiness and acceptance

The participants adjusted well to their workplaces. They reported positive feelings of happiness and acceptance (*Bradley: They are happy with me and I am happy there*). Work not only provided income and socio-economic position for the participants, but it also positively impacted their socialization, the development of identity and the building of social connections at the workplace (*Banda: I get along well with them. Akona: I am happy with my job and the people I work with*) ((LaMontagne, Keegel, Louie, & Ostry, 2010). Social connectedness created feelings of relatedness and companionship with their work colleagues (R. Lee & Robbins, 1995). The feeling of social connectedness and social affiliation in the workplace, is a strong predictor of happiness and subjective well-being (Myers, 2000). Workplace well-being refers to happiness and job satisfaction (Keyes, 2005; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014). Their good feelings in the workplace acted as an assemblage for them by creating happiness.

Furthermore, in keeping with the tenets of the social model of disability where the environment influences one's functioning, they were well received by their colleagues who assisted and supported them in their new environment (*Bradley: They are happy with me and taught me the basics; Siya: They were good to me, they taught me the job*). Their colleagues (assemblages) in the work environment supported their work adjustment process (Ritter et al., 2014). Environmental support and acceptance could have contributed to their subjective feeling of wellbeing and happiness at work. They were pleased with the support that they received from their colleagues at work, as they adjusted to the workplace and learnt their new jobs. Young people with disabilities require appropriate supports that would maximise their opportunities towards independence (Stokes et al., 2013). A supportive environment greatly enhanced their ability to perform tasks efficiently and confidently. According to a theory of work adjustment (Hershenson, 1996), the environment influences the work adjustment process. According to this theory, the environment is made up of behavioral expectations of the employer from the employee, skill requirements for the job and rewards and opportunities (money, social networking). The fact that their employers and clients were happy with them implied that they met the behavioral expectations of the employer (*They are happy with me; he treated me well*). This highlighted the interrelated assemblages and interdependence between individuals.

The employers' satisfaction with them contributed to the participants' feelings of happiness. The participants were also able to perform their jobs successfully and they were happy with their work colleagues. They were therefore content with their work environment, leading to good adjustment.

8.5.3 A job provides purpose and meaning to life

Meaningful job activities assist people to live a fulfilled life and to integrate into society (Soeker et al., 2018). Work provided the participants with purpose and meaning, thus enhancing their self-esteem and giving them a feeling of contentment, resultant good feeling and better quality of life. This highlighted the relationship between humans and non-human material resources such as jobs and the interdependency between the two. The participants were eager to go to work (*I wake up early to come to work*) indicating that they felt a sense of purpose and fulfilment. This too could have supported their process of adjustment. Work created connections and possibilities for them, for their future. There are ways in which employees can enhance their work experience in an attempt to feel a greater sense of purpose, meaning and well-being. One such way is called "job crafting conceptualization" (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014). This can be likened to an assemblage of the rhizome and it was a resource that Siya used in his job. Job crafting refers to the positive ways in which employees can change their job tasks in order to enhance the joy, meaning and satisfaction they attain from their jobs and in so doing increase their wellbeing. Job crafting is a form of proactive behavior where the employee shapes his/her work experience to align with his/her personal needs, desires and values (A. Grant & Ashford, 2008). This revealed the interconnection between knowledge construction and the participants' culture and values. Job crafting has the potential to improve well-being (purpose, meaning and value) at work, to increase their enjoyment or satisfaction and to connect with more people at work (establish relationships). Individuals also craft their job to maintain control over their work (self-determination), to create a positive self-image for themselves in their work and to work not just for material gain but for fulfilment and enjoyment. This led to work satisfaction and hence happiness amongst some of the participants. The extent to which employees engage in job crafting will determine the extent to which their intrinsic needs are satisfied at work (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014). By

satisfying one's needs at work, one will move towards a positive and better state of mental health that will lead to a happy and well-adjusted individual in the workplace.

The participant, *Siyanda*, displayed job crafting when he wanted to learn other tasks in addition to what he was already engaged in (*I want to learn new things in my job*) He wanted to learn about the buses and become a teacher aide. This kind of job crafting is called "task crafting" and refers to making changes to the number or type of activities one completes on the job (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Task crafting could have been an attempt by *Siyanda* to initiate change and redefine his job in order to enhance his work enjoyment and purpose. Engaging in more tasks and possibly more challenging ones may have been more desirable to him, satisfying his intrinsic need and providing him with greater job fulfilment (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014). Task crafting as an assemblage transformed his job into a new experience and gave him more possibilities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). *Siyanda's* job crafting and the proactive measures taken by his colleagues as well, supported the basic premise of the active model which encouraged self-help actions.

8.4 Objective 4: To identify enabling factors that assisted the participants in obtaining and maintaining employment

The participants enjoyed the benefits of enabling factors along their journey towards obtaining employment and whilst in employment. Their family and community opened up a rhizome of growth and possibilities for them. Akin to the growth of a rhizome, rhizomatic mapping of their career trajectories depicted a number of points that elaborated and shaped each other. The kinds of support that they received were their interconnected resources and assemblages. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explained, it is not enough to know what assemblages are, but rather what do they do and how productive they can be. I set out to determine what the participants' assemblages were and what roles they played in their career trajectories. They received much family and community support that enabled them to seek and maintain employment. Academic support from their lecturers, enabled some of them to engage in training programmes successfully, despite their challenges. Workplace support (workplace rhizome) enabled the participants to maintain their jobs and to be happy in their work environments. Let us delve deeper into the various rhizomes of support that assisted and shaped them.

8.4.1 Family/community support received by the participants

Most of the participants enjoyed support from their families and community during their journey in seeking employment (*My sister helped me with my CV; My family supports me in my business*). Tswele's neighbor realized that Tswele was in need of learning a skill to enable to earn a living, so he taught him to fix gates and other skills. Here the culture of collective wellbeing or "ubuntu" was evident where there was a philosophy of shared collective humaneness and responsibility towards fellow family members and the community (Chataika et al., 2015). The family and the community were compassionate towards each other's needs and assisted where they could. Those who underwent training programmes received guidance and support from their lecturers. It can be seen that environmental support was important to the participants as it enabled them to acquire skills and make progress towards attaining employment. The biopsychosocial model of disability highlighted the role of the environment in enabling an individual with a disability (Verbrugge & Jette, 1994). The environment can act as a hindrance or an enabler to people. The participants were fortunate to have had a supportive environment that enabled them to achieve their goals. The skills that they learnt were the material resources that enabled them to obtain their goals, again highlighting the inextricable relationship between humans and the material environment.

8.4.2 Workplace support received by the participants

The workplace acted as a rhizomatic field site that offered them a rhizome of assemblages to thrive in. These assemblages emanated from the organization itself or from the employee. Most of the participants enjoyed the support of their work colleagues (assemblages) in the way of assistance and guidance (*Bradley: The people are good to me in my job; Lunga: My boss is understanding*). These supportive behaviours offered comfort and other psychological resources to them to manage their stigmatized entities (such as those with disabilities). This kind of psychosocial support was important for them as they could have felt excluded if this was lacking (Reason, Millar, & Scales, 2005). Social support is associated with enhanced psychological well-being (Turner, 1981), reduced stress (G. King, King, Rosenbaum, & Goffin, 1999) happiness and success in life (G. King, Cathers, Polgar, Mackinnon, & Havens, 2000). In workplaces, individuals with disabilities must be

integrated into the general social networks to help them to fulfil their need to belong to the organization. In this way a fully inclusive culture is created in the organization and there is more likely to be an increased tolerance for those with differences. Diversity training on disability can improve acceptance, decrease prejudice, alter mindsets and decrease destructive stereotypes (Procknow & Rocco, 2016). Regular sensitivity training can promote cohesion amongst divergent employees. Socially supportive employers had a positive impact on the lives of their employees as it helped them to achieve their goals (Sabat et al., 2015). The participants reported that they were happy and wanted to learn more in their workplaces. Biopsychosocial support structures that create enabling work environments are essential for people with disabilities to live, learn and work. Both the family/community and workplace support assemblages depicted nonlinear interconnections in the lives of the participants, that enabled new possibilities for action (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). There was an interdependency between the participants and individuals in the workplace.

