

AN ENQUIRY INTO
THE VALUE OF WORK EXPERIENCE
AS PART OF A CAREER EDUCATION
PROGRAMME
FOR GRADE 11 PUPILS
IN A CO-EDUCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the responses of the main role players in a Work Experience Programme which is offered as a component of Grade 11 Career Education at Hillcrest High School. The aim was to describe, evaluate and optimise the programme.

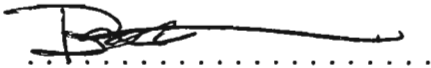
The theory and literature on career development and work experience was reviewed in order to establish what programmes, methods and approaches are currently being used internationally and in South Africa. Issues related to work experience were explored with a view to evaluate whether the programme undertaken could enhance the career decision making of Grade 11 pupils.

A qualitative, participatory research method was applied. The action research design chosen enabled the researcher to collect data over a period of eight months while interacting with her subjects as their teacher counsellor. The design, application, analysis of findings and limitations of the research study are described and recorded.

The findings indicated that the programme was regarded as a positive experience by the majority of pupils. It was possible to make recommendations from the findings for wider application of such a programme.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, unless otherwise indicated, this dissertation is my own work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brenda Helen Harris', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Brenda Helen Harris

15-01-97

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BHH

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Chapter

I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Work experience has been part of the career education programme of Hillcrest High School for many years and has been implemented annually without conscious consideration of its wider implications or its consequences. In the past, informal feedback has been positive. In an era of greater reflection on the role and functioning of teacher-counsellors, particularly with cutbacks in levels of staffing, and with evaluation of school curricula being important as the education system in SA is being transformed, it is appropriate that aspects of the school programme be more formally researched. The work experience programme takes up a great deal of time and effort, hence the decision of the researcher to make this a topic of investigation.

1.2 The Focus of the Dissertation

The research investigation focuses specifically on a school-based work experience scheme for all Grade 11 pupils in a single, comprehensive high school. It aims to describe and evaluate the process and consider ways of optimising the experience for the role players concerned.

World trends in rising unemployment and changing working roles have impacted on the

social and political shifts current in South Africa today to create a challenge for those preparing school leavers for the working world.

It was in response to these challenges that this research was undertaken. Ways must be sought and opportunities provided to ease the transition from school to work. The work experience described in this study provides such an opportunity for Grade 11 pupils to:

- Expand the range of occupations they are prepared to consider in terms of personal career planning.
- Test their career preference before committing themselves to it.
- Experience the work environment so that they will be able to manage the transition to work more comfortably.
- Facilitate their personal and social development.
- Develop their knowledge and understanding of the world of work.

The additional opportunity for experiential learning is provided in the form of debriefing and reflection. This is possible because the nature of the programme is that it is inclusive of a preparation stage and a debriefing stage as well as the experience itself.

The findings of this study, although limited in scope and not necessarily generalisable, reflect the potential for such programmes to be replicated.

Before any researcher may embark on helping to develop others' education, she must first develop her own; and must honestly attempt to understand the processes and experiences, and share those understandings with others. It is only through self knowledge that we hope to know others, and it is only through a commitment to professional development that we can hope to improve the quality of education in our own classrooms.

1.3 Developments in Work Experience

A marked growth of interest in work experience as part of a wider movement to integrate education and work is evident in literature from the UK, Europe, Australia, Canada and the USA. Initially it was focussed on the education of pupils of average and below-average ability but in the late '80s in the UK it was extended to all pupils reaching the end of compulsory schooling. Hopson and Scally (1983) explore the alternatives to paid employment and separate 'work' from 'employment', which has more recently led Watts (Miller et al, 1991) to say that young people need to : *familiarise themselves with a range of occupations including both those associated with paid employment and those associated with work at home or within the community from which no income is derived* (p30).

Work experience programmes are conducted by isolated schools and some colleges in South Africa but no published documentation on the subject is available and to the best of the writer's knowledge no research on work experience has been done in South Africa or more specifically in KwaZulu Natal.

The literature review (Chapter 2) gives an overview of the ideals and rationale underpinning the work experience movement. Various approaches, programmes and methods in use in different parts of the world are discussed. Also in Chapter 2 is a review of the current and relevant career development theory. Included are the works of Super, Holland, Roe, Tiedeman and Crites.

1.4 Choice of Research Methodology

Chapter 3 contains a description of the research design and methodology. A qualitative approach was chosen because of the nature of the project which aimed at working with Grade 11 pupils in a participatory way over an eight month period. The study

investigated the main role players' responses to, and perceptions of the work experience programme over this extended period. These responses would inevitably be subjective and influenced by individual values. The researcher sought to gain an understanding of the subjects' worlds and accurately portray their responses to this dynamic process. Quantitative methods were not considered suitable for these reasons. Flexibility was felt to be an important requirement in the choice of design and method. The site and subjects were predetermined by the researcher's work location.

An action research approach was deemed most suitable as the process involved the 'cycles of phases' of planning, implementing, observing, reflecting and replanning as described by various researchers (see Chapter 3). The limitations for action research are also discussed in Chapter 3 and the researcher acknowledges the possibility of bias in interpreting the data, being aware of her own subjectivity as a participant in the process.

The techniques used for collection of data include participant observation, logbook entries, the use of questionnaires and structured worksheets, a standardised test, and focussed classroom discussions. Four pupils included in the general study were selected for additional case study purposes. It was intended that these would add depth to the study. Data was analysed at the completion of each phase. Each phase of the action research cycle necessitated interpreting observations, and responses of participants in order to adapt and plan the next step.

1.5 The Work Experience Project: An Analysis of Impressions and Interpretation

Chapter 4 describes the events and interactions that took place during the work experience. The time frame and the four phases of the programme are summarised at the beginning of the chapter. The action research design as a whole is analysed from the

points of view of the researcher, the employers and the pupils in a series of phases describing the process of the study. Case studies of four pupils from the general group provide an in-depth description of the process over the eight month period.

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter and contains a description of the recommendations and limitations of the study.

1.6 Definition of terms

1.6.1 Work experience

Watts (Miller et al, 1991) describes work experience as a paradoxical phrase in that it is firmly distinguished from 'work' and is used to describe schemes in which only part of the full experience of work is available. To be more specific he says:

it is applied to schemes in which people experience work tasks in work environments, but without taking on the full identity of the worker. The key distinction is that the role of students on a work-experience scheme is not that of employee but of learner. Accordingly they are only attached to the work place on a short-term basis, and are not normally paid by the employer (p16).

Watts' definition of work experience applies to schemes in which pupils have the opportunity to experience the work environment and the role of the worker while maintaining the identity of student. *Work observation* is where the pupils experience the work environments but not the work tasks. There are two main types of observation: *work visits*, which are carried out by groups and often observe work processes rather than work roles, and *work shadowing*, in which the individual follows a particular worker for a period of time, observing all the tasks in which he engages.

Before we can fully understand the concept 'work experience' there is a need to be more specific about the separate concepts 'work' and 'experience'. Hopson and Scally (1983) separate 'work' into the categories of 'paid' and 'unpaid', while Watts (Miller et al, 1991: p37) claims that the perspective of 'work' can be both narrow and broad. The narrow view of work defines it as *paid employment*, a broad definition includes self employment and the informal economies. Seen in this light, the following definition seems appropriate. Steinberg (in Miller et al, 1991) defines work as:

any activity in which a young person engages - paid or unpaid, obligatory or voluntary - that places the adolescent, subjectively and objectively, in the role of 'worker', adding to or replacing the other primary roles of adolescence, that is the roles of 'family member' and 'student' (p35).

Similarly, Watts (Miller et al, 1991: p37) extends 'experience' to two levels. A narrow view of 'experience' limits it to direct experience while the broad view includes work shadowing, work visits and work simulations.

At this point there is a need to define the particular brand of work experience carried out in this research project. As this experience is available to all the Grade 11 pupils, the range of work selected is vast. The nature of the tasks of some professional work precludes the actual experiencing of them by pupils. In addition, the very short time period limits the pupils to learning no more than the most basic skills associated with the job. It appears, then, that in accordance with Watts categorization of work experience, that this particular scheme can be included in the category of *work observation* and described more specifically as *work shadowing*. It is the contention of the researcher that, although this project is unique and was implemented before the literature was consulted, it can best be described by Watts (1983) definition:

Work shadowing is a form of work observation, in which an individual student follows a particular worker for a period of time (usually between two days and a week), observing the various tasks in which he or she engages, and in so doing within the context of his or her total

role (p12).

1.6.2 Guidance

The National Education Policy Investigation, Support Services (1992) reports that school guidance and counselling is a relatively new subject. It was initiated in the White, Coloured, and Indian departments in 1967 but was only included in the African departments in 1981. In all departments both career guidance and life skills have emerged as major focus areas in the last decade (pp19-20). The Framework Report (NEPI, 1992) makes specific recommendation for the improvement of guidance services for rural and townships schools which would assist pupils in making choices both within and between the sectors of the system (p34).

de Lange defined School Guidance and Counselling in an HSRC report in 1981 as:

a practice and process which brings children into contact with the real world in such a way that they are taught life skills and survival techniques which enable them to direct themselves competently within the educational, personal and social spheres and the world of work (NEPI, Support Services, 1992: p20).

Brownell (1996) says that when the term 'guidance' is used in a school context, it refers to the helping process which aims to promote effective living and an exploration of the different ways to tackle difficulties. Guidance must be appropriate to the developmental stage of students who are being encouraged to realise and develop their individuality and individual potential. Guidance activities should enable pupils to take responsibility for their own lives, to find out relevant information, to make decisions and to contribute positively to the society in which they live (p2).

The Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance (1995) provides considerable scope for

interpretation that is developmentally appropriate and relevant. Provincial education policy might dictate that certain components are covered, but the programmes offered by individual schools are able to reflect local needs. Guidance should, however, promote a culture of learning and involve active learning and discovery.

1.6.3 Career Education, Counselling and Guidance

It is important that the reader have the same understanding as the researcher of the concepts discussed in this project. Definitions of the specific concepts used in this study will now follow:

Career: *The course of events which constitutes a life; the sequence of occupations and other life roles which combine to express one's commitment to work in his or her total pattern of self development.... Careers exist only as people pursue them; they are person-centred (Lewis et al, 1986: p169).*

Occupation: *A specific job or work activity (Gibson & Mitchell, 1986: p278).*

Vocation: *A trade or occupation (ibid.: p278)*

Career Education: *Those planned-for experiences that facilitate a person's career development and preparation for the world of work. The totality of experiences through which one learns about and prepares for engaging in work as part of a way of living. A primary responsibility of the school with an emphasis on learning about, planning for, and preparing to enter a career (ibid.: p278).*

de Haas (1991) distinguishes between the terms *vocation* and *career* stating her preference for *career* because it emphasizes the developmental and ongoing features of the process

of career decision making. She also distinguishes between *career counselling* and *career guidance*, explaining that the term *guidance* implies that the person offering the help knows what is best for the person being helped, while *counselling* involves consultation and the mutual interchange of opinions and ideas, discussion and deliberation. The term *counselling* would appear to describe the interaction between the teacher-researcher and the pupils more accurately than *guidance* which seems to imply advice-giving (pp6-9).

Although this teacher-counsellor is available for individual pupil counselling, when the additional role of coordinator-of-the-work-experience was added to an already busy schedule, there was not enough time to see the more than 150 pupils individually. Although some of the pupils were afforded the opportunity of this form of counselling, the majority were addressed in the classroom situation. Thus the role of the teacher-counsellor in this work experience project can be described as teacher-coordinator and the associated curriculum as career education. Brownell (1988) says the aims of career education are:

to make pupils more self-aware by helping them to explore among other things, their aptitudes, interests, abilities and value systems, and to apply their knowledge of self within the context of life in general, and in career and/or educational decision making in particular (p66).

1.7 Conclusion

The intention in this chapter has been to introduce the research project at hand. An outline of the contents of the study is provided by paragraphs 1.3 - 1.5 above. The concept of work experience and the concepts which are related to its implementation in the Grade 11 career education programme were also introduced. The theory and relevant literature associated with the career education and, particularly, the work experience programme will be examined in the following chapter.

Chapter

2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

..theory provides counsellors with ideas about possible intervention strategies to use, when to use them, and how to use them. The use of theory in practice, then, provides counsellors and clients with direction and focus for the counseling process, assisting clients to reach their goals or resolve their problems (McDaniels and Gysbers, 1992: p64).

Theory provides a rationale for counsellor action that goes beyond personal experience and intuition. This review of the theories and literature relevant to the research investigation gives an overview of the developments in the fields of career education in general and of work experience in particular. The purpose is to sketch briefly how and to what extent educators in other parts of the world and in South Africa are including work experience in their career education programmes.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is a discussion of the theoretical standpoints of Ginzberg and Blau, Super, Holland, Roe, Crites and Tiedeman as they have relevance to all or part of the Grade 11 work experience programme. The second section is concerned with the literature relating to work experience and work experience programmes, while a review on the current writings on life skills makes up the third section. In conclusion current South African career guidance is considered in relation to the changing trends in the world of work.

2.1 Theories and Approaches to Career Development

Five theories related to career development are presented. Each covers aspects of career decision making and presents a conceptual framework for aspects of the process. These theories inform the philosophy underpinning the career education programme and the researcher's approach to the work experience programme to be described

2.1.1 The Process Theories

In the 1950s Ginzberg and his colleagues analysed the process of occupational decision making in terms of three periods - first *Fantasy* choices, other *Tentative* choices, and finally *Realistic* choices. These stages were divided into substages: the *Tentative* stage into the four substages of *Interest*, *Capacity*, *Value*, and *Transition*, and the *Realistic* stage into the three substages of *Exploration*, *Crystallisation*, and *Specification*. The theory suggests a process tending increasingly toward realism in career decision making as one becomes more mature (Watts, 1981: pp23-24, Lewis et al, 1986: p188). This process is seen to be a developmental one, and by the time pupils are in their last two years of formal school, a goal of the guidance process is to assist them move from the Tentative stage through to the Realistic stage.

Originally, Ginzberg and his colleagues suggested that the crystallization of occupational choice had the quality of compromise between things such as the constraints of family income and situation, parental attitudes and values, opportunities in the world of work and value orientations. In the 1970s, their modified theory suggested that the process of career choice and development is life-long and open-ended.

In conclusion, there are four important ingredients which these theories suggest

contribute to the adequacy of the individual's career choice process during adolescence and are therefore of relevance to this research project.

They are:

- reality testing;
- the development of a suitable time perspective;
- the ability to defer gratifications; and
- the ability to accept and implement compromises in career plans (Gibson & Mitchell, 1986: p287).

Also in the 1950s, Blau and his colleagues considered how the social structure influences both personal development and defines the conditions in which decisions take place. They conceived of occupational choice as a process of compromise, continually modified, between preferences for and expectations of being able to get into various occupations. Blau et al. considered the interaction between personality and culture and identified four personal and four social characteristics which determine occupational entry. The former were biological conditions - personality development, socio-psychological attributes, and immediate determinants such as occupational information and values. The latter were physical or geographic conditions - historical change, socio-economic organisation, and immediate determinants such as demand and functional and non-functional requirements (Watts, 1981: pp14-15, Lewis et al, 1986: p183).