8.4.3 Self-determination behaviour in action

Many of the participants displayed self-determined behavior (employee assemblage) and this enabled many of them to gain skills and find employment (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015; Durlak et al., 2011; Kautz et al., 2014). Self-determination is correlated with desirable adult outcomes, including obtaining suitable employment (Tuckwiller & Dardick, 2015). These self-determined behaviors involved interaction with other people (*I went to the councilor for help*) or the use of material resources (*I took pictures with my phone*). This highlighted the “inextricable combination of interrelated assemblages between human and non-human resources.” They created their own interconnecting routes (rhizomatic assemblages and linkages) in order to pursue their goals and manage their circumstances. Their self-determined behavior demonstrated their varied attempts at making their lives work for them and represented the ensembled form of human capacity which opened up possibilities for them. *Bradley* went to his local councilor to obtain more information about the job that he desired. Having obtained the job, he also intended to improve his reading ability so that he can perform his job better (*I want to read better for my job*). *Tswelle* tried to compensate for his reading difficulty by engaging in innovative ways to learn at the college (*I took pictures with my phone*) (assemblage). He was also willing to learn as

many skills as possible in order to earn a living (*plumbing, driving, drawing, fixing, painting, cutting wood*). *Banda* found a way to circumvent his inability to read recipes to develop his cooking skill by watching the food programmes on television repeatedly, using his visual and auditory senses to learn to cook. They acted independently to direct their own future. Here too, in keeping with the active model of disability, they engaged in activities to help themselves and to improve their circumstances. All people entering the world of work benefit from knowing their strengths, limitations and acquiring market related skills (Marsay, 2008). Their self-determined behavior also enabled them to demonstrate “ableism”. They used their strengths to achieve what they wanted and consequently became quite able. Disability was redefined by demonstrating capacity, potential and possibility in all individuals as well as multiple ways of being (M. Shildrick, 2012).

8.4.4 Positive character skills of the participants

Positive character skills (positive attitude and behaviours) enabled the participants to pursue training opportunities, to obtain jobs and to adapt to the workplace culture (Kautz et al., 2014). These skills acted as assemblages for them and facilitated the achievement of their goals. The assemblage was an open ended productive resource which assisted them (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). They displayed perseverance despite their limitations (not being able to read and having an intellectual impairment). *Bradley* persevered to obtain the job that he desired (*I went to the councilor for help*), *Lunga* studied and passed his security course exam (*I thought I will fail the exam but I passed*) and *Tswele* completed the theory course with help (*they explained everything and told me how to learn it*) and undertook several other jobs while he searched for practical training in plumbing. They displayed grit which broadly refers to persistence in the presence of challenges and it indicates a level of motivation (Tuckwiller & Dardick, 2015). These positive character skills extended to their workplaces as well. They were conscientious about their jobs and willing to learn new tasks (*Bradley: I want to train others to do the job Siya: I want to learn new things*). Their positive character skills gave them a sense of job satisfaction (*I am happy here*). Their positive character skills became a strength which enabled them to overcome their disability. They resisted a disablist attitude (Rocco, 2011).

8.5 Objective 5: To identify the challenges that the participants faced in search of and during employment

The outcome of this objective showed that the participants encountered several barriers and challenges in their efforts to obtain training and paid employment, post school. Some were unable to find work in spite of having a qualification (*Tswele: I don't know where I will get job experience*). Some were skilled at a task but could not obtain credentials to prove their skill (*I wish I had the papers to prove that I can cook well*). Attendance to a special school was a barrier to employment and it was a form of discrimination for them (*Siya: It was not easy to get a job because I went to a special school*). Not having a grade level or a certificate of achievement upon completion of schooling, restricted their options for employment (*I don't have a certificate to show anything*). Poor ability or inability to read was a setback for some participants in studying further and in obtaining employment (*Banda: I can't even do any cooking courses because I can't read*). Some participants believed that employers did not have sufficient knowledge about a special school and this disadvantaged them (*Banda: Most of them don't understand about a special school*).

8.5.1 The continuum of ability and disability

Critical disability studies maintain that in reality most of us live in the midst of ability and disability (Goodley, 2018). We occupy spaces (family, schools) in which ableism is held in esteem and dis-ableism is generated. This type of knowledge construction about individuals is constructed by society and their attitudes and values (Tillmans et al., 2014). Most schools are built upon achievement and progress. The best performing students receive the most accolades whereas the academically weaker ones struggle along, silently. At the same time, some schools create disability and categories, where disability is more present than absent (as in special schools). The participants in this study attended a special school for students with special educational needs. Although they were happy there, this separation immediately set them apart from their mainstream counterparts. Most of them were removed from mainstream education, as they did not cope academically, and placed in a special school in the hope that they would benefit from specialized instruction. However, ironically, it was the label of being in a special, due to being “intellectually impaired” (medical model), that presented a barrier to them as young adults who tried to obtain

employment or some form of training so that they could enter the adult world of work and find their niche in society. During their search for jobs some participants were discriminated against because they attended a special school (*Siya: it was not easy to get a job because I went to a special school; Lunga: When they saw I was in a special school they made an excuse, their facial expression changed*). The medical model of disability negatively impacted employers' perceptions of the participants' abilities and it was used as ground for discrimination and stigmatization (Aquino, 2016). The categorization of them as being mildly, moderately or severely affected created a greater barrier as this imposed a strict boundary to their potential. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) reject this trend of thought that is vertical, linear and rigid and which is said to suppress creativity and result in predictable outcomes for people. There appeared to have been a limit imposed on their potential and assumptions made about them regarding their ability. According to M. Shildrick (2012) there is no single acceptable form of embodiment. People should not be labelled as deficient but rather different. People with disabilities should be seen as people with unique abilities, who need to be given opportunities to prove themselves (Marsay, 2014). Many people who have disabilities can be very competent members of the workforce if they are enabled to identify and develop their unique strengths. Their abilities and strengths are their resources or assemblages which is an expansion of possibilities for them and challenges our dominant mode of thinking about students with special educational needs (Kennedy et al., 2013). People who are able to use accurate knowledge of themselves to create strengths can become successful in the workplace (M Wehmeyer et al., 2013).

8.5.2 Organizational knowledge about people with disabilities and enhancing awareness

A further barrier expressed by the participants was that there was a lack of knowledge about special schools and their curriculum (*Banda: Most of them don't understand about a special school; Bradley: The people think we don't know anything because we went to a special school.*) Employers and others appeared to have a lack in knowledge about disabilities and its implications for people. Organizational knowledge about disabilities through awareness and training programmes can lead to more favourable attitudes towards those with disabilities and positive outcomes for the workplace. This can also reduce discrimination which some of the participants in

this study encountered during their search for employment. Awareness building can also reduce stereotypes regarding people with disabilities and justifies the accommodations that sometimes are required for them. Organizational policies that accommodate and are supportive and proactive towards those with disabilities will reduce barriers in obtaining and maintaining employment for them. We need to create rhizomatic assemblages in society that would create new behaviour and new realization about students with special educational needs. This type of knowledge construction in society should be constructive and not divisive.

Disability can signify oppression or possibility, depending on how society perceives it. What is important is that given a change in context, the capacities and what the body can do changes (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983). Bodies can be context dependent and impairment does not have to signify a finality to the actions of the body. These participants needed to be acknowledged as individuals who have the capacity to learn a skill or a job, if they are given the opportunity by employers. Negative responses from the environment (social model of disability), will not allow students to access the labour market. The interplay between disability and ability must be considered in order to appreciate the meaning of disability. It is our ethical responsibility to deconstruct the seemingly well-constructed categories we create so that we include people with varying abilities in our plan. Ability must be redefined by demonstrating capacity, potential and possibility in every person regardless of their categorization or label. Discrimination against people with disabilities disadvantages them. Stigmatization and unemployment prevent people from being properly educated and included in society. This type of exclusion can be psychologically and physically harmful (Thomas, 2007). The effects of disability are rooted in the deep economic structures of society and requires the deliberate re allocation of goods and wealth, not just the removal of obstacles that hinder them. Ideological change must be accompanied by material change. Society must take responsibility for those in need and not deny them the services that they require. Ability should be viewed as a continuum so that all of us with varying abilities can be included.

8.5.3 Disability intersected with socio-economic status and other intra-group variables

Although all the participants had special educational needs, each one of them differed in many other respects. In the current study it was important to consider not only the effect of their disability on their journey toward employment, but as well as other variables related to the participants (Jacob et al., 2010). Intersectionality as a research tool enabled the researcher to acknowledge the multiple identities of people (Symington, 2004) the compounding effects (Emmett & Alant, 2006) thereof and how these determined disadvantage or advantage in their lives. Anti-essentialism was acknowledged. Lived experiences brought out hidden complexities and invalidated simple generalizations and essentialisms (the experience of all group members sharing similar experiences, perspectives and needs). Akin to the growth of a rhizome, it allowed for the exploration of multiple individual experiences, different connections, new questions and varied understandings. With this approach, many possible truths and realities emerged from the stories, instead of assuming that there exists only one truth. In this study, disability appeared to have intersected with socio economic status, for example. Just some of the participants could afford to finance their own training to enable them to obtain jobs. For those who could not afford to enrol in private training programmes their employment prospects were worse because they did not have any form of training or skill to offer the employer or to break into the job market. They obtained their first job after many years or had to become self-employed. The individual differences amongst them could have acted against them or could have been understood by those around them.

8.6 Objective 6: To determine the participants' desires, aspirations and expectations regarding their career, employment and achievements for the future.

All the participants expressed their varied desires for the future, each one extending in a different direction, just like the extensions of the rhizome. Their varied experiences could have altered the nature of their realities. Some wanted to obtain a stable, permanent job like their peers and receive a regular salary (*Tswele: All my friends are working and I'm not, I feel bad*). They had personal and career goals which they wanted to fulfil. Some participants expressed their desire to be independent (*Tswele: I don't want my father to do everything for me*). Some

participants felt a sense of obligation to their families and they wanted to be of assistance to them (*Lunga: I want to work so I can extend my mother's house*). The future for these participants became a rhizome of opportunities and possibilities. They created their own interconnecting routes and assemblages and often required the support of those around them to realize their dreams and desires. They realized that they could not achieve what they desired solely on their own effort (*My sister helped me*). All their desires and aspirations were reliant on obtaining employment. Job or work identity is an important domain for most people as it impacts on personal well-being and enables them to find their place in society (Crocetti, Avanzi, Hawk, Fraccaroli, & Meeus, 2014). Jobs have consequences beyond wages, it creates happiness and life satisfaction within themselves, their families and their communities (Ismail, 2016).

8.6.1 Aspirations of the participants

The rhizomatic principle of multiplicity (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), was evident in the participants' aspirations for their future. Their aspirations comprised several elements which they wanted to achieve, not always for themselves (*I want to make my mother's house bigger*). *Lunga* displayed his spirit of "ubuntu" towards his family. Their aspirations were assemblages that they used to generate new possibilities for themselves. Although all the participants' experiences towards employment were different (anti-essentialism) it was found that they had similar aspirations and hopes as other young people (Emerson et al., 2009; Stokes et al., 2013). They wanted to become independent (*Tswele: I want to buy my own clothes*), have control over their lives and own their own home and car (*I want a home, job and car*) (Yueng et al., 2008). Some of them had career goals (*Siya: I want to learn more about the buses and become a teacher aide; Siya: I want to do my own business.*)

Aspirations were important as they shaped the young people's lives and their actions (Crivello, 2015). Although all their aspirations may not have become a reality for them, they still do matter because aspirations have an important role in their everyday lives. Their aspirations signified a sense of the future, however, they were also influenced by their present realities and their relationships with people around them (Allport, 1955; Yates & Roulstone, 2013; Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008). For young people with disabilities, like the participants, their daily lives constituted much

uncertainty about their future and this impacted on their aspirations. This uncertainty was evident (*Siya; It was not easy to get a job because I went to a special school; Lunga: I could not get a job.*) They became despondent about obtaining a job. Feelings of connectedness at the workplace and relationships with work colleagues influenced their aspirations. Their aspirations were sometimes tainted by negativity (*Lunga: They undermine you, it's like there's no chance for you*), however, they received much support from their families, friends and teachers (*Bradley: My mother helped me; Tswele: My friend was teaching me; My teachers were patient with me.*) The support that they received kept them motivated to persevere towards their aspirations.

8.6.2 Beliefs created possibilities in the participants

The participants saw life and the world from the perspective of emergence, potentiality and connections. It was a complex set of assemblages that connected, bifurcated, combined and transformed their thinking (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The rhizomatic principle of multiplicity was also evident in their beliefs. Their beliefs varied in their content and context. None of their beliefs was more powerful than the other and they had no hierarchy (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Their self-belief was an assemblage and a resource to them. It increased their capacity and opened themselves up for more possibilities (Kennedy et al., 2013). It was a belief in their power and abilities that allowed the participants to have dreams, to set goals for themselves and to persevere in their desires (Baldwin et al., 2015). They had hope, which is a positive psychological construct that yields positive life outcomes (Tuckwiller & Dardick, 2015). It also provided guidance to them for living as well as a sense of determination and purpose. Their beliefs in themselves also enabled them to have good relationships with others and facilitated new possibilities for them. The participants spoke fondly of their parents and siblings who supported them in their entry into and their journey through the world of work (*my father helped me to find a job*). They also enjoyed support from their friends (*My friend taught me on the laptop*). Emplaced relationships with family and friends were key to a strong sense of belonging. Their confidence and willingness to enter social spaces, with the possibility of experiencing exclusion, was admirable. *Tswele* believed in his ability to obtain his driver's license and he did so with the help of his friend. He believed in his ability to learn anything (*There's nothing I can't do*). The participants took control over

their lives and became proactive and worked towards their goals (Yueng et al., 2008). *Bradley* believed in his ability to help the youth in his community to manage the social ills prevalent there (*We arrange talks for the youth. I like to help people*). *Bradley's* civic engagement was an expression of positive youth development (Crocetti, Erentaite, et al., 2014). He realized that he had the competence to contribute to his community and that his actions would benefit others. He then embarked on voluntary activities and engagement in youth organizations. *Siya* believed in his ability to make a positive difference to the children under his care (*I can teach them skills*). He shared his hope and vision with those around him and created new realities for them. He encouraged the teachers to teach the students skills that can be of value to them later, to earn a living. He pleaded with the parents of disabled children to believe in their abilities to learn, achieve and have a better future (*Don't stop believing in your child because he has a disability and think he has no future. He has a future*). His care for children with special educational needs indicated a sense of sympathy and empathy for others. Having care for others is suggestive of positive youth development (Crocetti, Erentaite, et al., 2014). A belief in his own efforts and confidence was expressed in his drive and determination to start his own business and to learn more about it (*I want to do my own sound business. I want to learn more; I will find somebody to teach me*). A spirit of hope and determination could be heard in many of their voices. They had beliefs about their future and they were positive about achieving them. They created their own rhizomes of hope which led to the creation of new life for them (Adkins, 2015).

8.6.3 Achieving justice through assemblages and linkages, for students with special educational needs

The aspirations of our participants and others with disabilities can be realized by giving them a voice, listening to their desires and dreams and creating possibilities for them. Disability can be a place of oppression or possibility. If students with special educational needs have similar career desires, aspirations and expectations for their future as their peers without special educational needs, why should they be discriminated against or marginalized? They need to be afforded the same career opportunities as their peers so that they too can fulfil their aspirations. The differences that existed amongst the participants (as in ability) should be acknowledged and not be a source of disadvantage to them. Those with disabilities

may need additional supports in order to fulfil their ambitions and access employments (Nolan & Gleeson, 2017). Using the concept of assemblages and linkages, we need to consider how we can best support them so that their lives can be improved and they can be included in society. The assemblages are resources that could allow their lives to be in a continual process of emergence and becoming. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). We need to determine what kind of supports need to be put into place from childhood, during the preschool years, during the school years and beyond. These supports will allow for the proliferation of rhizomatic off shoots that will create new possibilities for the participants and transform their lives (Kennedy et al., 2013). Transition plans are required at every stage of child to adult development thus enabling those with special educational needs to ultimately find a place and role in society. Assemblages and linkages in these plans must be found and used as open systems to enable the achievement of the transition plans and goals. The rhizomatic principles of connection and multiplicity should be applied to education planning for them. This involves critically engaging with differing perspectives from various disciplines, tertiary institutions, business, government and communities across regions and internationally (Tillmans et al., 2014). There needs to be collaboration, discussion, whole system engagement, innovation within curricula and teaching and learning. Various departments that are stakeholders in the development of students (education, health, higher education, industry) should be involved in the masterplan to develop them to become assets to society. We need to move back and forth between assemblages and linkages in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for our participants and their counterparts. Assemblages could be manipulated to produce more favourable outcomes and the best possible solutions to our problems. The rhizomatic principle of heterogeneity requires an openness to acknowledging different disciplines and their contributions. Student education should emphasize the relationship and interconnectedness between humans and non-humans (including plants, animals and objects), the effects on the economy and therefore employment.