The following have some implications arising from these theories. Firstly, because the pupils' environments have an impact on the career options open or at least perceived to be open to them, career guidance should provide opportunities to broaden their horizons through structured career exploration groups and career and labour market information. It is important to expose pupils to alternatives and give them the skills to relate those alternatives to the career exploration and choice process. Secondly, because pupils' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and values have an impact on the meaning they attach to work, it is desirable to use these backgrounds, experiences, and values as a springboard

for discussion. Thirdly, because some pupils follow the line of least resistance, or the path with which they are already familiar in their career exploration, career guidance should help them to appreciate career exploration as a quest rather than a track to follow routinely. Fourthly, because labour markets change, pupils need to be assisted in developing adaptive skills to deal with shifting occupational demands and economic conditions (Mc Daniels & Gysbers, 1992: pp42-43).

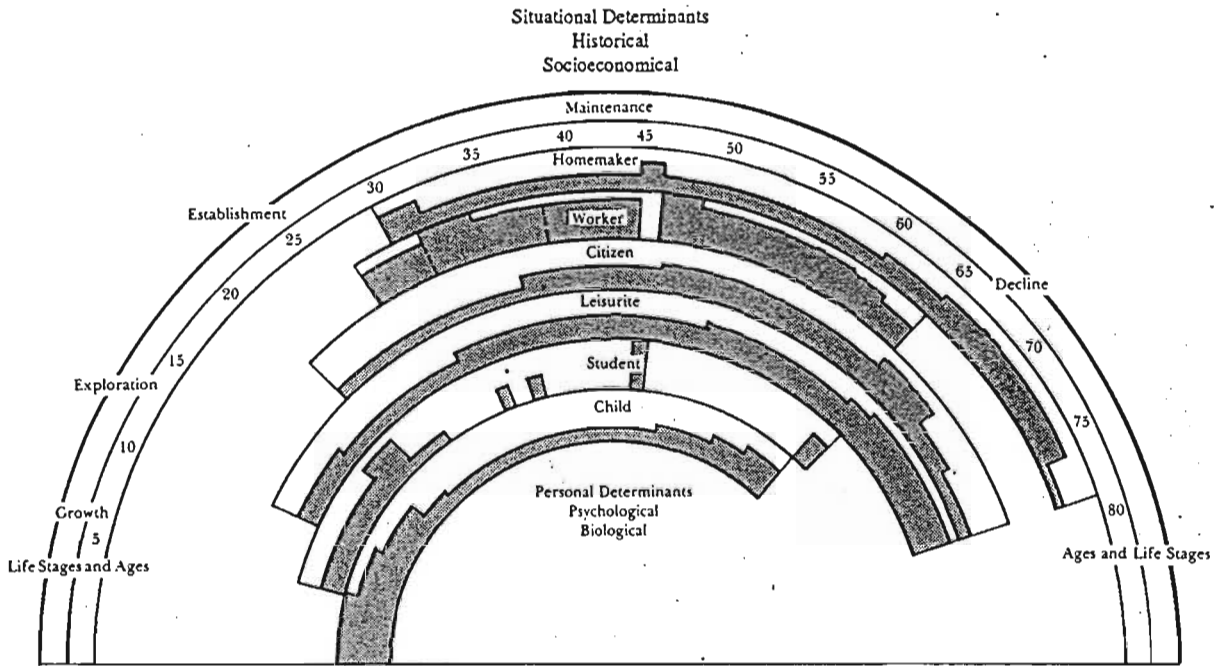
2.1.2 Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory

Donald Super and his colleagues compiled the most encompassing of the developmental approaches to career development. Super is particularly concerned with career progression. He used longitudinal studies to develop methods to analyse the relationship between certain life stages and the appropriate behaviours in dealing with stage related tasks. Super's approach is to synthesize what has been learned about career development by researchers and theorists, and this he did with the work of Buehler and Ginzberg amongst others. Of particular relevance to this research project, is Super's description of the nature of career exploration which leads to the making of career choices.

Super and his colleagues were concerned with determining career patterns. Drawing from a humanistic philosophy of individual potentials and differences, they were also interested in influences on development by role models and life contexts and developed a theory in the form of 'Fourteen Propositions' (Mc Daniels & Gysbers, 1992: p43).

To illustrate the complexities of career decision making, Super developed two models. The Life-Career Rainbow and the Archway model are graphic representations of his theory. The Rainbow (p14) brings the life-span and life-space into two dimensional perspective and the Archway Model (p18) reveals the segmented, but unified and developmental nature of career development.

Figure 1 The Life Career Rainbow: Six Life Roles in Schematic Life Space (Brown et al, 1990: p212)



In relation to this research project some of the more important concepts of Donald Super's theory have been identified and are discussed in greater detail below.

2.1.2.1 Life Stages

Super based his life-stage theory on typical developmental tasks, with focus on the maxicycle. A maxicycle is a series of life stages characterised as a sequence of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline, and these stages may in turn be subdivided into:

- the fantasy, tentative, and realistic phases of the exploratory stage and
- the trial and stable phases of the establishment stage.

A minicycle takes place in the transitions from one stage to the next (Mc Daniels and Gysbers, 1992: p45). The concept of life stages has been modified in recent years, from envisioning mainly a maxicycle to involving minicycles of growth, exploration,

establishment, maintenance, and decline, linked in a series within a maxicycle. Re-exploration and re-establishment when career shifts are made have thus attracted a great deal of attention, and the term has come to denote these processes. Super says that transitions are considered to be likely several times during a career (ibid.: p50).

Super's formulation has sought to make it clear that not only the ages of the transitions are very flexible but also that each transition involves a recycling through a period of growth in the new role, of exploration of the nature and expectations of that role.

Important too, is the greater emphasis on the fact that the typical impetus for any specific transition is not necessarily age itself, for the timing of transitions (stage) is a function of the individual's personality and abilities, as well as of his or her situation.... Furthermore, the popular career-education concept of exploration as something completed in midadolescence has been shown to be invalid. Instead it carries on into the middle and late twenties, sometimes the early thirties, and often starts again in the recycling at later stages. It appears in the form of conventional, unstable, or multi-trail careers and in so-called mid-career crisis (Brown et al, 1990: p237).

2.1.2.2 Career Maturity

Career maturity is longitudinal; it takes place over the life span, the maxicycle, and is linked to the 'life stages and ages' on the outside semi-circle of the model.

Career maturity is defined as the individual's readiness to cope with the developmental tasks with which he or she is confronted because of his or her biological and social developments and because of society's expectations of people who have reached that stage of development. This readiness is both affective and cognitive. (Super, in Brown et al, 1990: p213).

The affective variables are expressed as attitudes and relate to the areas of career exploration and planning. The cognitive variables mostly relate to knowledge: the knowledge of the principles of career decision making and the ability to apply them to the actual choices; the knowledge of the nature of careers, occupations, and the world of work; and knowledge of the field of work into which one's occupational preference falls. The concept of career maturity conveys the notion that there are certain behaviours that describe the individual's mastery of the developmental tasks associated with each life stage. So one can think of career maturity as both a structural and a developmental concept because the elements of career maturity can be identified and assessed for particular life stages and they also change in different life stages.

2.1.2.3 Role Salience

Role salience is the third dimension depicted by the Life-Career Rainbow. It is latitudinal. It is the life space, the constellation of positions occupied and roles played by a person. In the Rainbow major roles are specified: that of the child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker and homemaker.

In a later formulation of his theory, Super reaffirms his developmental approach but makes out a stronger case for the fact that people play particular roles in so-called 'theatres' of life. Specific roles are normally related to specific theatres, but one role can be played in more than one theatre. The various roles interact. The addition of a new role reduces the participation of one or more others and sometimes affects the effective commitment. These various roles can be extensive (supportive or supplementary), compensatory, or neutral. They can also be conflicting if they make inroads into time and energy needed elsewhere. They can enrich life or overburden it. The continuous build-up and decline of particular roles in the life cycle of an individual is related to the stage of life in which a person finds him- or her-self and the particular and relevant

developmental tasks associated with that stage (Nel, 1988: pp3-4).

Of relevance to this research project are the links between the various roles played by one person. The more effectively an adolescent plays his or her pre-occupational roles, in particular those of student, leisurite and part time worker, the more ably will such a person be able to make an appropriate occupational decision. The extent and type of schooling and/or training will influence a person's first occupational position and the first occupational position, in its turn, subsequent occupational positions (Nel, 1988: p4).

2.1.2.4 Self Concept

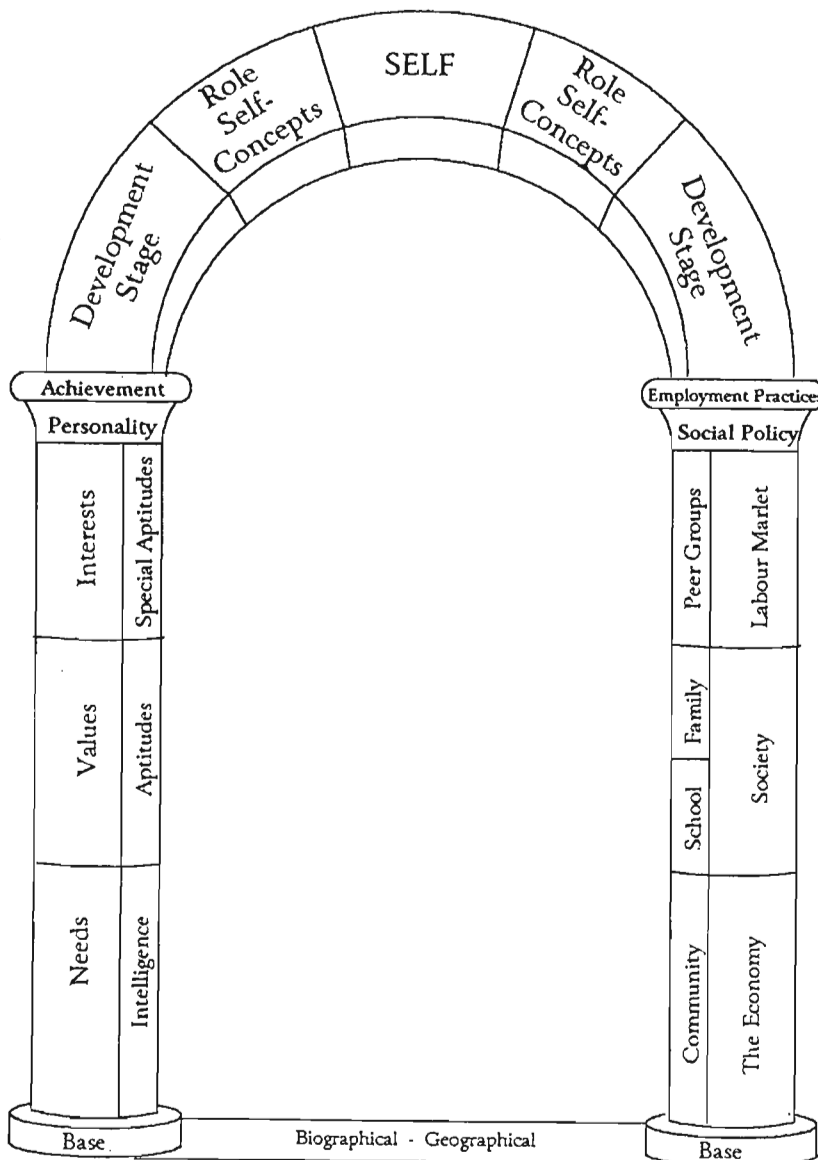
By far the most central and crucial characteristic of Super's theory is the role he ascribes to the self-concept. Super provides an explicit and detailed explanation of career development by describing how the self-concept is formed and implemented occupationally. According to him the formation of the self-concept includes exploration of the world and the self, self-differentiation, identification, role playing, and reality testing (Verma, undated).

In considering how the Grade 11 pupils make a work experience choice and later a career choice, it is relevant to consider Super's views on the implementation of the self-concept into occupational terms. According to him this occurs in various ways: the child's identification with an adult may lead to his playing the adult's occupational role; a person may be cast into a role by chance and this experience may lead to the discovery of a congenial career translation of his or her self-concept; or a pupil may be aware that he or she has many attributes which are said to be important in a certain field of work and this may prompt further investigation which may lead to the belief that the role expectations of the occupation are such that he or she would do well in and enjoy it.

People do not have only one self-concept but rather constellations of self-concepts. Garfinkle showed that high school students' concepts of themselves as students are empirically differentiated from their general concepts and, by inference from their concepts of themselves in other roles, such as athlete and child in the family (Brown et al, 1990: p223).

Super's interest in the self-concept led to the most recent developments of the theory as encapsulated in the Archway Model. This model represents the dual influences of the

Figure 2 The Archway (Brown et al, 1990: p200)



personal determinants (the left column) and the family and social determinants (the right column). These dual influences are maintained in some sort of balance by the person's 'self', which Drever in (Brown et al, 1990) defines as:

the integrated and dynamic organization of the physical, mental, moral, and social qualities of the individual that manifests itself to other people in the give and take of social life...the impulses and habits, interests, and complexes, the sentiments and ideals, the opinions and beliefs, as manifested in his social milieu...(pp201-202).

This model emphasises both the need for the understanding of personal attributes as well as various familial and societal influences as they impact on the individual. This research project aims to examine the role of the work experience programme on pupils' understanding of both their own attributes and the workplace as well as the interaction of the two (represented by the two columns of the archway).

2.1.2.5 Decision Processes

Super claims that theorists and practitioners have come to see that decision-making is central to career development and that this has led to a focus on decision-making styles. The life-stage and developmental-task emphasis of the developmental theories highlights the sequential nature of decision making, stressing the ongoing mini-decisions that add up to a flexible maxi-decision. With a changing self and changing situations the matching process is never really completed. Matching occurs only temporarily, when major decisions are made; and even then, minor decisions continue to be made. In the use of the self-construct theory, Super suggests it is *the deciding individual...who make the synthesis or compromise of self and situational data* (Brown et al, 1990: p240).

Career education and guidance should therefore take into account the sequential nature of decision-making and equip the pupils to anticipate and cope with the mini-decisions and to make them add up to flexible maxi-decisions. There is also a need for the pupils to be made aware of how the decisions are related to life-stage and developmental-task.

2.1.2.6 Practical Applications

Probably more than ever before, Super's theory seems adaptable for both programmatic and individual use. Super contends that environmental factors, such as social and economic conditions, and genetic factors influence the development of the self-concept.

Since the implementation of the self-concept vocationally is considered the very essence of the career choice process, and the self-concept is open to outside influence during the formative years, counsellors can be particularly effective in planning strategies which will affect the career choice process.