Initiatives to create work for those with disabilities is also important. These are the linkages for them. In the Netherlands, an innovative approach called the “Inclusive Redesign of Work” was created for people with severe disabilities (Van Ruitenbeek, Mulder, Zijlstra, Nijhuis, & Mulders, 2013; Zijlstra, Mulders, & Nijhuis, 2009). The aim of this programme was to create manageable work in regular work settings to

facilitate participation of people with disabilities. Tasks are differentiated at different levels of complexity, for people with varying levels of capabilities. This represented a new way of thinking about work and work positions. I believe that, with rhizomatic thinking, we can include students with special educational needs amongst us in all spheres.

8.7 Summary of chapter 8

I traversed through this chapter as a rhizome researcher. I used the metaphor of the rhizome to map the post school career trajectories of the participants. Rhizomatic mapping depicted the many points that elaborated, shaped and challenged them during their post school career experiences. Their school experiences laid the foundation for some of their careers. Like the multiple off shoots of the rhizome, their post school training and employment choices were varied and dynamic, from some training to intermittent jobs. Most of their adjustment experiences were positive. Support from their families and the workplace, their self-determined behaviour and their positive character skills were their assemblages and this enabled them to achieve positive outcomes in the workplace. The participants alluded to their challenges along some routes (*roots?*). They also let me into their desires and aspirations for their future, all of which were very similar to that of any other young adult who is seeking a place in society. Their post school world of career development was an inextricable combination of interrelated assemblages of people, circumstances and material resources, all of which worked simultaneously to yield outcomes for them.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION TO THE THESIS

“We search on our journeys for a self to be, for other selves to love and for work to do. We become something new by ceasing to be something old. We find by losing, we hold on by letting go. (Frederick Buechner, 1975)

9.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis and commences with a return to the research questions that guided the study. Hence a narrative response is presented to each of the research sub-questions. Drawing from the findings of the study, it is therefore necessary to relate these findings to respective persons, processes, policies and structures for consideration. Hence a section on how these findings are significant to these persons, processes, policies and structures is presented with a view to strengthen the resolve to create opportunities for special needs youth to aspire for a livelihood that they can grow and prosper within. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief personal reflection of the insights I have gained through this study methodologically, contextually and conceptually.

9.2 A return to the research questions that guided the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the post school career/training and employment trajectories of students with special educational needs. The critical research question was: What were the post school career and employment trajectories of students with special educational needs? In order to obtain a deeper understanding of their post school trajectories, research sub-questions were formulated. The responses to the sub questions were summarized below.

Question one asked: what were the participants’ school experiences in preparation for the world of work? The participants expressed mostly positive learning experiences from their school education. While acknowledging some limitations (e.g. absence of a school leaving certificate) of their special schooling, their school experiences allowed them to either secure some form of work or some entrepreneurial activities from which to derive an income. The education that they received comprised useful practical skills that they used after completing school. In addition, positive attitudes developed during their schooling enabled them

to navigate and negotiate their spaces within work environments or in entrepreneurial activities from which they derived work experience and remuneration.

Question two asked: What career/training and employment opportunities did the students engage in post school? Some participants engaged in private training programmes (where financial support was available) in order to secure jobs whilst others searched for long periods to obtain jobs. Others held several short-term jobs, became entrepreneurs or attended sheltered workshops. The opportunities for work for special needs youth were limited and often of a generic nature and that which did not involve sophisticated engagements.

Question three asked: How did the students adjust to the world of work, for those who were employed? The participants adjusted well to their workplaces. They reported positive feelings of happiness and acceptance. They were pleased with the support that they received from their colleagues and they eagerly learnt their new jobs. Some were appreciative of the opportunities given to them and of the support that they received from their employers.

Question four asked: What were the enabling factors that assisted the students in obtaining and maintaining employment? They received much family, community, academic and workplace support that enabled them to seek and maintain employment. Self-determined behavior and positive character skills were evident and this enabled the participants to gain skills, find employment and keep their jobs.

Question five asked: What were the challenges that the students faced during the search for employment and while they were employed? Some were unable to find work, in spite of having a qualification. Some were skilled at a task but could not obtain credentials to prove their skill. Attendance to a special school was a barrier to employment and it was a form of discrimination for them. Not having a grade level or a certificate of achievement upon completion of schooling, restricted their options for training and employment. Poor ability or inability to read was a setback for some participants in studying further and in obtaining employment. Some participants believed that employers did not have sufficient knowledge about a special school and this disadvantaged them.

Question six asked: What were their future desires, aspirations and expectations regarding career and employment? All the participants expressed goals and desires for the future. Their desires were to obtain a stable, permanent job like their peers and receive a regular salary. They had personal and career goals which they wanted to fulfil. Some participants expressed their desire to be independent. Some of them held firm beliefs about empowering children with disabilities, with skills. Some participants felt a sense of obligation to their families and they wanted to be of financial assistance to them.

9.3 Agents of change

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are proposed to respective persons, processes, policies and structures. These recommendations are made on the basis of the significance of the findings so that students with special educational needs can be developed for and supported in their post school, career endeavours. Agents of change were also identified.

9.3.1 Improve educational outcomes (policy makers, teachers)

The youth must develop human capital (skills, knowledge and competencies) (Hampf et al., 2017). It begins with education. Academic achievement must be improved as it has been associated with positive employment outcomes (Morrisroe, 2014; Shomos & Forbes, 2014; Wagner et al., 2005). Strong educational foundations form the basis of all learning and skills development (World Bank, 2018). Evidence on the kind of learning programmes that will most effectively boost learning must be considered and implemented (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Schweisfurth, 2011). The development of literacy and numeracy and problem- solving skills should be highlighted. Also, greater effort is required to make schools work for all students (including those with disabilities). The provision of remedial education programmes can strengthen the foundational skills of academically weak students and prepare them for further education and training (Post, 2016). Reading failure has long term implications and restricts future work opportunities (Muralidharan & Zieleniak, 2013) and therefore should be taught to students with special educational needs. This can be done with the implementation of evidence based instruction (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2017; McArthur et al., 2016). National standards to measure and increase the achievement of young people with disabilities should be established (Moretti,

2016). School management must implement interventions that will enhance learning where students are ready to learn, teachers are skilled and motivated and other factors that will support the teacher -student relationship and learning (such as school infra structure, resources) (World Bank, 2018). Importing of skills should be considered where necessary (McGregor, 2019). Aligning the various parts of the education system coherently towards teaching and learning in the classroom is vital and these will yield long term benefits toward education and the economy (Liang et al., 2016).

9.3.2 Develop teachers

The skills of teachers should be advanced, in the field of special education as well (Conn, 2017). Teachers require specialized skills and knowledge to successfully teach students with disabilities. Teacher professional development must be effective and result in enhanced learning for the students. Strategies for enhancing and maintaining the school engagement of young people must be employed so that they can be provided with social, life- skills and intellectual rewards that positive school experiences can offer (Fredricks et al., 2004). A modified approach to education must respond to their emotional, educational and employment needs (Tillmans et al., 2014).

9.3.3 Modify the curriculum (policy makers)

The school curriculum should comprise cognitive, socio-emotional and technical skills as they re-enforce each other (Winthrop & McGivney, 2016; World Bank, 2018). Of importance is a high-quality general education system with cognitive and vocational skills (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2015). In the adolescent years greater benefits are gained from programmes that target non-cognitive skills compared to the benefits from cognitive or academic programmes (F Cunha et al., 2010). Vocational (skills) training for all students is advised (Biavaschi et al., 2013; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016). Skills can be differentiated ((Van Ruitenbeek et al., 2013) for students with special educational needs, so that they are able to learn and acquire a skill that would enable them to enter the labour market. There is a need to identify the skills and abilities young people with disabilities need in order to successfully participate in education, training and work. At school level, supervised work experience should be arranged and promoted, in preparation for the world of

work (Gold et al., 2013; Steyn & Vlachos, 2011; M. Wehman et al., 2014). Classroom learning must be supported by workplace training for the adolescent child. Attending an inclusive school (as opposed to a non-inclusive special school) has been found to be more advantageous to many students with special educational needs (Dessemontet et al., 2011; Dimitrova-Radojichich & Chichevska-Jovanova, 2014). This could prevent employment discrimination against students who attend a special school. Policies for skills development at all levels (from early childhood development, during school years, on the job life- long learning opportunities) and policies that ensure that skills are effectively retained and utilized must be in place and implemented. Such policies are important to secure future prosperity (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2015).

9.3.4 Develop transition programmes from school to work

For youth with disabilities, the education system should provide effective transition into adult employment and preparation for the world of work (Kraemer & Valentini, 2018). Transition plans are required at every stage of child to adult development (early childhood development, school, post school). Schools should coordinate transition activities with community service agencies to make needed services more readily available to graduates after leaving school. Links to paid work and training services in the community is advised (Lawson & Shields, 2014).

9.3.5 Provide career guidance services

Personalized training and mentoring can improve career outcomes for disabled employees (Procknow & Rocco, 2016). Career services in special needs education is advised, thereby creating a link between school vocational training and the needs of the industry (M. Engelbrecht et al., 2017b). Career information is essential to help students to identify opportunities and enter into careers (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010; Watts & Sultana, 2004). It is important for the youth to be able to access information on training or jobs from an information or youth centre (Kilimani, 2017).

9.3.6 Higher education for students with special educational needs

Greater provision for higher education for students with special educational needs is recommended as having some form of training or a skill would be an advantage for

them when seeking employment (Cheatham et al., 2013; Marcotte et al., 2005; Zafft et al., 2004). These skills need to be relevant to the needs of the labour market in order to enable employment (Buheji, 2019). Academic support (modified teaching methods) should be available to them to enable them to successfully complete their programmes (Ferrell & Marshak, 2004). Funding should be made available so that poverty does not prevent them from accessing training programmes (Heckman & Mosso, 2014).. Apprenticeships and internship programmes can provide young people an opportunity to improve their skills in a workplace setting (Heckman & Mosso, 2014; Hunter, Runswick-Cole, Goodley, & Lawthom, 2019). The curriculum should include a greater array of skills to be taught and students with lower levels of educational attainment, such as those with special educational needs, should be accommodated (Kruss et al., 2014). The South African TVET college system needs to be strengthened and transformed in order to provide quality vocational education (Mitgang, 2012). The curriculum content of the TVET programmes should be reviewed, relative to the needs of the society and of the economy (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). TVET should be combined with general education (Oketch, 2014). Key general competencies must be established first (literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills). Skills selected to be taught must be relevant and enduring over time.

9.3.7 Creating employment/ Improving the employability of the youth

A close examination of the economy is required to determine where future job opportunities could emanate from. One needs to find out what problems and challenges the youth is faced with in areas where opportunities could exist (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). There is a need for a detailed database on labour market projections, entrepreneurs and gaps in skills. More data must be obtained about the functioning of the informal and agricultural sectors (Institute of Development Studies, 2017). There should be increased interaction and liaison amongst policy makers, academia and the private sector. There is a need for an integrated approach involving different levels of government and multiple stakeholders (Kilimani, 2017). There should be increased policy focus on technical and vocational institutions and more funding, is required. There should be greater technical and vocational training across the education system. Policies and programmes are required to stimulate a demand for labour in the market. Short term solutions to alleviating unemployment must be found (as in the high productivity skills sector) (Institute of Development Studies, 2017). An

employment strategy should support the youth to enter the informal sector (agricultural and non-agricultural sectors) as well as the formal sector (referred to as mixed livelihood strategies.) They should be guided to find these opportunities. Accelerated transformation needs to take place where more private firms become established to create more jobs. Initiatives to create work for those with disabilities is also important. Tasks can be differentiated at different levels of complexity, for people with varying levels of capabilities (Van Ruitenbeek et al., 2013). It is important to develop partnership arrangements between government, employers and non-profit organizations which are established to train unemployed adults. (Committee for Economic Development of the Conference Board, 2015; Conway & Giloth, 2014; C. King, 2014; Martinson, 2010). A combination of further subsidies and incentives for industry to encourage apprenticeship schemes is required (McGregor, 2019).

9.3.8 The employer's role in inclusion

The attitudes and mind sets of employers need to change in order to include people of differing abilities in the workforce (Das & Espinoza, 2019). Employers must be made aware of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities (improved profits, cost effectiveness, improved company image, inclusive work culture) (Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014). Employees with special educational needs have favourable personality traits and positive character skills (reliable, punctual, loyal, appreciative, innovative, strong work ethic) which are beneficial to the workplace (Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014). Young adults who are under skilled must be targeted and supported to enter careers and to plan their progress to longer term careers. Employers are advised to make efforts toward assisting employees with special educational needs to adjust to their jobs. Extra support, mentoring or supervision can be offered to them where necessary (Marsay, 2014). Workplace support assists them in maintaining employment and achieving their career goals (Sabat et al., 2015). Organizational policies that are supportive and proactive towards those with disabilities will reduce barriers in obtaining and maintaining employment for them (Drew et al., 2011). Organizational staff needs to be educated about disability and its implications for a person in a work environment. Employers could make efforts to include individuals with disabilities into the general social networks. This could increase tolerance for each other. Diversity training on disability can improve acceptance, decrease prejudice, alter mindsets and decrease destructive stereotypes (Procknow & Rocco, 2016). Regular

sensitivity training can promote cohesion amongst divergent employees (Kulkarni, 2012).

9.3.9 Entrepreneurship is an option for the youth

The youth must consider self-employment as an option instead of persisting towards wage employment. Self-employment for young people with special educational needs is a potential pathway for them (Bates, Goodley, & Runswick-Cole, 2017). An entrepreneurial mindset should be promoted. Assisting youth to find a sustainable livelihood in agriculture or in self-created enterprises may assist the employment challenge (L. Fox & Kaul, 2017). Youth can be screened for latent or active entrepreneurial inclinations such as innovative thinking, leadership attributes, passion and results orientation. This however must be done in conjunction with other supportive measures such as availability to finance (Institute of Development Studies, 2017). They also need skills to develop their networks and linking with higher levels of the value chain. Entrepreneur education and training is recommended (beginning at school level) in order to provide students with skills that will help them establish and sustain a career in business (Osuala, 2010; Turker & Selcuk, 2009).

9.3.10 Youth with special educational needs

They can also positively contribute to their employment access by engaging in proactive behaviours (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011) such as vocational training, voluntary work, being optimistic about job prospects or by acknowledging their disability (Hebl & Kleck, 2002). They have an active role to play in reducing the effects of their limitations (J. Levitt, 2017a). The value of self-determined behavior and positive character skills in the workplace must be highlighted to them (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015; Durlak et al., 2011; Kautz et al., 2014). They must be made aware that their adjustment to their jobs is assisted by their actions as well as their employers' actions (Hershenson, 1996). They are encouraged to engage in self-help and self-empowering activities in order to help them to adjust to and to maintain their jobs (A. Grant & Ashford, 2008). Their positive character skills (soft skills, conscientiousness, perseverance) and positive attitudes towards their jobs and their work colleagues will also facilitate employment and adjustment (Bryson et al., 2014; Nyhus & Pons, 2004).

9.3.11 The parents and the communities of children with special educational needs

Family and community support networks for students with special educational needs assist them in achieving their career goals and obtaining employment (Heckman & Mosso, 2014; Marsay, 2014). Parents of children with special educational needs must believe in their children's potential to develop and learn with their support and role as teachers in the home (Lendrum, Barlow, & Humphrey, 2013). Parent expectations of their children will influence their children's social and academic outcomes (Banks, Maître, McCoy, & Watson, 2016; Rutchic, 2009; P. Wehman et al., 2014). Greater expectation will produce better outcomes. Parents must become part of the educational process to support and extend learning opportunities at home and widen the child's experiences and engagement with the environment and the world (Bjorklund & Salvanes, 2010; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Heckman & Mosso, 2014).