Career developmental theory has provided a theoretical orientation for career education in schools. Super claims that the programmes developed need to recognise the individual differences in career development of the pupils and should seek to foster curiosity which leads to exploratory behaviour, autonomy, time perspective, and self esteem. At the same time they should expose pupils to a variety of adult roles (Brown et al, 1990: p243). Crites (1981) agrees, but adds that a broader, more inclusive goal of career developmental counselling is to further both career and personal development, because work is so central to a person's life (p128).

Super identifies the main characteristics of career development programmes, including those for school pupils. He claims that in any setting, three types of programmes are needed: the designing and monitoring of a development- or growth-producing environment, group activities designed to foster career development, and individual counselling:

For students, an environment that fosters career development means a curriculum that facilitates growth, exploration of oneself and the world (particularly the occupational world and the educational world that leads to it), establishment in a field of study leading to a field of work, and maintenance of the role of student (the role of learner or of worker in a learning job). Such an environment requires teachers who are interested in human development, as well as subject matter. It means a curriculum flexible enough to foster career development and individual counseling. It will contain resources for exploration and for learning that are varied and attractive - libraries, laboratories, shops, and school-community programs (Herr and Cramer in Brown et al, 1990: p258).

Consideration of the application of the developmental theory as it is applied to group guidance and assessment will follow. Individual counselling, even though it is one of the central thrusts of the application of Super's theory, because it has little bearing on the research to be described.

It is the function of career development counselling to help pupils to anticipate career development tasks to plan how to cope with them, and to evaluate them. A career counsellor can play an important role at a number of junctures in the lifespan. Of interest to this research are those aspects which impact on the Grade 11 Career Education Programme.

Exploration in the broadest sense could begin in the middle school, perhaps grade 9, when the pupils are making a subject choice. Exploration in more depth would be appropriate when the pupil appears ready to focus on one or two groups of occupations, and if this proved unsuccessful he or she could go back to broad exploration again. Work experience would be undertaken with a clear understanding that it is essentially in-depth exploration.

Group guidance activities should include both self-exploration and occupational exploration projects. An important objective is an orientation to career, in the sense of life stages and developmental tasks. Too often career education deals only with occupations and not with career development. Both, in fact, are needed. The group activities should deal with the person (the individuals as related to occupation and to career), with occupation, and with careers. Schedules should be arranged to guide and evaluate career development, with time for monitoring needs and resource provision as well as for counselling.

Because occupational decisions are similar to other life decisions and continue to be made throughout life, group guidance for career development should focus on decision making and learning and practising the skills of decision making. It should take into account the

sequential nature of decision making and equip the pupils to anticipate and cope with the mini-decisions which become the basis for maxi-decision making.

Assessment can be made of a pupil's relative level of career maturity because Super has collected data regarding the skills, attitudes, and level of knowledge that characterise each developmental level. After ascertaining the pupil's level of career maturity, the counsellor can identify the next career relevant task to be accomplished. If pupils are career immature, specific steps can be taken to make them aware of the stage related behaviours they need to acquire and suggest potential ways for doing this.

The majority of high school pupils are career immature, in that many have little information about careers and occupations and lack the skills to plan ahead. Assessment of career maturity then emerges as an early step in assessment for career counselling and for counselling concerning further education. If a pupil scores low on scales that assess planning and exploration, then counselling needs to concentrate on the arousal of interest in careers and career planning. Exploring some field that appears to be of current interest in such a way as to develop more awareness of the need to plan may be more helpful than trying to help the student narrow a choice to one occupational preparation programme (Brown et al, 1990: pp244-246).

In conclusion, the developmental theories are well suited for a career education programme which is dependent on group guidance. The initial teaching relates to the teacher identifying the developmental process of career decision-making and the responsibility of each pupil for his or her own progress. The flexibility suits large classes - they can be divided into groups of pupils who are at similar stages or have the same needs. The cyclic progression means that pupils can fit in at whatever stage of development they have reached.

2.1.3 Holland's Personality Theory

John L. Holland considers personality style to be the major determinant of vocational decision-making and development. He proposes that personality develops as a result of the interaction of environmental and genetic factors. From this interaction the individual develops a preferred personal style, or 'modal personal orientation' as he calls it, which can be classified in terms of six different personality types. According to Holland the individual chooses a work environment which satisfies his particular personality style. Work environments can be classified into categories similar in their requirements to the six personality orientations. Since successful performance in each work environment rests upon specific abilities, values, and attitudes, a direct relationship between personality style and work environment is specified in Holland's theory. In addition, a hierarchy of job levels within each occupational environment is developed in which levels of intelligence and individual self-evaluation are the determinants.

The difference between Super's self concept theory and Holland's congruence theory is that where Super claims his interest is in the nature, sequence, and determinants of the choices that constitute a career over the life span, Holland is concerned with the implementation of an occupational self concept which tends to be a single, matching process.

2.1.3.1 Basic Assumptions

Four basic assumptions underlie Holland's (1985a) theory:

- occupational choice is an expression of personality;
- occupational stereotypes develop;
- the personalities of individuals in the same occupation correspond;
- individuals working in the same occupational environment, with the same

personality traits, are inclined to react in a similar way to most situations (Gevers, 1992).

Holland thus proposed a strong link between interests and personality thus concluding that measures of interest are in fact measures of personality (Gibson & Mitchell, 1986: p291).

2.1.3.2 Principal Features

The first feature of Holland's theory is his claim that most people can be categorized as being one of six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising or conventional.

The realistic type

The realistic individual prefers activities that involve the systematic manipulation of machinery, tools, or animals, and shows a clear aversion to educational, intellectual, social and creative activities. A lack of social, educational and verbal skills may be experienced. A draughtsman is an example of this career.

The investigative type

This type is characterized by a preference for the systematic investigation of the physical, biological and cultural phenomena. They often lack leadership skills. Careers include physicist and chemist.

The artistic type

Artistic individuals tend to be expressive, nonconforming, original, and introspective and lack clerical skills. Occupations relating to this type are interior decorator and journalist.

The social type

The social type shows a definite preference for working with people, by forming and training them or by caring for them. These people tend to lack mechanical and scientific ability. They choose careers involving people eg. nursing.

The enterprising type

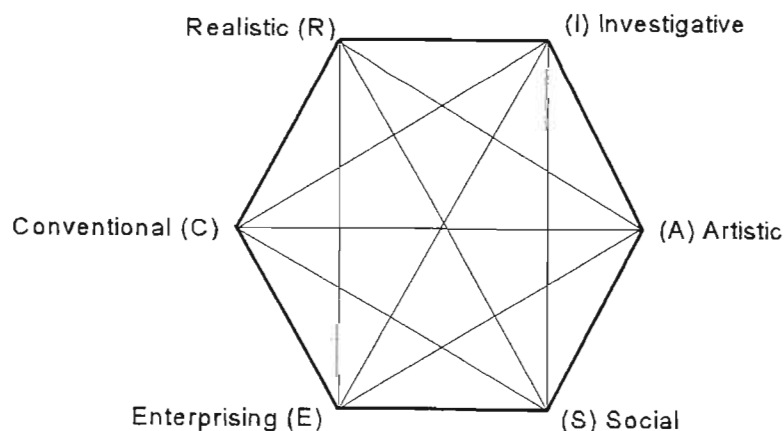
The enterprising person can be identified by his or her ability to motivate others to the attainment of a common goal, often economic. What they lack is scientific ability. Businessmen, lawyers and sales people fit into this type of occupation.

The conventional type

These people enjoy systematically manipulating data, filing records or reproducing materials and avoid artistic activities. This type prefers occupations such as accountancy, and business administration (Brown et al, 1990: p42, Gevers, 1992: pp.6-7).

The hexagon graphically represents the relationships between the constructs in Holland's theory (Crites, 1969: pp14-116).

Figure 3 Holland's hexagonal model of interest (Gevers, 1992: p4).



Holland suggests that, while one of the six types usually predominates in people, there are also subtypes, or personality patterns, that provide more complete descriptions. Such patterns profile individuals according to the typology. A person's complete profile would include characteristics of all six types, but subtypes are developed on the basis of the three most prevalent types to be found in the individual. The Holland profiles are called three-letter codes and have become a kind of shorthand for characterizing people as well as occupations (Brown et al , 1990: p41).

Another feature of Holland's theory are the unique work environments are created by the interaction of the people who work there (Gibson & Mitchell, 1986: p291). Using the same constructs which he used to define the personality types, Holland describes six environment types (Gevers et al, 1992: p7).

The realistic environment

This environment promotes technical skills. It is an environment for the orderly and systematic use of tools and machinery.

The investigative environment

The predominant characteristic of this environment is the systematic and creative investigation of physical, biological and cultural phenomena.

The artistic environment

This is a free, unsystematized and creative environment.

The social environment

A genial atmosphere in this environment generates social skills.

The enterprising environment

A competitive atmosphere and high levels of tension are not uncommon in this

environment.

The conventional environment

In this environment individuals are expected to conform to set demands.

The interaction between personality and environment is the determinant of an individual's behaviour. Career stereotypes have reliable and important psychological and sociological meanings. Predictions about occupational choice can be made on the basis of information about the personality type and the occupational environment (Gevers, 1992, pp.7-8 and Gibson and Mitchell, 1986: p291).

A third feature of Holland's theory is the identification of five key concepts. He uses the spatial representation of the Hexagon to define the concepts: consistency, congruence, differentiation, identity and calculus.

The concept of consistency applies to personality as well as to environment type and is defined as the degree to which an occupational profile is internally consistent. A high degree of consistency is an indication that the skills, interests and values relate well to one another, the person and the environment and will thus be more predictable (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992: p40).

There is congruence when individuals live and work in an environment whose type is identical or similar to their own types (Gevers et al, 1992: p10).

Differentiation is regarded as the degree to which the three highest scores of an individual's interest profile or an occupation's profile differ from one another. Some people and environments are very pure. In contrast, a person who resembles many types or an environment that is characterised by about equal numbers of the six types is undifferentiated or poorly defined (Mc Daniels & Gysbers, 1992: p40).

The degree of an individual's occupational identity can be seen by the extent to which he or she has a clear and stable vision of his or her goals, interests and talents. Similarly, the occupational environment has a high level of identity when there are clear, consistent and integrated objectives, tasks and rewards which remain stable over a long period (Brown et al, 1990: p44).

The final concept is calculus and this explains the internal relationship of the theory as well as providing a graphic representation of the degree of consistency within or between a person or an environment (Brown et al, 1990: p46).

2.1.3.4 Practical Applications

Although there is criticism that Holland's theory does not suggest specific techniques according to which career guidance can be conducted, it does describe testable constructs and their functions which underlie occupational behaviour. His theory is also well integrated with psychometric instruments: the Self Directed Search; a classification system, namely the Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes; as well as a computerised career guidance system, The Discover Career Guidance System (Gevers, 1992: p15).

Holland's theory provides a link between the individual and the world of work in the form of Holland's Occupational Classification. This integrated, coordinated and systematic coding system is straightforward and easy to understand and use. Holland suggests three ways:

- for organising occupational information
The library and career information material can be filed according to the occupational classification system.
- for analysing work histories
As a class activity pupils, can analyse a working history classifying the jobs

according to Holland's Hexagon. They can then predict future jobs according to the past pattern.

- developing a plan for occupational exploration

Pupils can use their three letter code as a start for exploring career literature, work experience placements and interviews with working people. They need to return to their code between each exploration to confirm which way they are tending.

The Self Directed Search is the most widely used measure based on Holland's system in South African schools. It is easy to complete and relatively simple for pupils to score, and accessible to teacher counsellors. In this study, Holland's coding system was used to show the distribution of the pupils placements on their work experience.

Brown et al(1990) have high praise for Holland's theory: *Symmetry added to simplicity results in a theory with the greatest appeal and application* (p39). Once a three letter code has been established for each pupil, the South African Dictionary of Occupations (Taljaard & von Mollendorf, 1987) and the Hexagon(Gevers, 1992) can enable a teacher counsellor to generate many pupil directed activities.

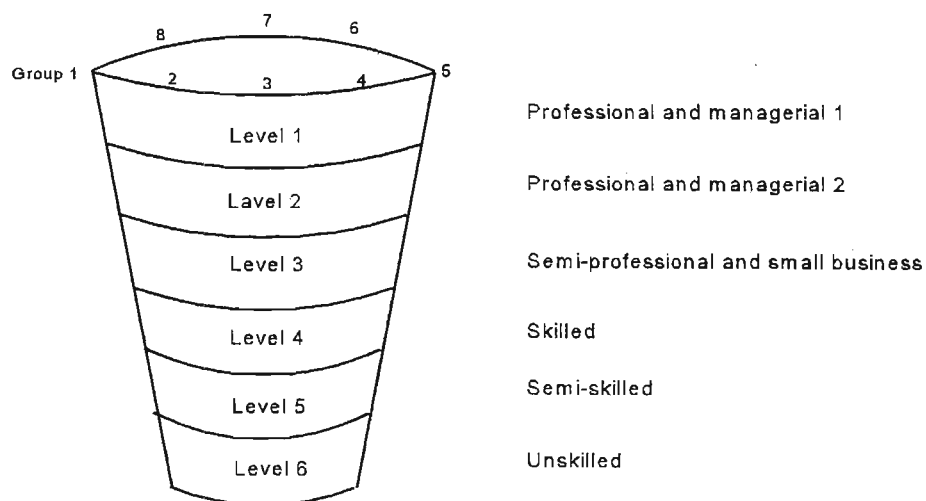
2.1.4 Roe's Need Theory

Anne Roe's theory of occupational choice assumes a relationship between certain childhood environments, need development, personality and, ultimately, job choice. She claims that the inherited psychological structure of a person interacts with environmental conditions to create a need structure within each individual. The individual then seeks to meet these needs in a work environment.

2.1.4.1 Characteristics of the Theory

Roe has delineated a two-dimensional classification of occupations by field and level. She divides occupations into eight groups and attributes six levels to each group. The groups are differentiated by the primary focus of activity, and the levels are based on degree of responsibility, capacity, and skill. Examples of groups are service, organization, technology and general culture, and the levels within each group are arranged in a hierarchy from 'professional and managerial' down to 'unskilled'.

Figure 4 Three-dimensional conceptual model of occupation classification (Brown et al, 1990: p82).



Roe's theory is entitled a 'need' theory and contains five propositions on the origin of needs. These are:

- Genetic inheritance sets limits on potential development.
- Socioeconomic factors, culture, sex and other environmental factors are also influences.
- The relationship between personality and perception.
- Where attention is directed - this determines interest.

- The intensity of needs and their satisfaction determines the degree of motivation that leads to accomplishment (Brown et al, 1990: pp. 74-75).

Roe thus emphasises the complexity of factors which impact on each other and in their interaction leads to the development of predominant needs which will seek expression in career development. Roe considered the crucial influence of parental child rearing style on the orientation of offspring toward or away from people in their occupational choice:

there are relationships between psychic energy, genetic propensities, and childhood experiences that shape individual styles of behaviour, and that the impulse to acquire opportunities to express these individual styles is inherent in the choices made and the ensuing career behaviour (Herr and Cramer, in Gibson and Mitchell (1986: p291).