9.4 A personal reflection methodologically, contextually and conceptually

The journey across this study, especially from the data generation process was very revealing to me. Sensitivity and care were the most crucial attributes that enabled me, as a researcher of special needs youth, to get the trust, depth of information and on-going communication from the special need's youth. I was not able to just get to the participants, do the interviews and move away. I needed to gain the participants' confidence, the support of their parents or care-givers to win the trust of the participants which finally enabled me to obtain the relevant information from them to make a detailed analysis of their experiences. Despite the attempts at building and sustaining trust, some participants were not expressive of their work/career trajectory experiences and this required me to explore different ways to get these them to communicate their experiences in various ways.

Contextually within South Africa with respect to the economic and employment challenges that the country has and is facing, compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, extracting variances between the experiences of special needs youth and that of other abled youths proved to be quite difficult in the sense that the experiences of the special needs youth were similar to those of abled youth. Their aspirations and desires in terms of finding work and earning a regular salary were the

same. In order to get more specific and nuanced experiences of the youth with special needs, I had to rely on my experience of working with special needs children to identify the variance. Hence research of this nature requires a fine eye and an ear and with insights on special needs. My life's work on special educational needs was material to this study and while I acknowledge the insider bias, I relied on the expressions (verbal and other forms) of the participants as the basis of my analysis.

Conceptually, I am better informed of the educational challenges of special needs education that goes beyond the school education that they receive. While life skills and vocational training are the foci of special needs school education, exposure to the world of work is a crucial component of the school education. Hence the curriculum of school education for the special need's learner needs to be reviewed for relevance to the learner not just on educational achievements but also to include post-school activities that they can use as a foundation for further development.

The achievement of inclusion of all requires a conscious commitment (by government and society) with a clear plan of action and goals that are measurable and achievable. Policies toward social inclusion need to be cross sectoral where a range of interventions need to be employed, cutting across several domains, in order to bring about change for all. Prosperity can occur if more and better jobs are created for all segments of the population, especially those most vulnerable, thereby increasing their earnings, transforming their work careers and improving their lives and those of future generations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



11 January 2019

Ms Sitha Laalje 8320097
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Laalje

Protocol reference number: HSS/1591/018D

Project title: POST SCHOOL CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT TRAJECTORIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL.

Full Approval – Full Committee Reviewed Application

With regards to your response received 09 January 2019 to our letter of 02 November 2018, the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Prof Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Prof Labby Ramrathan

cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Simon B Khoza

cc School Administrator: Ms S Jennarain, Ms M Ngcobo, Mr SN Mthembu, Ms LH Shezi

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

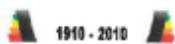
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APPENDIX B: GATEKEEPERS CONSENT LETTER (PRINCIPAL)

62 Fiddlewood Drive
Isipingo Hills
Durban
4133
22 November 2018

The Principal

Dear _____

Permission to conduct research on ex-learners from your school

I am Sitha Laalje and I am conducting a research study towards a PhD in Education, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. As part of my doctoral study I am required to do a research study and report on it. The aim of my research study is to obtain information about career/ training opportunities for students with special educational needs. It is hoped that the outcome of the study would be of benefit to all concerned. The study is for research purposes and the findings will be made known to you and interested members of your school through a seminar that will be presented at a time and place that you deem appropriate. I therefore require your consent for me to conduct research with students who have exited the school.

Participation in this study is voluntary and the ex-students' rights to participate in this study will be protected including the right to withdraw from this study at any time that they deem so without any penalties for them. By giving me permission, your rights as a gatekeeper will also be protected including the right to withdraw your permission should you feel the need to do so and with no implications to you or your school. The activities of the school will not be disrupted. All the information received from the participants will be treated as confidential and will be used for the study purpose only. The name of the students and of the school will not be used in the thesis or publications arising out of the study. Should the need arise for referring to any student or the school, pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the student and the school and to maintain anonymity. The study procedure will be as follows:

- The selected students (about 12) will participate in an interview.

- The date and time of the interview will be negotiated with all of them.
- The information that is given during the interview will be audio recorded.
- The duration of the interview will be approximately 30 minutes long.

Yours sincerely

S Laalje (Researcher)

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GATEKEEPER'S DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of principal) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to my school participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw my school from participating in this project at any time, should I so desire and that my rights will be protected at all times during this research process, including the right to withdraw my school from participating without any consequences to me or my school.

I also understand and give permission for the use of the following recording device during the interview and data production process.

	Willing	Not willing
Audio recording		

Signature

Date:

School stamp

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF INFORMATION TO THE PARENT OF THE PARTICIPANT (ENGLISH)

62 Fiddlewood Drive
Isipingo Hills
Durban
4133
22 November 2018

Dear Parent

Re: Information about the study

I am Sitha Laalje and I am conducting a research study towards a PhD in Education, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I obtained your name and contact details from the last school that your child attended. The aim of my study is to obtain information about career and training opportunities for students who have special educational needs. It is hoped that the outcome of the study would be of benefit to your child and others. I require your consent for your child to take part in the study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and your child may withdraw from it at any stage and for any reason, without penalty. I will ensure that he/she will not be harmed in any way. All the information received from your child will be confidential and will be used to do the study. The study procedure will be as follows:

- He/she will participate in an interview.
- He/she will be given a date on which to attend.
- The information that is given during the interview will be audio recorded.
- The duration of the interview will be about 30 minutes long.
- We will meet at the last school that your child attended
- After this he/she will receive refreshments as well as forty rands to assist with the transport costs.
- Later he/she will be invited to a feedback session/meeting about the results of the study.

The Interview questions: Please refer to the attached interview schedule

Yours sincerely

S Laalje (Researcher)

Research Supervisor

Prof. Labby Ramruthan

031 9021635
smaalje@hotmail.com
Research office
Ms P Ximba
031 260 3587
ximbap@ukzn.co.za

031 260 8065
ramruthanp@ukzn.ac.za

PARTICIPANT DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I also understand and give permission for the use of the following recording devices during the interview and data production process.

	Willing	Not willing
Audio recording		

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF INFORMATION TO THE PARENT OF THE PARTICIPANT (ISIZULU)

62 Fiddlewood Drive

Isipingo Hills

Durban

4133

10 December 2018

Mzali Othandekayo

Re: Ulwazi Ngocwaningo

Igama lami ngingu Sitha Laalje ngenza ucwaningo lwe- PhD kwezemfundo, enyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natal. Ngithole igama lakho neminingwano yakho esikoleni sokugcina ingane yakho ebifunda kuso. Inhloso yocwaningo lwami ukuthola ulwazi mayelana nomsebenzi kanye namathuba okuqeqeshwa abafundi asebethothule izifundo ezikoleni ezikhethekile. Kunethemba lokuthi imiphumela yalolucwaningo izoba nenzuzo kubo bonke abathintekayo. Ngizocela imvume kuwe ukuthi ingane yakho ibe ingxenye yalulo cwaningo.

Ukubamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo kungukuzithandela futhi ingane yakho ingahoxisa noma inini noma nganoma isiphi isizathu ngaphandle kwesijeziso. Umcwaningi uzoqiniseka ukuthi ingane angeke ithakamezeke nganoma iyiphi indlela. Lonke ulwazi oluzotholakala einganeni yakho luzobe luyimfihlo futhi lizosetshenziswa ocwaningweni. Inqubo yocwaningo imeme kanje:

- Ingane izobamba iqhaza ekubeni ingxenye engxoxweni yeqembukanye nabanye abangeneleli cwaningo.
- Ingane izonikwa usuku lapho eyobe ezodingeka ukuthi ibekhona.
- ingxoxo izoqoshwa kusetshenziswa isiqopha-mazwi
- Ingxoxo izothatha isikhathi esizocishe sibe imizuzu engu-60.
- Singahlangana endaweni ephaphile nelungele wena nengane yakho.

- Emumva kwengxoxo, ingane izothola okokudla kanye no R40 wokusiza ezindlekweni zokugibela ezingase zenzeke ukuze nize kwi ngxoxo.
- Emumva kwesikhathi niyobe senimenywa ukuza emhlanganweni lapho niyothola impendulo mayelana ngemiphumela yocwaningo.

Imibuzo yengxoxo: Sicela ubheke uhla lwemibuzo yengxoxo olufakiwe.