2.1.4.2 Applications

Since Roe's theory emphasises the interrelationship between both intrapsychic and environmental factors, career counsellors have become more conscious of investigating the various influences on the decision making process. The orientation toward or away from working with others, the needs for or away from autonomy become important considerations to bear in mind. Further applications of her framework are diverse and widespread and include interest assessment, teaching and decision making strategies, career development research, and the daily practice of career counselling.

Locke, Super and Katz link values to needs, Super claims that *..values are objectives that one seeks to attain to satisfy a need* (Langley, 1992: p2). All see values and needs as having a bearing on preferences for ideals and lifestyles. Roe's theory contributes to the understanding of how values and needs are formed and how these stimulate the individual to prefer one occupation to another (Crites, 1969: p93) In the study to be

described, a values clarification exercise is included as preparation for work experience

2.1.5 Tiedeman's Career Decision-making Model

Tiedeman, together with other colleagues, among them O'Hara and Miller-Tiedeman, has advanced some important ideas influencing the way career behaviour evolves. Many other theorists have been concerned primarily about the exploration or anticipation of choice but not with what happens when one tries to implement what has been chosen.

Tiedeman and O'Hara (1963) designed a model to fulfil an observation that educational or occupational choice is related more to personality than to abilities and aptitudes. It is a model of *how* people decide, not *what* they choose. They claim that abilities and aptitudes do make a difference in how well a person does in an educational or occupational group, but personality, values and interests, more than abilities and aptitudes, influence what a person actually does. Their theory highlights the personal processes involved in career development, particularly those of growth, choice, willingness, capacity to adapt and change, and continued self-exploration and self-renewal (Brown et al, 1990: p308). They advocate the complementary use of all the theories and models of career decision making.

In his more recent work, Tiedeman with others, including Miller-Tiedeman have been increasingly concerned with emphasising the power of the individual to create a career and in advancing notions of autonomy, competence, and agency as major aspects of such processes. In so doing, Tiedeman and his colleagues are increasingly emphasising the holistic nature of the human career and the need to see career development as a whole.

2.1.5.1 Characteristics of the Theory

The main characteristic of this approach is that it is holistic and addresses the role and process of personal choice and decision making in career development.

Tiedeman and O'Hara noted that:

career development grows out of a continuously differentiating and reintegrating ego identity as it forms and reforms from experience as a self-organizing system. Differentiating is a matter of separating experiences; integrating is a matter of structuring them into a more comprehensive whole (Brown et al, 1990: p 312).

Differentiation originates in various ways. Experiencing the need for making a choice triggers the onset of rational differentiation. The steps that follow are:

- 1 Anticipation or pre-occupation
 - Exploration (developing awareness)
 - Crystallization (organising of information, making distinctions between alternatives)
 - Choice (including consideration of consequences)
 - Clarification (of issues that rise as a person moves towards implementing a choice)

- 2 Implementation or accommodation
 - Induction (in contact with reality of setting)
 - Reformation (becoming more assertive and adaptation of identity)
 - Integration (of personal identity with others in settings)

(Mc Daniels & Gysbers, 1992: pp 57-58).

The above steps make Ginzberg's (Chapter 2, pp11-13) analysis of occupational decision

making more explicit. Each step in this paradigm represents a discrete change in psychological state and the quality of each decision is different at each stage. The changes are neither instantaneous nor irreversible (Lewis et al, 1986: p192).

This model of differentiation and reintegration can be used to understand the organisation of self and the environment. The constructs help a person to assess and define career direction. They also help the individual understand the basis of this career direction. This basis and its understanding are linked to the career identity. By understanding the basis of how an individual defines his or her career, we locate the degree of openness a person has toward change of career. The degree of openness is a function of a person's belief system (Brown et al, 1990, pp. 312-317).

The theory of Tiedeman and O'Hara is not one that allows another to predict the behaviour of a subject, rather it is a value-functioning model that allows a person to put his or her decision-making into perspective for himself or herself, in so doing it distinguishes between *common reality* and *personal reality*. They differentiate between what is commonly accepted and prescribed and what the individual feels and values. The aim is to make the individual come to understand what occurs as he or she thinks, and how decisions are influenced by the common reality. With this kind of awareness and confidence, the personal reality will then reign over common reality.

2.1.5.2 Applications

This model has been used as the core design for computer programmes for career decision-making. Programmes are designed to increase the 'I' power of the pupils by helping them

assess their core functioning with regard to ego development, values development, and decision development. In so doing, the learners have a choice. They can decide to live the "I" power

idea and go on to unite their ego and values developments through further comprehension of their decision making, or they can discard the idea (Brown et al, 1990, p336).

Tiedeman and O'Hara hold that the aim of career counselling is to help people better understand the dynamic process of career development (Brown et al, 1990, p317). Because decision making is related to personality and the development of values, an important objective is to provide experiences to people that contribute to their emotional maturity, self-concept, and values orientation (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992: p59). Personal development and individual responsibility for career decision-making are stressed in this holistic model. Making choices is the responsibility of the chooser. After giving clients the necessary tools, guidance teachers should encourage them to make their own decisions. (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992: p60). Career decision-making is an ongoing process and the search for resolutions will continue throughout the individual's lifetime. There is no better place to begin to understand and learn this process than at school. In a relationship that shares the responsibility for learning career related skills the pupils will assume more and more responsibility for their decisions as they identify their personal reality based on their value system.

2.1.6 Crites' Comprehensive Career Counselling

John Crites considers all the major approaches to career counselling and declares that not one is sufficient in itself to address all the needs and challenges of present day career decision making, but says that each method has something unique to offer to a comprehensive approach. The most interesting aspect for this project is Crites's formulation of a model of Comprehensive Group Counselling that has both conceptual soundness and practical utility.

2.1.6.1 Model

The difference is between content and process. Traditionally, the focus of group career counselling has been upon content, usually scores of one sort or another. The difficulty with this approach is that first, each group member's profile is different, and second, as a consequence, the group process typically devolves into a dialogue between the counsellor and each client separately. It is tantamount to doing individual career counselling in a group context, which violates a common model for group interaction.

2.1.6.2 Methods

By concentrating on career choice process, rather than content, interaction among group members can be facilitated by assessment methods that measure the critical attitudes and competencies in career decision making.

Career choice attitudes are:

- Involvement in career decision making
- Independence in career decision making
- Orientation to career decision making
- Compromise in career decision making
- Decisiveness in career decision making

Career Choice Competencies are

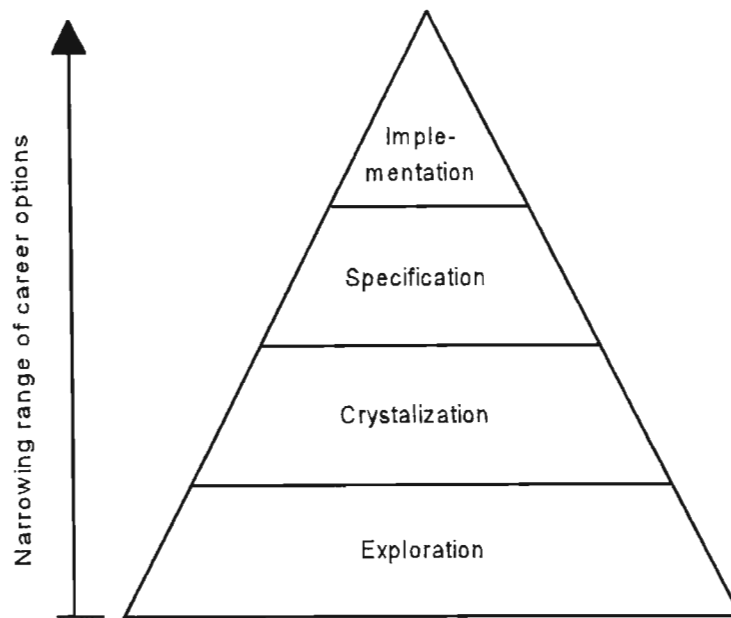
- Self-appraisal
- Occupational information
- Goal selection
- Planning
- Problem solving

Discussion of these attitudes and competencies is general, although each group member has her or his own configuration of scores indicating areas of maturity and immaturity. By outlining the process of career decision making each group member learns the ideal way to make a career choice and, at the same time, to identify personal strengths and weaknesses. These can be discussed by the group and they can suggest ways of becoming more career mature. Thus all group members are involved, along with the counsellor, in what becomes the career choice process per se (Crites, 1981: pp. 218-219).

2.1.6.3 Materials

To make the discussion specific, scores can be interpreted to elucidate the career choice process variables (attitudes and competences) and other tests and inventories which measure career choice content can be taken when appropriate. Having gained some group cohesiveness through discussion of the decision making process, career choice content problems can now be introduced without the interpretation becoming a dialogue between the counsellor and a particular client. Hoyte (in Crites, 1981: p219) has reported that concurrent individual and group counselling is more effective than either alone. This may be particularly true when the group deals with career choice process issues and the individual interview with career choice content problems.

Figure 5 Model for a comprehensive career development program in higher education. (Crites, 1981: p221)



2.1.6.4 Programmatic Approaches

These are pen-and-paper tests such as the Self-Directed Search and a variety of computer-assisted approaches. Research shows that most of them produce some kind of change in career development as a result of the intervention. There is evidence that programmatic interventions can impact on the process of career development.

A variety of interventive methods can be used to implement a programmatic approach to Comprehensive Career Counselling in schools. A typical plan is to begin with needs assessment. Both measures of career content and process can be administered, but with the focus upon the latter to identify areas of career immaturity in making decisions. Interventions are then designed for both individual and group participation to facilitate career development where it is needed. Activities are organised to correspond to each of the dimensions of career maturity as measured.

2.1.7 Conclusion

On reflecting on the theories and models discussed above there is evidence of movement to a developmental frame of reference and to greater consideration of the contexts of decision making. Previously, the primary task of guidance specialists had been seen as being to diagnose the individual's attributes and to prescribe appropriate occupations. Now, their tasks are increasingly seen as facilitating the individual's decision making processes and developing decision-making skills. However, for the South African situation there is too much emphasis on the one-to-one counselling situation and the expertise of the counsellor. Such counselling is a luxury most South African schools cannot afford. There have been some attempts in the theoretical literature to address the issue of group counselling, for example Crites' comprehensive counselling and the programmatic implementation of the theories of Super, Holland and Tiedeman do offer some solutions.

What is relevant to this research project, then, is that career development should be an holistic, ongoing developmental process linked to the development and growth of the self concept of the individual. Moreover, it should enable the pupils to clarify their personal values and help them make decisions for themselves considering the impact of environmental opportunities and constraints. Since career decision making is not a one-off event, but a series of decisions which continue throughout the lifespan, helping the individual to develop ways of making decisions taking into account as many of the variables as possible is an important aim. The work experience will enable the pupils to challenge their fantasies about the world of work, to broaden their knowledge of opportunities and limitations and to base their decision making in the realities of the current situation.

2.2 Work Experience Literature

Reflection on the theories above point to career development as a lifelong process dependent on corresponding development in personal, social and educational areas. Making a successful transition from school to the world of work is dependent on the attitudes the pupils have about themselves, others and work and on their interpersonal and decision-making skills.

Burns (Young & Burns, 1982) states that the emphasis is on a continuous process of career education that:

- enables individuals to decide who they are and the kinds of lives they wish to lead and can lead, and the clarifying of personal values;
- should cover not only what individuals could offer to their work, but also what their work could offer to them in terms of their total personality and lifestyle, an understanding of workplace values and the realistic constraints on free choice of jobs;
- should be concerned with self concept development and growth;
- should be concerned not only with choice of occupational roles, but also the interaction between such choices and the individual's evolving constellation of leisure, study, family and community roles;
- should aim not to deploy expertise to make decisions for people, but rather to use it to help people to make decisions for themselves (p96).

Burns thus emphasises the movement of people from a passive role in terms of career decision making to an active role where they see themselves interacting both with work and other needs and demands. The continuous process of career education cannot be compartmentalised as belonging only to the secondary school. It ought to be projected into the work place and the transition of the school leaver from school to work ought to

be the common concern of both the education system and the working community.

Bride & Knights (1981) confirm these sentiments and claim that there are many ways in which the transition from school to work can be eased by increased knowledge of the world of work. The first is the positive effect this knowledge will have on the self concept of the pupil and the second is how it will impact of the decision making of the pupil. One of the most important skills needed for smooth transition from school to work, is that of decision making. This can only be exercised when the decision maker is well informed, that means knowing both the positive and negative aspects of the world of work. Knowledge about the world outside school is needed, not at the moment when the transition is imminent but when the young person is making the series of small decisions at every stage in their educational progress. This is important because misunderstandings about educational opportunities and the expectations of the working world, at a quite early stage of schooling, can contribute to a troubled period when the young person attempts to achieve the place he or she wants in the world outside the school. The final point made by Bride and Knights (ibid.) is that insufficient information about the world outside of school can leave a young person vulnerable to exploitation (p46).

Work experience provides the opportunity for learning to be transferred to the work place. A report to the US Congress by the Office of Technology Assessment (1995) notes five learning processes that can be used in work settings: experiential learning, work-group learning, mentoring, workplace instruction, and technology-assisted learning. Work experience programmes thus need to be examined in terms of the aims of the programme, the learning processes involved and their value in terms of easing the school-work transition.

Further comment on learning processes involved in experiential learning and work-group learning comes from Boud et al (1993). They claim while experience is the foundation of, and the stimulus, for learning, it does not necessarily lead to it. *Experience has to be*

arrested, examined, analysed, considered and negated to shift it to knowledge (Boud *ibid.*: p9). Reflection plays a special role in drawing meaning from experience. Reflection is not just an individual activity. Engaging in the process with another person can change the meanings we draw from experience.

A second premise put forward by Boud and his colleagues is that learners actively construct their own experience. The meaning of experience is not given, it is subject to interpretation. Each experience is influenced by the unique past of the learner. Experience is created in the transaction between the learner and the milieu in which he or she operates - it is relational.

Learning is as Boud et al(1993) claims, *a seamless whole* (p12). One feature of learning may be prominent at any particular time, but all learning involves the feelings and emotions (affective), the intellectual and cerebral (cognitive) and action (conative). Learning is not constrained by time or place. Bringing to bear appropriate experience is one of the greatest challenges of learning. Openness to the possibility of learning from any event facilitates learning.

Of particular interest to this research project is the claim by Boud and others (1993: p13) that learning is socially and culturally constructed. While learners construct their own experience they do so in the context of a particular social setting and range of cultural values. Learners do not exist independently of their environment. It is not possible to step beyond the influence of context and culture. However, their influence can be recognised if learners' experience is then subjected to critical reflection aimed at exposing taken-for-granted assumptions (Criticos, in Boud et al, 1993: pp157-168).