Ozithobayo

Research Supervisor

Umphathi wocwaningo

S Laalje (Researcher)

Prof. Labby Ramruthan

031 9021635

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Research office ihhovisi locwaningo

Ms P Ximba

031 260 3587

ximbap@ukzn.co.za

Ukumemezela komzali

Mina..... (igama eliphelele lomzali)

Ngियाqinisekisa ukuthi ngियाqonda okuqukethwe ilomqulu nano hlobo lwalo cwaningo, futhi ngiya vuma ukuba ingane yami ibe ingxenye yalolucwaningo.

Ngियाqonda ngokwanele ukuthi ngikhululekile ukuhoxa kulolucwaningo nanoma isiphi isikhathi uma ngifisa.

Ngियाqonda futhi nginikeza imvume ukuba kusetshenziswe izinsiza kuqopha ezilandelayo ngesikhathi sengxoxo nasenqubeni yokukhiqizwa kolwazi.

	Ngiyavuma	Angivumi
Isiqopha-mazwi		
Imishini yokuthwebula izithombe		

Usishicilelo

Usuku

APPENDIX E: LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR THE PARTICIPANT

Read this letter to those who experience difficulty in reading

62 Fiddlewood Drive
Isipingo Hills
Durban
4133
22 August 2018

Dear Participant

Re: Information about the study

I am Sitha Laalje and I am conducting a research study towards a PhD in Education, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of my study is to explore the post school career and employment experiences of students with special educational needs. It is hoped that the outcome of the study would be of benefit to you and others. I obtained your name and contact details from the last school that you attended. You will be asked to take part in an interview. Participation in this study is your choice and you may withdraw from it at any stage and for any reason, without penalty. I will ensure that you will not be harmed in any way.

Informed consent

Should you agree to participate in this research study, you will be given an “Informed Consent Form” to read and sign. I will also read it out to you. This form is about whether you want to take part in this study or not. You may discuss this form with your family or friends before you make a decision about taking part. If you agree to participate the procedure will be as follows:

- You will take part in an interview at the last school that you attended.
- You will be given a date that is suitable for you to attend.
- The duration of the interview will be about 30 minutes long
- I will ask you 6 main questions and some specific questions. Refer to the interview schedule.
- The information that is given during the interview will be audio recorded

- After the interview you will receive refreshments as well as forty rands to assist you with your transport costs.
- Later you will be invited to a feedback session to inform you about the outcome of the study.

Please note the following:

- The questions do not have a right or wrong answer.
- You may choose to not answer any question that causes you discomfort
- Should you require further support or counselling as a result of the discussion you will be referred to a registered counsellor within close proximity to the venue of the interview. The researcher will cover the cost of the first consultation. Should further consultations be required thereafter, you will be expected to bear the costs thereof.
- You may request the help of an interpreter, should you prefer to speak in isiZulu or have difficulty in understanding the questions.
- The information collected from you will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Recording, use and protection of information

- The interview will be audio recorded
- The researcher will conduct the interview and your information will be transcribed and analysed and used to write up the study.
- All the information that you provide will be kept in a locked cupboard for a period of five years. Thereafter the information will be destroyed.

Please read the above information carefully. If you would like more information about any aspect of the study, please feel free to ask me. Thank you for your time and interest shown in this study.

Yours sincerely

S Laalje (Researcher)

031 9021635

slaalje@hotmail.com

Research Supervisor

Prof. Labby Ramrathan

031 260 8065

ramrathanp@ukzn.ac.za

HSSREC RESEARCH OFFICE

Full Name: Prem Mohun

HSS Research Office

Govan Bheki Building

Westville Campus

Contact: 0312604557

Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

PARTICIPANT DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I also understand and give permission for the use of the following recording device during the interview.

	Willing	Not willing
Audio recording		

Signature

Date

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (ENGLISH)

The aim of the study was to explore the post school career/training and employment trajectories of students with special educational needs. The objectives of the study were outlined below. There were six main open-ended questions with associated specific questions that were used to elicit the relevant information that was being sought from the participants.

Objective 1: To explore the participants' school experiences in preparation for the world of work.

Main question: Tell me about what you learnt at school just before you left.

Specific questions:

- What did you learn at school?
- What activities/skills did you learn at school?
- Did it help you in your work?
- Were you happy at school?
- What made you happy?
- What do you think you should learn in school in order to help you with work after school?
- While you were in school did you think about what you would like to do when you finished school?

Objective 2: To determine the nature of the participants' career/training and employment opportunities post school.

Main question: Tell me about what you did when you left school?

Specific questions: Training/studies

- Did you have any training or studied anything after you left school? Tell me more about it.
- Where did you study it?
- How long was it?
- Was it enjoyable?
- Was it difficult/easy?
- Did you get help if you needed it?
- What was the cost of it and who paid for it?

- Was there something that you wanted to study but could not because of certain reasons? Tell me more about it.
- **Specific questions: Jobs**
- How soon after school did you start looking for a job?
- How long after leaving school did you get a job?
- Who did you ask about jobs, who helped you?
- Where did you go to look for a job?
- Were you willing to take any job that came your way?
- Was it easy to find your first job?
- What did the employees say to you?
- What job/s did you do?
- Did you use the skill that you learnt?
- Was the job easy or difficult?
- If you didn't get a job how did you feel?
- Did you need any more training?
- Do you know anything about hard and soft skills?
- Do you think both of these are important and why?
- Were you asked to leave the job at any time? If yes why?
- What other jobs did you hold over the years?
- Which one did you not like and why?
- Where you happy about your salary?

Objective 3: To explore the participants' adjustment to the world of work, for those who were employed.

Main question: Tell me about how you adjusted to or how you felt about your job?

Specific questions:

- What job was it, what did you do?
- Were you able to cope with the job? Was it difficult?
- Did you need help and were they willing to help you?
- What skill was the employer looking for?
- How did you feel about your work? (positive and negative feelings)
- Tell us what made you feel happy?
- What situations made you not happy or sad?
- Did you get along well with your colleagues?

Objective 4: To identify the enabling factors that assisted them in obtaining and maintaining employment.

Main question: Let's talk about what helped you to get the job and stay in the job.

Specific questions:

- What or who do you think helped you to get the job?
- What skill might have helped you to get the job?
- What good qualities that you have may have helped you?
- Did your family/ friends/neighbours help you?
- Did your work colleagues/friends help you?
- What did your work friends do for you?
- Were you happy in your job?

Objective 5: To identify the challenges that the participants faced in search of and during employment

Main question: Tell me about the problems (if any) that you had while you were looking for a job and, in your workplace.

Specific questions:

5.1 Problems during the job search

- Was it easy for you to find a job?
- Tell me some of the problems that you had when you were looking for a job
- What did the employees tell you when you asked them for a job?
- Why do you think you had those problems?
- Were they good to you?
- Coming from a special school, was that a problem for you?
- How did that make you feel?

5.2 Challenges during employment

- Did the employer or the people that you worked with give you problems?
- Tell us what they did or said to you.
- How did this make you feel?
- Did you want to leave the job because of your problems?

- Where you able to do the job or did you need help?
- Did you get the help that that you needed?

Objective 6: To determine the participants' desires, aspirations and expectations regarding their career, employment and achievements for the future.

Main question: Tell me about your future, what work you would like to do and what you would like to achieve for yourself or for others.

Specific questions:

- What would you like to do in the years to come?
- What kind of job would make you happy?
- How do you see yourself in 10 years from now?
- What do you want for yourself?
- How will you get what you want?
- What will make you happy?
- What do you want for others who are important to you, like your parents?
- Is there anything that you would like to add to what we are talking about?

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (ISIZULU)

Isheduli yengxoxo

Inhloso yalolu cwaningo bekwukuhlola umsebenzi we-post esikoleni kanye nemikhakha yabafundi abanezidingo ezikhethekile zemfundo. Ucwangingo lwalunezinhloso ezilandelayo. Kube nemibuzo yokuphenya ehlobene engavusa imininingwane efanelekile eyayifunwa kubahlanganyeli.

Izinhloso zocwaningo

1. Ukuhlola okuhlangenwe nakho kwesikole sabahlanganyeli ukulungiselela umhlaba wezisebenzi.

Umbuzo omkhulu: Ake ungitshele ngalokho okufunde esikoleni ngaphambi nje kokuba uhambe.