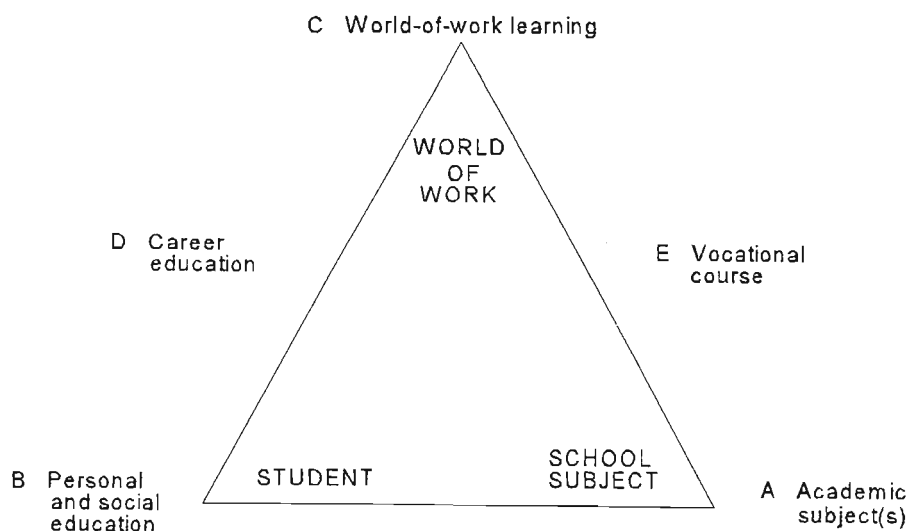
A further influence on learning is the socio-emotional context in which it occurs. Emotions and feelings are key pointers to both possibilities for, and barriers to, learning. Denial of feelings is denial of a key constituent of learning. A major influence on

learning from experience is confidence and self-esteem; unless learners believe themselves capable, they will be continually handicapped in what they do. Engagement in a learning task is related to belief in success.

Criticos (Boud et al, 1993: p162) sums up the above statements by claiming that it is not the quality of the experience but the quality given it by the learner that makes an experience educative.

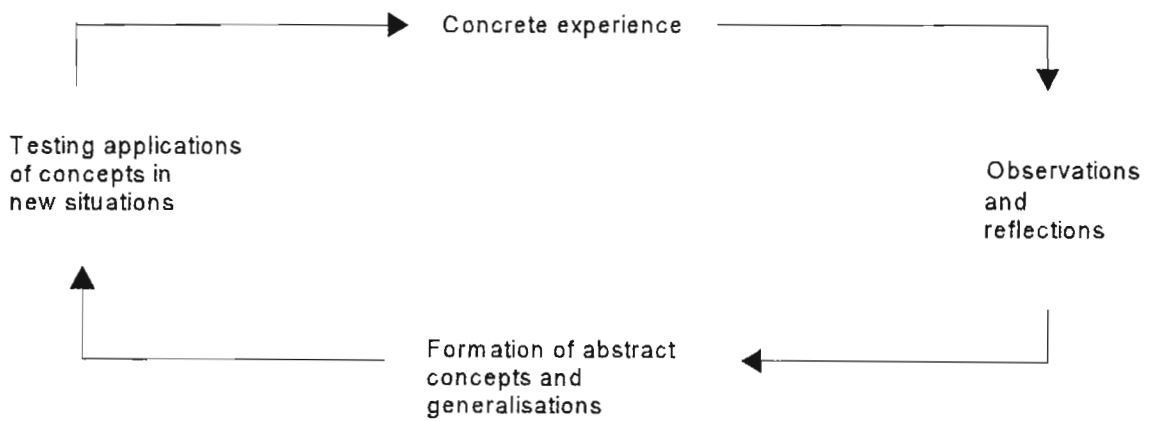
Watts (Miller et al, 1991: p 22) makes another point which is particularly relevant to this research project when he refers to the five curricular frames in which the work experience is incorporated. The possible curricular frames for implementing these schemes are: academic; personal and social education; world-of-work learning; careers education and vocational course. All five of these frames make it possible to incorporate work experience as part of the experiential learning cycle. Work experience can offer opportunities both for concrete experience and for active experimentation, but its learning potential will only be harnessed if it is integrated into a curriculum frame which also provides opportunities for reflective observation and abstract conceptualization, and for maintaining the momentum of the cycle.

Figure 6 Mapping of possible curricular frames on the 'work experience triangle' (Miller et al, 1991: p23)



He refers to the learning cycle developed by Lewin and Kolb and claims that effective learning occurs in a four state cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. However, its learning potential will only be harnessed if it is integrated into a curriculum frame which also provides opportunities for reflective observation and abstract conceptualization, and for maintaining the momentum of the cycle.

Figure 7 The experiential learning cycle



Miller et al, 1991: p23

Work experience programmes are a regular part of career education in many countries around the world. Evidence can be found of programmes being successfully pursued in the USA (Glaser, 1982, Wright, 1991, Lynch et al, 1992, Smith and Rojewski, 1993, Children’s Aid Society, 1994, Churchill, 1994, Strumpf and Mains, 1994, Goldberger et al, 1994, Bailey, 1995, MacAllum and Ma, 1995); Canada (King, 1986, Sankey, 1985, Studd, 1994); England (Watts, 1983), Scotland (Malcolm and Johnstone, 1991); Australia (Miller, 1991); The Netherlands (Hofmeister, 1994, Miller, 1991); France (Miller, 1991), USSR (Miller, 1991); the former West Germany (Riehl, 1989-1990); the former East Germany (Miller 1991); Sweden (Watts, 1983, Miller, 1991); Denmark (Miller, 1991); Cuba (Miller, 1991); Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zambia (Hoopers and

Zambia (Hoopers and Komba, 1995); and Nigeria (Nwoke, 1994). Smith and Rojewski (1993) comment on the quality of the transition supports established in European and Asian countries. They claim that these young people move directly into the primary labour market by the age of 20 or 21, normally with a set of job skills that are in demand. For instance, Japanese school leavers typically obtain employment through well-established school-business connections and over two thirds of German youth participate in apprenticeship programmes (p225).

What is also evident is the sophisticated level of cooperation between the education departments and counties (Watts, 1983, pp36-50), trade unions (Watts, 1983, p69), local government (Ingham Intermediate School District, 1995), national government, (Watts, 1983, p97, OTA-EHR-637, 1995) and Commerce and Industry (Goldberger, 1994).

2.2.1 The principles, desired outcomes and objectives of work experience

A blueprint for a school-to-work system, issued by the Department of Education in Washington (1992) claims that every work experience programme must be guided by four principles: the pupils should be encouraged to attain high academic standards and to stay at school, the classroom curriculum should link to the work-site experience, lifelong learning should be emphasized; and finally students' prospects for employment should be enhanced.

Smith and Rojewski (1993) describe what they consider to be the desired outcomes of work experience programmes: to connect theory with practice, to develop personal and career maturity, to gain personal awareness, and to attain professional insight.

Moving from a general framework such as those described above, Watts (1983) becomes

more specific as he considers the declared and latent objectives of work experience as it is applied in the United Kingdom (pp6-8). Later in (Miller et al, 1991) Watts suggests that work-experience schemes have a variety of aims: some declared, and some latent, some highly respectable, and some dubious in character. The aims can be labelled enhancing, motivational, maturational, investigative, expansive, sampling, preparatory, anticipatory, placing and custodial.

Enhancing - to enable students to deepen their understanding of concepts learned in classroom settings, and to apply skills learned in such settings.

Motivational - to make a school curriculum more meaningful and significant to students, so improving their levels of academic attainment.

Maturational - to facilitate students' personal and social development.

Investigative - to enable students to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world of work.

Expansive - to broaden the range of occupations that students are prepared to consider in terms of their personal career planning.

Sampling - to enable students to test their vocational preference before committing themselves to it.

Preparatory - to help students to acquire skills and knowledge related to their particular occupational area, which they will be able to apply if they wish to enter employment in that area.

Anticipatory - to enable students to experience some of the strains of work so that they will be able to manage the transition to work more comfortably.

Placing - to enable students to establish a relationship with a particular employer which may lead to the offer of a full-time job.

Custodial - to transfer some of the responsibility for particular students for a period (Miller et al, 1991: p18).

Watts' (ibid) definition of work experience applies to schemes in which pupils experience

work tasks in work environments . However, he claims that these objectives can be equally achieved with alternatives to work experience. For example, Work Simulation provides an opportunity for the pupils to experience work tasks such as career training and business games while remaining at school. Work Observation allows the pupils to experience the work environment but only allows them to observe the tasks. The schools' association with adults in the working world can create the opportunity for pupils to vicariously experience work tasks and the work environment. Part time jobs are a very good instance where the pupils experience the work environment and work tasks and even take on the identity of a worker (pp.11-14).

Further alternatives to work experience posed by Smith and Rojewski, (1993) are apprenticeships, internships, and work-site modelling.

2.2.2 Who is Involved in Work Experience ?

The three most important partners in a work experience programme are the employers, the pupils and the teacher/coordinator.

2.2.2.1 Employers

Why become involved in activities whose rewards are rarely immediate and often intangible? INICE (l'Union des Confederations de l'Industrie et des Employeurs d'Europe) answers straightforwardly, declaring upfront; "What we're about is about creating wealth." Industries and services, as wealth creators, see value-for-money in Education-Industry Programmes that encourage young people to join industry as workers, to support industry, and to buy Industry's products and services (Quin, 1993).

Whatever their motive, large numbers of employers must be willing and able to provide

high quality learning experiences for pupils in the work place for work experience programmes to be successful. The form the experience takes is determined at least as much by the employer as by the school or the student. Traditionally teaching has been the domain of educationalists, so expecting employers to share some of the responsibility, requires a change of perception. Watts (Miller et al, 1991), examines the motivations of employers taking part in work experience and some issues related to these motivations and the roles employers can play in work-experience schemes. Goldberger (1994) describes how to target employers most likely to participate in work experience and how to clarify their roles and responsibilities. In his publication, *Learning to Work. Employer Involvement in school to work transition programmes*, Bailey (1995), considers employer participation in work transition programmes both in America and Europe, the options that employers have and the incentives for employer participation in school-to-work programmes.

In some cases the employers are involved from the inception, as in Project Trident (Watts, 1983, pp.23-35) and can even be financially responsible for the secondment of a coordinator for the project (ibid, p27). The Industry Project (ibid, p69) was run in conjunction with two powerful national bodies, the Confederation of British Industry and the Trade Union Congress.

The following tables indicate the potential benefits to, and roles of employers.

Table 1 Potential benefits to employers (Miller et al, 1991, p 138)

1	Social contribution: helping to build a national 'climate of assent'.
2	Community involvement: helping to build a local 'climate of assent'.
3	Employee satisfaction: giving individual employees a 'warm glow'.
4	Educational influence: stimulating educational provision to meet employer needs.
5	Publicity: advertising the company and its products or services.
6	Recruitment: screening potential recruits.
7	Labour power: providing additional staff resources.

Table 2 Employer roles (Miller et al, 1991: p144)

1	Recruiter/selector: helping to choose which students are to fill the placements.
2	Job designer: determining which tasks and responsibilities are to be given to the students.
3	Trainer: inducting the students into the work organisation, and showing them how to carry out the tasks allocated to them.
4	Supervisor: ensuring that students are coping with the tasks that have been given, and carrying them out competently.
5	'Godparent': providing personal and emotional support.
6	Model: modelling what it is like to be an adult in the working world.
7	Assessor: evaluating students' performance in their work role.
8	Debriefing: helping students to review their progress and to reflect on what they have learned from the experience.

From Australia, Bride and Knights (1981) report that the most commonly expressed expectation of employers is for young people to enter their organisations with a positive attitude to work. The second expectation of young people by employers is that they are flexible and are able to use their initiative (p 56).

Watts' (1983) conclusion is that work experience can in some respects loosen the structures of the work-place and of the employer-education interface, in ways which allow new forms and new understandings to emerge.

2.2.2.2 Pupils

From the literature on work experience around the world, two types of programmes seem to emerge; one for the pupils who will study further, and a second for the less academically inclined pupils.

Pupils who wish to follow a professional career will most probably go on a work observation or shadow-a-worker trip. They will not experience work so much as find out about the work environment and the relevant tasks and the required levels of admission and training.

The work programmes for the academically less able pupils are arranged on a different basis. There is documentation of programmes from America, Britain, Canada and the Netherlands and what they have in common is that they are school based and operate throughout the year, usually with two to three week periods of work experience occurring three to four times during the year. Watts (1983) explains how the syllabus is adjusted for these pupils to complement the work experience (pp54-56). Project Live is a mentoring, tutorial, and a world of work programme that matches an American junior high school student with a corporate volunteer (Project Live, 1994).

A third category of pupil is the potential dropout. Ohio's Occupational Work Adjustment programme is a one- to two-year ungraded career programme for fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds who have been identified as potential dropouts from the regular educational programme. In the 1981-1982 school year, it served over 80,000 students

in 499 programmes. The goal of OWA, which finds its legal base in the US Department of Labor's Work Experience and Career Exploration Program, is to reorient these students toward successful completion of a career or academic high school programme. Students staying in school in order to participate in the programme are assisted in finding job placements in the school or in the community, working during two consecutive class periods each school day and up to 23 hours each week. Pupils have special classes together dealing with job and social skills and with Mathematics and English, as well as taking classes in the regular school curriculum. Certified teachers with specialised training act as programme coordinators, diagnosing the student's academic needs, developing appropriate individual educational plans, and leading career exploration activities.

2.2.2.3 Teacher / Co-ordinator / Liaison Officer

These can be one and the same person or three separate people depending on their location. Watts (1983) describes three different approaches to work experience each having a different sort of coordinator.

- the Trident Trust operates in many areas of England and has a manager seconded from industry and an assistant provided by the education authorities who liaise with the employers and the schools to provide a three week work experience placement for hundreds of pupils from many schools (Watts, 1983, pp.23-50).
- a local authority approach describes a county-centred organisation of school-based work experience. An Industrial Liaison Officer employed by the county of Cleveland places over 4000 pupils a year in factories, workshops, offices, banks, service and public-utility organisations, hospital and shops (Watts, 1983, pp 36-50).

- a school-based approach - here it is a teacher who is responsible for contacting the employers and liaising with the pupils.

2.2.3 Work Experience in Operation

There are various ways in which work-based learning programmes can be structured.

What is important to consider when planning a programme is:

- the type of pupil to be served
- the programme's objectives
- the coordination with schooling
- the timing i.e. the intensity, duration, and progression of the work-based experiences
- the settings of the work experiences
- the issue of non payment for the pupils

A variety of school-to-work transition programmes have been developed in Canada and America including cooperative education, youth apprenticeships, school-to-apprenticeship programmes and school-based enterprises. Watts (1983) explores work experience in operation in Britain and he explains and compares the aims and strategies of four different approaches. Of relevance to this research project is the school-based programme described by Montgomery (*ibid.*, 1983: pp51-68) and Miller's (Miller et al, 1991: pp85-105) thorough investigation of the school-based organization. Both of these will be considered in more detail.

2.2.4 The School-based Approach to Work Experience

Stowmarket High School is a co-educational school of 1000 pupils serving an agricultural and an industrial area. The aim was that the work experience should be available to all pupils but this meant offering two different patterns of activities.

The first scheme places pupils, after their final GSE and O-Level examinations, into a variety of jobs ranging from those in retail and factory positions to professional placements. The duration varies from one to two weeks.

The second work experience scheme for the less academically inclined pupils is arranged on a different basis. The identified pupils spend three week periods in local unpaid employment at six-week intervals throughout their fifth year. A very practical course is followed while they are at school including basic Mathematics and English.

Both schemes include thorough preparation for and debriefing after the work experience. Great emphasis is laid on the feedback from the employers.

2.2.4.1 School-based organization

The first advantage of a school organising its own work experience is the opportunity of marketing the school to the parents and employers. A second is that schools can build closer links with particular employers. A third advantage is that schools are able to devise their own work-experience aims and to organise them in such a way that the likelihood of achieving the aims will be maximized. A fourth advantage is the greater control which schools have over the phasing of the organisational tasks and, in particular, over the timing of when particular groups of students go out on work experience so as to minimize disruption and to be timed to permit optimal curricular framing. A final advantage is the greater flexibility which schools have over the duration of the work placements.

These potential benefits are set alongside the possible drawbacks of school-based organization. The first concerns the resourcing of work experience. It requires an inordinate amount of time and access to secretarial support. A second drawback concerns the demands on the expertise of the staff responsible for vetting placements for health

and safety.

Miller(1991) claims that the organizational systems that have evolved over time for most schools should be examined against the four main elements that comprise the scheme. The first is the school's policy: such a policy may be written up or it may be implicit and based on custom and practice. The second is the resources used in the operating system. The third is the set of tasks involved in the administration. The fourth is the allocation of roles and associated responsibilities for managing the system.

Table 3 gives an example of a policy statement which ensures that all the parties involved - teachers, employers, students, and parents - share a common understanding of the main aims of the programme and of how they are to be achieved. Is work experience an entitlement for all students? How does the organization of work experience relate to the school's equal-opportunities policy, if it has one? In what ways is work experience linked to the whole curriculum of the school? What is the philosophy regarding parental and employers' involvement in the scheme? Who is responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring the programme? What resources are available to support it? What is the procedure for keeping the programme under review?

Table 3 A School-Industry policy statement including work experience (Miller et al, 1991: p. 88)

- All students must select an activity which will give them experience of industry and/or enterprise.
- Equal access available to all activities irrespective of students' gender, race or physical ability
- Students are actively encouraged to consider activities beyond the limits of traditional gender roles.
- All members of the teaching staff are involved in the delivery of the programme.
- Local industry and commerce is given every opportunity to be involved in the planning of the programme, the preparation of the students, and the evaluation of the whole programme and the students' individual achievements.
- A wide variety of work-related activities is offered to students to cater for all interests and the full ability range within the college.
- All aspects of the programme are centred within the academic curriculum and work undertaken within the programme can be assessed as GCSE course work.
- The students' experiences are closely linked to the pastoral and profiling curriculum of the college.
- All students are encouraged to build upon the experiences gained within the programme with further work related activities.
- The programme is to be seen as only one part of a 'whole-school' commitment to partnership between education and industry.

A policy document might also include targets and performance indicators or it could incorporate aspects such as the resources available, the roles and responsibilities of the people involved and a critical path for the main tasks involved (Miller et al, 1991: pp87-88).

The duration of work experience is an organizational issue which can have a profound influence on the quality of curricular integration. The most common periods are one week, two weeks and three weeks (Miller et al, 1991: p101). Above is a summary of the opinion of Miller as to the optimum use of time in the implementation of a work experience programme.

Table 4 Optimum duration of placements, by aim. (Miller et al, 1991, p 102)

One Week	Two Weeks	Three Weeks
Enhancing ----->		<----- Maturational
Motivational ----->		<----- Sampling
Investigative ----->		<----- Preparatory
Expansive ----->		<----- Anticipatory
		<----- Placing
		<----- Custodial

2.2.5 The Effectiveness of Work Experience

Much work experience in schools has been based on an intuitive sense of its value rather than in research. Petherbridge (1996) expresses alarm at how rapidly the expansion of work experience has taken place without the proper debate about its purpose, its potential or its learning structure (p255). She suggests that it is dependent for its success on a model of learning which it may be unrealistic to expect schools to afford or to carry out. Watts (1983) divides his evaluative evidence into two categories. The first is objective data or quantitative measures of attitudes or knowledge. The second category comprises subjective data, based on direct questions about participation in the work experience programme (p84).

Objective data

There is very limited data available which systematically examines the influence of work experience using more formal research methods. Watts (1983) remarks that a part of this is due to difficulties in controlling the variables impacting on work experience and *the vast range of pupil characteristics is likely to be more complex than any research design will be able to handle* (p85).

Of interest to this project is the study by Pumfrey and Schofield. They found that pupils

that pupils who had been on work experience schemes scored significantly higher on three out of six measures of 'career maturity' (attitudes towards work and career decision making, self-appraisal, and occupational knowledge) than did those who had not. On goal selection, planning and problem-solving competencies, however, the differences were not significant (ibid.: p85).

A further objective study of personal skills development of pupils on a co-operative education programme is described by Shaughnessy (1986). The instrument of measurement is the PSM - the Personal Skills Map - which is designed to provide a framework for the self-assessment of personal skills, including intra personal, interpersonal and career and life management skills. The reliability and co-efficient for the PSM scales are well within acceptable limits for behavioural science research. The students were tested before and at the conclusion of their placements. A control group was established for comparison purposes. The results showed an overall increase in the skills in the experimental group, while the control group showed no significant change.

Subjective data

This includes the retrospective opinions of school leavers and the comments of pupils on return from work experience. Watts (1983) arranged these data under the headings of:

- motivational,
- social-educational,
- knowledge and understanding of self,
- knowledge and understanding of society, and
- career effects.

The motivational effects were reflected by the comments from the pupils relating how the work experience had changed their attitude to school. They had come to realise the purpose of a school education in relation to job prospects. However, for 62% of the pupils the motivation was to leave school and start work immediately.

The social-educational category includes life-skills, self-knowledge and job knowledge. A fair number of pupils mentioned the specific skills they had acquired; for example, how to communicate with people. With regard to self-knowledge for some pupils it was the first time that they had assessed themselves in an environment other than school, and they liked what they discovered. But fewer pupils commented on the aspect of acquiring job knowledge.

The majority of replies included some reference to the vocational aspect of the work experience, the responses ranging from terms of broad orientation to anticipatory effects. For some pupils it identified the job they would like to do, for others it was a clear indication of what they did not want to do.

On discussion of the results Watts (1983) says:

On balance, the available evidence is reasonably positive. The objective evidence, though thin, tends to indicate that the measurable outcomes of work experience are positive, if modest. The subjective evidence shows, that in general, young people enjoy it and feel they get something out of it - though what that 'something' is can be many-sided and varies considerably from individual to individual. Overall the vocational, anticipatory, and placing effects appear to be more valued by young people than the social-educational effects emphasized by the policy-makers (p 96).

He goes on to conclude that if helping pupils in their career decisions is an educational matter, then work experience should be offered to all pupils and it should be introduced earlier in their school lives.

Bride and Knights (1981) present a comprehensive analysis of the findings of their report. They conclude by stating that the majority of young people believed, whether they did it or not, that work experience eased the transition from school to work (p52).

In an assessment of work experience in Canada, King (1986) makes a plea for co-operative education in which pupils spend 60 days of their school year in a work placement. This enables the pupils to observe and test a variety of roles in the work place and allows them to increase their range of skills. King adds the additional advantages as being a renewed relationship between education and business and industry.

In the USA, a study by Stern et al (1990) examined the effects of school-supervised work experiences on the work attitudes of high school students and found that the students who reported less conflict between their jobs and their academic achievement expressed more motivation and less cynicism.

A survey of 182 Nigerian vocational teacher trainees and their employers who provided unpaid work experience, received 122 and 148 usable responses respectively. Students were generally positive about the experience and over 60% of the employers rated students highly on willingness and ability to learn. Many Nigerian employers cannot provide paid work experience, and money does not seem to be a prime factor in a successful experience.

The work experience module used in secondary schools in Lothian, Scotland was evaluated by soliciting the opinions of the teachers and career officers who organise it, the students who participate, and the employers who provide work experience placements. Data was gathered between October 1990 and March 1991 from 699 students in 38 schools, 151 of their teachers, and 18 career officers using a questionnaire, and from 40 employers by telephone. Some of the findings are the following:

- both teacher and pupil groups felt that the work experience outcome had helped pupils become more confident;
- more than half the students thought that the experience had made them want to work harder at school;
- more effort should be given to matching students with placements in which

they could do well;

- more effort should be made in helping develop realistic expectations about the work experience; and
- teachers found the data base used in the project useful for making placements, but felt they needed more training and did not rely on it for all the placements (Malcolm & Johnstone, 1991).

Jamieson,(in Miller, 1991: pp260-274) comments that there is strong positive evidence for work experience if it is embedded in a curriculum framework and if there is adequate preparation, briefing, debriefing and follow up. Petherbridge (1996) argues that if work experience is to become more than a work transition exercise, then debriefing becomes central to its success. Her spotlight is on the teacher and the deeper educational aims of work experience. It is realistic to expect schools to maximise the learning gains from this experience and so prepare the pupils for lifelong learning. Debriefing must form part of a continuous mentoring process. It has to be perceived as the starting point of learning from experience, enabling pupils to recognise that their feelings are vital to real personal change and that learning is neither objective or passive (pp243-257).

Boud and Walker (Boud et al, 1993: pp73-86) take a close look at learners reflecting on their experience. They identify three key factors in this process: return to the experience, attend to the feelings that arose out of the revisit and re-evaluate the experience. They stress the role of 'others' in learning by reflection, and the need for mutual cooperation and generosity to provide a creative learning milieu.

Miller (1991: pp278-280) claims that there is little research on work experience which operates with anything like an adequate research design, and there is far too much questionnaire research which goes little beyond eliciting the general satisfaction or otherwise of students with their placements. However, he goes on to say that, despite these failings, there is enough evidence, both from researchers and from teachers as

researchers, to support the contention that work experience can be a potent source of learning in a number of different areas. It will, however, only deliver if it is carefully prepared for and followed up. Miller concludes that if work-experience can help schools change by giving pupils more responsibility and by making schools more business like, then their educational potential will have been richly fulfilled.

2.2.6 South African Research

Reflection on work experience in the South African situation reveals a different picture. Young people find it difficult to make informed decisions about the future without relevant past experiences. For a student to make an appropriate career decision he or she needs to be exposed to as many different careers and work environments as possible. Children from more privileged backgrounds are given this opportunity through their daily interactions. However in South Africa the majority of school children do not have this opportunity due to the lack of a variety of role models in the home and school environment.

There is no educational policy which decrees that work experience be part of the secondary school syllabus. The schools that do run these programmes do so independently without having either to seek permission or receive any assistance from the education departments. The driving force behind such programmes is the motivation and enthusiasm of the teacher-coordinators responsible for the organisation.

Looking at work experience programmes running in South Africa, there will be a highlight on some of the strategies used by PROTEC College. PROTEC is a non-formal education enrichment programme which aims to prepare Maths and Science students from disadvantaged communities for successful entry into technological careers. The

programme is broad-based, combining academic support with career counselling and a variety of practical applied activities of which work experience forms an integral part.

The objectives of the programme are:

- to enable students to develop an understanding of the work environment and how different activities are inter-related.
- to promote realistic and informed career choices by students.
- to provide exposure to technology as it manifests as work.
- to expose students to specific and relevant career information.
- to facilitate discussion of expectations and problems encountered in the world of work.
- to enable students to set realistic school and career goals through mentor relationships and discussions with role models in the work place.
- to facilitate student sponsorship by placement in companies.
- to enable companies to have first hand experience of PROTEC students and the work in which PROTEC is involved.
- to allow students to explore issues relating to work culture, norms and social systems.
- to enhance personal and social development, especially communication skills (Mosupye & Sakalis, 1994).

PROTEC claims that work experience provides the student with a realistic experience of the world of work and its norms and values and helps bridge the gap between the school and work environment. It also encourages students to set realistic goals for themselves and make informed career choices. Most importantly work experience provides exposure to successful role models.

Companies also gain by being involved in work-experience schemes, not only do they have a chance to realistically assess recruits but their company's image benefits by being seen as involved with development of students from the community from which their

work force comes.

These strategies are aimed at Grade 11 and 12 students and are divided into three stages:

- Preparation
 - of pupil
 - of company
- The activity (work experience or alternative)
- The follow-up
 - of the pupil
 - of the company

The preparation of the student should ideally include: conceptual preparation, eg understanding of the work culture, hierarchies in industries etc.; and practical preparation eg punctuality, dress and behaviour. Preparation meetings with employers should: clarify the objectives for the work experience and of the individual students and clarify their expectations of the students; it should also assist them in planning a programme of work activities for the students. During the work experience it is the co-ordinator's responsibility to check that all students have arrived safely and that everything is going well. There will be a need to visit any employer where there is a problem. The supervisors must be reminded to fill in Student Appraisal Forms.

Student feedback programmes should offer feedback to the students, particularly from employers, as well as record both negative and positive responses from students, so that these can be conveyed to the employers in future meetings. Organisational feedback meetings should encourage both negative and positive responses so that these can be addressed in future student or employer preparation workshops.

The first work experience projects in KwaZulu Natal were conducted in the late 1980s by a small number of teacher counsellors. Most of these projects involved the exposure of senior pupils - usually Grade 11s - to miscellaneous work situations for short periods during the school holidays. Since then a number of private and 'Model C' High Schools

have embarked on various forms of work experience, shadow-a-worker or work exposure programmes (Natal Education Department, 1992).

2.1 Life Skills Teaching

The world is changing, and we must change with it. In the past two decades many of the comfortable certainties of post-war life have disappeared: full employment, a job for life, traditional industries, and the State as a major provider in our lives. Increasingly individuals will have to make it on their own, taking ownership of their own futures. Yet ownership means little without empowerment, and empowerment requires real choices and real opportunities (Farrow, 1995).

Ultimately self empowerment and not skills development is the aim of life skills training. Self empowerment is not an event, it is a process *by which one increasingly takes charge of oneself and one's life* (Hopson and Scally, 1981: p 57). The key dimensions of this concept are that people with an internal locus of control feel more in control of their lives and react more positively to people and situations around them. Those with an external locus of control tend to feel victimised and helpless. The relationship between self esteem and academic success is well documented and high self-esteem has been correlated consistently with good physical and mental and social health. The main assumption behind the concept of self-empowerment is that human beings can change and learn to exercise more and more control over themselves; and that raising awareness of alternatives and individual's roles in making choices leads to development of a state of empowerment.