Buza imibuzo:

- You Yini oyifundile esikoleni?
- It Ngabe kukusizile emsebenzini wakho?
- Ngabe ujabule ngalokho obekufunda esikoleni?
- Yini ocabanga ukuthi kufanele uyifunde esikoleni ukuze ikusize ukwazi ukubhekana kangcono nomsebenzi ngemuva kwesikole?
- Ngesikhathi usesikoleni wake wacabanga ngalokho ongathanda ukukwenza lapho usuqede isikole?
- Ngabe kukhona amakhono owafundile esikoleni akusize ukuthi uthole umsebenzi?

2. Ukunquma uhlobo lomsebenzi owenziwa yilabo abahlanganyeli / ukuqeqeshwa kanye namathuba okuqashwa esikoleni.

Umbuzo omkhulu: Ake ungitshele ukuthi wenzeni lapho ushiya isikole?

Imibuzo yeProbe: Ukuqeqeshwa / izifundo

- Ngabe wake waqeqeshwa noma wafunda okuthile ngemuva kokuphuma kwesikole? Ngitshele okuningi ngayo.

- You Ufunde kuphi?
- Kwakuyisikhathi esingakanani?
- Bekumnandi?
- It Kwakunzima / kulula?
- You Ngabe ulutholile usizo uma uludinga?
- Kwakuyini izindleko zayo futhi ubani owayikhokhela?
- Ngabe kukhona okuthile obefuna ukukufunda kodwa ongakwazanga ngenxa yezizathu ezithile? Ngitshele okuningi ngayo.

Buza imibuzo: Imisebenzi

- Uqale nini ukuthola isikole?
- Uthole umsebenzi isikhathi esingakanani?
- Ubuze bani ngemisebenzi, ngubani owakusizile?
- Ngabe uye kuphi ukuyofuna umsebenzi?
- You Ngabe uzimisele ukuthatha noma yimuphi umsebenzi owavela?
- Bekulula ukuthola umsebenzi wakho wokuqala?
- The Abasebenzi bathini kuwe?
- Wenze muphi umsebenzi?
- You Ngabe ulisebenzisile ikhono olifundile?
- Ngabe umsebenzi ubulula noma ubunzima?
- Uma ungawuthanga umsebenzi uzizwe kanjani?
- You Uye wasizwa isidingo sokuthola olunye uqeqesho?
- Udinga uhlobo luni lokuqeqeshwa?
- Ingabe kukhona owaziyo ngamakhono alukhuni futhi athambile?
- You Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi zombili lezi zinto zibalulekile futhi ngani?
- Wacelwa yini ukuthi uyeke umsebenzi noma nini? Uma kunjalo kungani?
- Yimiphi eminye imisebenzi oyibambe iminyaka edlule?
- Yikuphi ongathandanga futhi ngani?
- Ujabule kuphi ngehlo lakho?

3.Ukuhlola ukulungiswa kwalabo ababambe iqhaza emhlabeni womsebenzi, walabo ababeqashiwe.

Umbuzo oyinhloko: Ake ungitshela ukuthi uvumelane kanjani nokuthi uzizwe kanjani ngomsebenzi wakho?

Buza imibuzo:

- Kwakuwumsebenzi onjani, wenzeni?
- You Ukwazile ukubhekana nomsebenzi? Kwakunzima?
- You Ucele usizo futhi ngabe bazimisele ukukusiza?
- Ngabe umqashi wayefuna yiphi ikhono?
- Uzizwe kanjani ngomsebenzi wakho? (imizwa emihle nezimbi)
- Sitshele ukuthi yini okujabulise?
- Yiziphi izimo ezakwenza ungajabuli?
- Get Ngabe uthandana kahle nabanye ozakwabo?

4.Ukuhlonza izinto ezibenza bakwazi ukubasiza ekutholeni nasekugcineni umsebenzi.

Umbuzo omkhulu: Ucabanga ukuthi yini ekusize ukuthi uthole umsebenzi futhi uhlale emsebenzini?

Buza imibuzo:

- Yini noma ucabanga ukuthi yini ekusize ukuthi uthole umsebenzi?
- Yiliphi ikhono okungenzeka ukuthi likusizile ekutholeni umsebenzi?
- Yiziphi izimfanelo ezinhle onazo okungenzeka ukuthi zikusizile?
- Family Ngabe umndeni wakho / abangane / omakhelwane bakusizile?
- Ngabe osebenza nabo bakusizile?

5.Ukuhlonza izinselelo abahlanganyeli abahlangabezana nazo lapho befuna noma beqashwa

Umbuzo oyinhloko: Ngitshele ngezinkinga (uma zikhona) owawunazo ngenkathi ufuna umsebenzi futhi, emsebenzini wakho.

Buza imibuzo:

5.1 Izinkinga ngesikhathi sokufuna umsebenzi

- Bekulula ngawe ukuthola umsebenzi?

- Ake ungitshela ezinye zezinkinga owawunazo lapho ufuna umsebenzi
- Yini abasebenzi ekutshela yona lapho ubacela umsebenzi?
- They Bebahle kuwe? Bathini?
- Did Kwenze kanjani ukuba uzizwe?
- Ngabe ulutholile usizo ngezinkinga zakho?
- Ngubani okusize?
- Kungani ucabanga ukuthi unazo lezo zinkinga?

2. Izinselelo ngesikhathi somsebenzi

- Lapho wenza lo msebenzi, wazizwa kanjani? Ngitshele okunye
- Ngabe umqashi noma abantu obasebenzisana nabo bakunikeze izinkinga?
- Sitshele ukuthi benzeni noma bathini kuwe.
- Did Kwenze kanjani ukuba uzizwe?
- You Ubufuna ukushiya umsebenzi ngenxa yezinkinga zakho?
- Lapho ukwazi ukwenza khona umsebenzi noma lapho udinga khona usizo?
- Ngabe ulutholile usizo obeludinga?

6.Ukucacisa izifiso zabo, izifiso zabo kanye nokulindelwe mayelana nomsebenzi wabo, ukuqashwa kanye nokufeza ikusasa.

Umbuzo oyinhloko: Ake ungitshela ngekusasa lakho, umsebenzi ongathanda ukuwenza nokuthi yini ongathanda ukuzenzela yona kanye nabanye.

Buza imibuzo:

- Yini ongathanda ukuyenza eminyakeni ezayo?
- Uhlobo luni lomsebenzi olungajabulisa?
- Ngabe uzibona kanjani eminyakeni eyi-10 kusukela manje?
- Ngabe ufunani wena?
- Yini ufunela abanye ababalulekile kuwe, njengabazali bakho?
- Sitshele nganoma yini ongathanda ukuyengeza esihlokweni sethu sengxoxo?

APPENDIX H: REQUESTING THE SERVICES OF AN INTERPRETER AND THE DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY

62 Fiddlewood Drive
Isipingo Hills
Durban
4133
25 August 2018

Dear colleague

Re: Requesting your service as an interpreter

I am conducting a research study towards a PhD in Education, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of my study is to explore the post school career/training and employment trajectories for students with special educational needs. It is hoped that the outcome of the study would be of benefit to all concerned.

I intend to obtain the research data by conducting semi-structured interviews with twelve young adults, with special educational needs, who have completed their schooling. Each interview would be about 30 minutes long. The information obtained from the young adults will be audio recorded, analysed and used to write up the study.

Some of the young adults may prefer to speak in isiZulu. In this case the services of an interpreter will be required. Your assistance is therefore requested. Should you agree to offer your services as an interpreter, you will be expected to sign a declaration of confidentiality. This implies that the all information emanating from the discussion must remain confidential. I will also inform you of certain ethical issues, guidelines and procedures that must be observed during the discussion.

I thank you for considering this request.

Yours sincerely

S Laalje (Researcher)
031 9021635
sllaalje@hotmail.com

Research Supervisor

Prof. Labby Ramrathan
031 260 8065
ramrathanp@ukzn.ac.za

HSSREC RESEARCH OFFICE

Full Name: Prem Mohun
HSS Research Office

Govan Bheki Building
Westville Campus
Contact: 0312604557
Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Declaration by interpreter

I _____ (name of interpreter) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this study. I agree to assist as an interpreter in this research study.

I agree to:

1. To keep all the information from the interview confidential
2. Respect the ethical issues involved in the research, as will be explained to me by the researcher.
3. Follow certain guidelines and procedures during the interview, as advised by the researcher.

Signature of interpreter

Witness: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX I: TURNITIN SUBMISSION RECEIPT



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