2.3.1 Criteria for Self-empowered Behaviour

Criteria for self-empowered behaviour include:

- awareness
- goals
- values
- skills
- information

Awareness of self, others, and systems implies a determined intellectual and active appreciation: of self, both objectively and subjectively; of others, their feelings and values; and of systems and their influence on individuals and vice versa.

Goals need to be based on the individual's personal value system and need to have specified outcomes.

Values must be actively chosen from among alternatives and prized, cherished and publicly affirmed. They must be part of a pattern that is a repeated action.

The greater the range of skills a person possesses, the greater the range of alternatives available to him or her. Hopson and Scally (1981) identify the skills they believe to be vital for the development of self-empowerment and divide them into four subsections: the skills for personal survival and growth; the skills to relate effectively one-on-one; the skills to relate effectively to others; and skills related to specific tasks.

Of specific relevance to this research project are the skills which work experience seeks to develop: those of career management, seeking a job, discovering interests, values and skills and being proactive and positive about oneself (Brownell et al, 1996: pp1-2). The

need to facilitate the development of these skills was referred to on page 39

To acquire information about oneself, others and the world is to acquire power. One of the purposes of work experience is for the pupils to increase the information they have about themselves by testing themselves in new situations and to find out more about the opportunities and challenges of the world of work.

2.3.2 The School Environment

Hobson and Scally (1981: p83) put the teaching and learning of life skills into context when they describe the environment of the school that empowers teachers and pupils to engage in a programme of personal growth. In writing about a facilitative school environment, Hopson and Scally paint a picture of a school in which teachers are aware of, and able to reflect on such issues as power, strengths and weaknesses, functioning of the system, relations between and the wider society. Furthermore they write about such a school having clear goals formulated in a democratic way, leading to both self development and social commitments. Life skills training ought to be provided in order to achieve these values. Teaching life skills needs to be done by teachers who know about people and how to create a favourable learning climate. As a great deal of learning occurs through modelling, the teachers involved in teaching life skills should be undertaking their own personal development and skills acquisition. Hopson and Scally (1986) have worked on a number of ways of categorizing life skills. In their most recent scheme, life skills are grouped under four headings: learning, relating, working and playing, developing self and others.

2.3.3 Life Skills Teaching Methods

Hobson and Scally (1981) call for teaching techniques that develop the role of the teacher more as a facilitator of others' learning, than as an expert passing on knowledge of a subject that has been acquired by specialist study. In fact, they advocate a shift of approach from formal teaching to experiential learning, with emphasis being placed on learning rather than teaching, and with each pupil being given more responsibility for his own direction and responsibility. Further, they suggest that small group work has distinct advantages for the individuals participating in learning alongside their peers and teachers and claim that this learning mode is central to the most effective use of the life skills programmes (Refer page 37). Central to the concept of life skills learning is the belief that each of us will benefit from 'owning' our own development, and small group work offers that opportunity much more than formal classroom teaching.

To work effectively, the teacher will require skills in contracting, designing, preparing for, managing, following up and evaluating the small group work in the classroom. In addition, Pickworth (1989) cautions that the teacher be aware of the developmental stage of the pupils before implementing a programme. The life skills training programmes must be tailored to the needs and stage of the target population (p51).

Lindhart and Dlamini (1990) describe the role of the facilitator as an 'animator' because he or she brings the students to life, is responsible for equipping the pupils with study skills, decision making, time and stress management and relationship skills. Two of the most important skills for a South African school leaver to acquire are how to choose a career and how to cope with unemployment.

2.4 Career Guidance and the World of Work

On a world wide scale there is a fundamental shift in national economies. Unemployment and changing job patterns are becoming much more common as we move from the industrial era to the information era. In South Africa we have the added challenges of adjusting to a new political and social order which particularly effects the job market. Burns (Young & Burns, 1982) comments:

A whole new economy is emerging which is based on relationships rather than bureaucracy; on self-help, self-employment and part-time work rather than full-time jobs. It builds networks rather than organisations, and requires skills and expertise rather than qualifications. It thrives on personal energy and initiative. In the future it is likely to be large organisations, via the new technology, which will produce the profits, but the small set ups will produce the chance to work. The need will be for proactive creative individuals who will refuse to accept that being jobless is the same as being hopeless. The alternative to being employed by someone is not necessarily unemployment (p102).

It is important to note that this was written almost fifteen years ago, yet there is little evidence of change in schools to accommodate these shifts. Euvarard (1996) calls for the formation of a new school guidance programme more relevant to the daily and future lives of South African scholars. His research looks at the career needs of high school pupils in the Eastern Cape and he considers the implications this has for curriculum development as the new South Africa moves away from the 17 education departments created by apartheid toward one national educational system. He researched the expressed needs of these pupils. Over 52% wanted to discuss career matters. They showed relatively little interest in gaining more self knowledge as a means towards making a wise choice, although some attention was given to abilities, interests, personal suitability and priorities. The major focus was on learning about careers themselves in greater depth and breadth, particularly those in which they had a special interest. They

wanted to know about the availability of certain careers as well as the educational requirements. A number seemed to have made a career choice although the quality of their comments reflects a level of career immaturity related to coming to decisions. Some were interested in finding out more about applying for jobs and handling job interviews (p126).

Work experience is not the panacea for all the ills of society, but it offers the pupils the opportunity to develop decision making skills and to try out adult roles. It also has the broader educational justification of motivating pupils and teaching them social and career related skills.

It would seem as if the concept of 'work' also needs to be addressed. High levels of youth unemployment in Britain has led Watts (Miller et al, 1991) to explore the link between work experience and a wider concept of work:

Preparation for working life presupposes that pupils will be encouraged to interpret the concept of work in relation to a series of definitions: these range from work seen as paid employment to work viewed as the tasks to which human creative energies can be focussed. Work experience helps in this process (p30).

Watts (ibid., 1991) suggests that the concept of work be extended to cover voluntary work of various kinds: paid employment and that associated with work at home or within the community from which no income is derived. He also suggests that the concept of work experience should cover self-employment, and setting up small businesses and cooperatives (pp 30-31).

Hopson and Scally (1983) differentiate between employment, as we have traditionally known it and work as an activity; something which provides a sense of purpose and direction, a structure for living, a personal sense of identity and self-respect, and companions and friends. Work can influence how other people see and feel about us

and can provide us with money if someone wants to buy what we can do. We will work in the process of planning and implementing any of our life roles - child, homemaker, consumer, citizen, student, employee, spouse, parent, leisure-user, friend (p7).

Although this is a comment on the broader concept of work experience, including work shadowing, work visits and work simulations, Chapter 4 will concentrate on the application of the narrow definition of work experience. Watts (Miller et al, 1991) cautions, however, that work experience defined in the narrow sense should be viewed in the broader context of all the areas discussed above (p31).

If part of the function of work experience is to develop students' concepts of work, it is important that it is not seen in a vacuum, there is a need to recognise the experiences of work the pupils may already have had. A structured programme in the curriculum, enabling the pupils to draw on and explore their prior experiences will have the greatest impact on the participants.

In conclusion reference is made to Watts (1983) who comments that:

Just as the relationships between 'work' and 'paid employment' are changing, so too are the relationships between 'education' and 'schooling'. Increasingly, it has been recognised that much learning takes place after the period of formal schooling, and outside education institutions. Indeed, educational institutions are being urged to regard themselves less as custodial institutions for particular age-groups, and more as resources which should be available to people throughout their lives when they want to learn things which can best be taught within such institutions. The incorporation of work experience within and beyond the period of compulsory schooling can play the role of establishing such a conception.

2.5 Conclusion

The concepts described in this chapter serve to influence, in one way or another, the various aspects of the work experience programme to be described in Chapter 4. The pupils are at the appropriate age and stage, as identified by Super, to begin identifying their career aspirations (Roe) and matching them with career fields (Holland). Tiedeman provides an explanation of how these decisions are made and Crites, the framework for the implementation of the career education group guidance lessons. A review of the literature on work experience programmes being run in South Africa and other parts of the world will provide valuable information for the planning and measurement of this local programme. While, the responsibility for teaching and learning will be enhanced by the life skills teaching approach adopted by the teacher. The next chapter outlines the methodology and research design of this study.

Chapter

3

METHODOLOGY

In Chapter 2, certain concepts were identified which have particular significance to this research project. These include:

- the importance of developmental career guidance;
- the acquisition of skills to sustain personal and social development and lifelong learning;
- work experience as a means of assisting the transition of pupils from school to work and
- the relevance of all of these in the South African context.

Collin (1996) explores the intimate relationship between theory and practice in the changing field of career development and suggests that if, or when, practitioners' 'heuristic and cognitive' maps become unable to deal with their changing world, and their improvisation falters, they will need to get into 'reflective conversation' with their clients and the situation they present. They will be able to do this more effectively if they pay critical attention to their practice and 'theories-in-use', and if they consciously adopt reflective practice (p77). To achieve this, Collin (ibid.) suggests that teacher counsellors adopt the role of 'jazz players':

Jazz players improvise but are not anarchic. They are disciplined, skilled, creative and intuitive. They make music in relational, collaborative and non-heirarchical ways. For counsellors to 'play jazz' would call for a significant shift in their role and its relationship with those of researchers and theorists (p72).

Recognising that it is critically important that the roles of researcher and practitioner are not rigidly separated and that some practitioners are encouraged to take on the role of researcher, Collin (ibid) identifies action research as a particularly appropriate form of research.

The interests and experience of this researcher, who as a teacher-counsellor had implemented a work experience programme for many years, influenced the subject and design of this study.

3.1 Aims of this Research Project

The primary purpose of this research project was to reflect on the current Grade 11 work experience programme and identify those aspects where change and improvement could better enable the school leaver to make relevant and pertinent decisions regarding his or her career choice. This relates to the pupils' abilities to identify the skills and qualifications, values and personality types required or preferred in particular career fields, and to ascertain what they already possess and what they need to develop to be able to work in that field. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the various aims which are associated with this research project. These specific aims are to describe, evaluate and optimise the work experience programme described in Chapter 4

3.1.1 Describe

The initial, principal aim of this research project is to describe the process of the grade 11 work experience programme as implemented by the researcher. To facilitate the description the programme is divided into four phases in Chapter 4. Four illustrative case studies provided an overview of the whole process and give examples of the varied

experiences of the pupils. The descriptive nature of this project elucidates the progress of the programme and this may facilitate replication by other teachers.

3.1.2 Evaluate

The second aim of this project is the evaluation of the process described above. This will be done in the light of current theory and trends and within the context of our unique South African setting. There will be consideration on how the experiential learning impacted on the career decision making of the pupils. Reason and Rowan (1981) describe the basic emphasis in evaluation as:

interpreting, in each study, a variety of educational practices, participants' experiences, institutional procedures, and management problems in ways that are recognisable and useful to those for whom the study is made. The illuminative evaluator contributes to decision-making by providing information, comment, and analysis designed to increase knowledge and understanding of the programme under review (p219).

They (ibid.) also state the need for:

a flexible methodology that capitalises on available resources and opportunities and draws upon different techniques to fit the total circumstances of each study (p219).

3.1.3 Optimise

An enormous amount of time and energy is invested, by so many people, in the implementation of the Grade 11 work experience programme. There is, thus, a responsibility by the researcher to identify the most efficient and beneficial ways in which to operate.

3.2 Choice of Design and Method

Traditionally, research is characterised as being objective, implying that it should be reliable, valid, generalizable and credible. Scientific research emphasises the classifying and measuring of quantitative data. This style of research implies that an investigation has an hypothesis, which is testable and replicable, which provides an explanation and is generalizable. This methodology has always been applied to the natural sciences, but its suitability for social enquiry is questioned. The social world is seen as having ‘multiple reality’ which can be understood only through the perceptions and understandings of the participants themselves. (Deakin University Paper, 1984: p26). This research project is concerned with the opinions and perceptions of the pupils participating in work experience, and so the alternative methodology of interpretive or qualitative research proved more helpful.

It would have been possible to use more ‘objective’ measures in this research design. Pre- and post work experience measures of career maturity may have yielded results and questionnaires with regard to career interest and field-specific knowledge may have been of some value. However, such measures yield other data which is categorised or numerical, and give very little information of the pupils’ experience per se. As Hopkins (1988) says:

as teachers we are concerned with the individual progress of students rather than the aggregated scores from the class or the school. Our emphasis is on varying teaching methods to suit individual pupils in order to help them achieve to the limit of their potential (p28).

Furthermore, the researcher was interested in explicating the whole process, and such measures would not have enabled her to do so. Thus, though the pupils did complete the Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ) and other measures at the beginning of Grade 11 and some repeated the CDQ later in the year, this data has not been included, other

than in the illustrative case studies, since so much influences career development that changes in such a measure may not have reflected the impact of the work experience itself.

Associated with the qualitative or interpretive paradigm is the approach of educational action research. Carr and Kemmis (1986) claim that educational action research has as its aim - transforming education. The aims of 'explanation', which is the characteristic of the positivist view of education, and 'understanding', which is the characteristic of the interpretive view of education, are both included in this transformative process (p156).

3.3 Advantages of a Qualitative Approach

The editor of *The School Counsellor* (1995) states that qualitative research has a place in the school counselling literature. Qualitative research is supposed to inform us descriptively and in depth, providing rich, detailed information in the language of the phenomena being studied. The information is to be used constructively, that is, as a foundation to formulate ideas, develop hypotheses and generate responses based on a better understanding of the phenomena in question.

One of the greatest advantages of the qualitative research is that it presents a flexible approach to the interactive, participatory nature of a classroom project. It is more responsive to the unpredictable and changing nature which is the reality of teaching (Keeves, 1988: p514).

A further advantage of this approach is that it can provide the opportunity for the researcher to gain an understanding of the pupils' worlds and the factors influencing their career decision making. The researcher strives to identify the factors which impact on pupils' thinking and behaviour in the context of career decisions (Hopkins, 1988: p28).

Yet another advantage of this interpretive approach is that the methodology includes the 'case study' with its emphasis on the language of the participants themselves. The aim is to understand how things are from the point of view of participants and to build a picture of events which takes account of the multiplicity of perspectives in the situation. The accounts of all the participants engaged in the educational programme is seen as significant. Furthermore, the unfolding of the process over time can be described (Reason and Rowan, 1981: pp186-189).

Gillies (1993) claims that school counsellors are increasingly being required to implement a range of programmes in school with different foci and different target populations. There is a growing demand for accountability flowing from two sources: the professional responsibility many school counsellors accept for evaluating the services they provide and the demands of the employing authority and general public at large in terms of their perceptions of pupil needs.

To sum up the advantages of using a qualitative approach, I would like to echo the words of Petherbridge (1996):

I have chosen to use an interpretative research method. I am interested in describing the situations and events observed but also in seeing the experience as far as possible as it is understood by those who were part of it. The experience itself, in my view, is unique to the individual, who construts it in relation to his or her personal values, culture and history. It is not adequate, therefore for me to attempt to define the experience from observing it, although inevitably that will emerge from any discussion about it in my reconstruction of their perception of social reality. A study of this sort aims to capture the individuality of each's participant's experience rather than the different values of theoretically-controlled variables, for which a quantitative methodology might be more appropriate. As a consequence, I make no pretense to generalise findings from this small sample to other situations. On the whole the methodology I have chosen has much in common with the adventure of learning from experience, acknowledging the uniqueness of the meaning each of

us accords to events (p245).

3.4 Limitations of Qualitative Research

Keeves (1988) claims that while qualitative data are rich, personal, close to the real world and contain considerable depth of meaning, substantial difficulties arise in educational research in the collection and use of this form of data. The first is that the collection of the data is labour intensive and the analysis thereof is time consuming and sometimes very difficult because the evidence has been collected without a recognisable structure. Specifically this effects the generalizability of the findings derived from qualitative research and with the replicability of analyses of qualitative data (p513). This researcher became increasingly aware of both these problems as the research progressed and sought to heed the words of Sowden and Keeves (Keeves 1988) that: *it is essential for the researcher to accept the responsibility of being accountable, and to present clearly a statement on analytical procedures employed (p514).*

Another limitation of qualitative research is that all enquiry into educational questions is, at least to some extent, value-laden. Kaplan in Keeves (1988: p514) suggests that only way to avoid subjective relativism is to *face the valuations and to introduce them as explicitly stated, specific and sufficiently concretised value premises (p514).*

A criticism by traditional researchers is that the methods used by qualitative researchers lack methodological rigour and validity. This researcher is aware that the validity of qualitative research rests on criteria such as truth and accuracy of statements, authentic insights and prudent decisions (Kemmis in Keeves, 1988: p46) and made every effort to meet these requirements.

Further criticism is that such research is biased because it involves the researcher in her

own practice. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: p192). This study is based on the responses and perceptions of the researcher, the pupils and employers involved in the work experience programme. In order to justify the approach chosen, attention was paid to the criteria suggested by Carr and Kemmis (1986) that the very purpose of critical self-reflection is to expose self-interest and ideological distortions:

The practioner sets out deliberately to examine where his or her own practice is distorted by taken-for-granted assumptions, habits, custom, precedent, coercion or ideology (ibid.: p192).

Finally, this researcher took note of the warning of Hopkins (1980) that qualitative data be logically organised and carefully presented for the study to make sense. Without this organisation and presentation, any contribution might be hidden and not be apparent to anyone including the researcher (p150).

3.5 What is Action Research ?

Applied to classrooms, action research is an approach to improving education through change, by encouraging teachers to be aware of their own practice, to be critical of that practice, and to be prepared to change it. It is participatory, in that it involves the teacher in his own enquiry, and collaborative, in that it involves other people as part of a shared enquiry. It is research WITH rather than ON (McNiff, 1988: p4).

Mc Niff (1988: p5) claims that action research is more than just good teaching. It is itself a vehicle for enhancing the teaching-learning situation. It encourages teachers to become aware and critical in their thinking, to use this self-critical awareness to develop theories and rationales for improved and changed practice, and to give reasoned justification for their public claims to professional knowledge.

Kurt Lewin, who coined the phrase, 'action research' in about 1944, described the process in terms of planning, fact finding and execution. Although Lewin's early work was

concerned with changes in attitude and conduct in areas of social concern, his ideas were carried into education. Educational action research flourished in the United Kingdom from 1973-1976 when the Ford Teaching Project (Hopkins, 1988: p2), under the direction of Elliot and Adelman, involved teachers in collaborative action research in their own practices. John Elliot has continued to develop action research theory and practice, and interest in action research is growing in developed and developing countries around the world (Elliott,1991).

Action research enables school counsellors to use a variety of methods to evaluate the diversity of counselling programmes. It enables them to make decisions about the development, improvement and continuation of specific programmes in schools. The emphasis in action research is to provide information that has an impact on the school community leading to change. Carr and Kemmis (1986) state:

The action researcher sets out to improve particular practices, understandings and situations by acting in a deliberate and considered way in which understandings and values are consciously expressed in praxis. Moreover, by observing the action taken and the consequences of the action, the action researcher deliberately arranges things so that these understandings and commitments can be critically examined (p192).

Mc Niff (1988: p2) claims there are two perspectives to educational action research: the first describes the outcome when a teacher decides to intervene in her own practice and the second attempts to identify the criteria of these activities. In this sense the term action research is a term used to describe methods and techniques.

Action research has been criticised by some writers. The subjective nature of the endeavour must be taken into account. Another limitation of action research, suggested by Hopkins (1988) is that it can be prescriptive. He suggests that the tight specification of process and the steps and cycles may inhibit the independent action of teachers (p40). A further concern of Hopkins (ibid.) is that action research may impinge on valuable

teaching time and is unethical (p41).

Kemmis (1988) defines action research as:

a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which these practices are carried out. It is most rationally empowering when undertaken by individuals, and sometimes in cooperation with 'outsiders' (p42).

Three important aspects of action research are identified by this definition.

Firstly, that it is concerned with the improvement of educational practice.

Davidoff and van den Berg (1990) claim that:

Action research is a way of trying out ideas in action, understanding these actions, and then attempting to make some improvements or changes in the classroom or school setting. It is a way of taking a systematic, close, critical look at the way in which we teach, with a view to changing it so that the classroom experience becomes a more meaningful one for all those involved (p28).

Secondly, action research is about individuals concerned about their own practice and who are actively involved in all aspects of the research process. Hence action research has an important role to play in one's professional development as an educational practitioner.

According to Mc Niff (1988):

Action research goes further than good teaching. It is being aware and critical of that teaching, and using this self critical awareness to be open to a process of change and improvement of practice. It encourages teachers to become adventurous and critical in their thinking, to develop theories and rationales for their practice and to give reasoned justifications for their public claims to professional knowledge. It is the systematic enquiry

made public which distinguishes the enquiry as research (pp5-6).

The third aspect identified by Kemmis (1988) relates to the methodology, in that action research is about actions and reflections on the consequences of those actions for educational practice. According to Elliott (1991) it is:

a process in which ideas are tested and developed in action. Its focus is on the process rather than the product of learning. It is directed towards activating, engaging, challenging and stretching the natural powers of the human mind (p10).

Running through these definitions and descriptions are some key criteria which need to be satisfied in order that a particular study might qualify as educational action research.

These criteria relate to:

- the objectives of the research
- who is responsible for the research
- the research methodology and
- how the research will be reported.

Each of these criteria is explored below as they relate to the study described in this dissertation.

3.6 The Objectives of the Research

The objectives include aims to improve action within one's own practice. These may be achieved through improvement in understanding of both process and situation.

According to Elliot (1991) the primary objective of action research, is:

the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of the action within it (p49).

Based on the Kemmis definition, on page 81 in this chapter, the objectives of the researcher, as a teacher, in this research project are to improve:

- her own educational practices
- her understanding of these practices
- the situations in which these practices are carried out.

as they are related to the Grade 11 career education programme. The experiential nature of this section of the career deciding process seemed to the researcher to have great potential, but was she using it to its full advantage? To bring about meaningful change required consideration of many sources: the theory on developmental psychology; literature on work experience both from around the world and from South Africa; literature on life skills development and feedback from pupils and employers.

3.7 Who is Responsible for the Research ?

Practice (of career counsellors) is improvisatory, and is refined by frameworks provided by theory, critical thinking and 'reflective practice'. However, theories are often tardy or irrelevant, and practitioners also need to be able to carry out their own research, including action research (Collin, 1996: p67).

Hopkins (1988: pp23-30) discusses two themes that justify the concept of teacher-based research: the first is to do with the inappropriateness of the traditional research paradigm for helping teachers improve their teaching and the second with the nature of professionalism in teachers. He claims that the experimental process is liberating because it encourages independence of thought and argument on the part of the pupil, and experimentation and the use of judgement on the part of the teacher. This attitude encourages not only new pedagogic roles for the teacher, but implies a different way of

viewing knowledge. In this situation, no longer is knowledge given or absolute. The teacher treats it hypothetically and the pupils enhance their own authority through its use.

Davidoff and van den Berg (1990) make the claim that:

Many of the things we teach our students - attitudes, values, knowledge, skills - are 'hidden' because we are so used to working that way that we don't even realize the consequences of what we are doing. As we become more reflective of ourselves as teachers, we should become more aware of the values which we are communicating to our students every day (p7).

Jamieson (Miller et al, 1991: pp274-280) comments on the increasing trend of self-evaluation by teachers particularly, teacher- researchers involved in action research. He claims that the traditional evaluation compared intentions of the work experience with the outcomes, but self-evaluation relies on performance indicators which highlight the process of work experience - that is, indicators which show whether the appropriate processes have been transacted at various stages - and that this is particularly valuable in activities like work experience, where immediate outcomes are difficult to observe and evaluate.

Educational action research involves the teacher in her own enquiry by encouraging her to be aware of her practice, to be critical of it and to be prepared to change that practice. As the practitioner the writer was involved in all stages of the research process, from the research questions, through data collection, to the final reflection leading to the reactions.

She was guided by a supervisor and assisted by an observer in some aspects of the research.

3.8 The Research Methodology

The method of action research is elegant. It involves a self-reflective spiral of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and replanning. It requires teachers to be acutely aware of a sense of process, and to refine their perceptions to account for that process. Far from being ad hoc and woolly, action research raises to a conscious level much of what is already being done by good teachers on an intuitive level. It enables teachers to identify and to come to grips with their practice in a humane way which is at once supportive and critical (McNiff, 1988: p7).

This excerpt from McNiff proved to be very important in guiding the approach to the research. The first point made by McNiff relates to the 'self-reflective spiral'. Keeves (1988) notes that:

What distinguishes action research is its method, rather than particular research techniques. The method is based on the notion of a spiral of self-reflection. It is essentially participatory in the sense that it involves participants in reflection on practices (p46).

The process is a spiral because each phase leads on to the next, drawing from a former phase and influencing the next. It is thus an ongoing rather than a static process. The self-reflective nature of action research means that perceptions, thoughts and discussions which were previously at a subconscious level are brought to consciousness, and the researcher thinks through far more carefully what she may previously have acted on intuitively.

The stages of the spiral include the following:

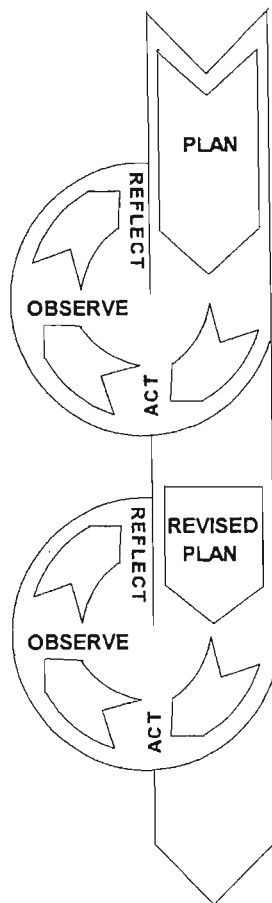


Figure 8 The Action Research Cycle
(Miller et al, 1991: p279)

- The 'plan' stage involving problem analysis, how to enhance the career decision making skills of the school leaver.
- The 'act' stage involved the implementation of the Grade 11 work experience programme.
- The 'observe' stage in which there was an evaluation of the programme which led to a critical reflection of the results of the evaluation. The data collected included questionnaires, interviews, report backs, evaluations and a selection of lessons on video. Comment was elicited from pupils, parents, employers and teachers.

- The last 'reflective' stage which should also ideally identify new problems and in turn generate the next cycle of plan, act, observe and reflect. Davidoff and van den Berg (1990) state that:

Reflection involves looking back critically at what has happened in your classroom activity to see what it can teach you about future action. It means trying to understand what has taken place in the light of what you had planned (p45).

In this case the following annual programme was implemented with conscious change for improvement.

3.8.1 The Participants

The participants include especially the teacher/researcher and the pupils. Of the teacher/researcher McNiff (1988) noted that an attitude of being more aware of practice in a way that is both sympathetic and critical, is necessary.

It liberates teachers from their prejudices and allows their instincts to blossom. The elegance of action research is that it possesses within itself the ability to incorporate previous approaches, simply because its focus rests on the enquirer rather than his methodology. It is primarily his insights and understandings that are moved forward by his own involvement in his enquiry (p7).

Evaluation of the above shows that much depends on the teacher's ability to reflect, gain insight, incorporate aspects which have succeeded in the past, and to adapt approaches.

The pupils are of primary importance in educational action research and here Elliott's (1991) comment is relevant:

It is process rather than product data which forms the basis of evaluations of teaching. And a major source of that data will be the students themselves: their accounts of the respects in which teaching enables or constrains the development of their powers in relation to the things which matter (p10).

For the researcher this was a very important. Pupil opinion is indeed a powerful and relevant resource. It is not only essential to the research at hand, but to elicit it and act on it enhances the relationship between the teacher and pupils. Pupils need to regard

themselves as active partners in their education and this is a way to increase their responsibility. As the action research cycle gives more responsibility and power to the teacher so the teacher can empower the pupils by involving them in research on them.

Work experience confronts the learner with a large-scale problem-solving activity. The problem is to find the way through an unfamiliar social maze and to discover how the learner relates to it. As with the research process, the pupils engage in personal reflection to understand their relationship to the world and to deliberate about or reconstruct their values in relation to everyday situations, which constantly demand their judgements and their action Petherbridge (1996: p250).

The parents and the employers of the pupils are also directly or indirectly effected by their decisions. The relationship between the school and the home is in reciprocal balance and the programme of work experience, which relates directly to career choice is perhaps one of the greatest areas in which parents do become involved in their child's choice. Employers, too are involved and effected by this project. As McNiff (1988) explains:

The action of action research, whether on a small or large scale, implies change in people's lives, and therefore in the system in which they live (p3).

3.8.2 The Programme

The scheduled timetable for the Grade 11 career guidance is a 45 minute period once every second six-day cycle. During that time the work experience programme, consisting of a *preparation and briefing* phase, the *implementation* and *debriefing*, was implemented. These phases are described in detail in Chapter 4. The project described in this dissertation took place over a period of eight months and was implemented between January and August. The time frame of the programme is detailed at the beginning of Chapter 4.

Two research questions evolved from consideration of the Grade 11 work experience described above, one on a macro and the other on a micro level.

The first and more general research question is:

How relevant is the Grade 11 Career Guidance programme as a whole ?

- is the material appropriate to their level of development ?
- does it prepare the pupils to make the transition from school to work ?

The second, more targeted question, focuses specifically on the work experience within that programme:

How relevant is the work experience programme to the development of the pupils' career decision making skills ?

This is a time intensive programme. It is important to consider if this practical experience better prepares the pupils to be able to project themselves into the working world and so make more realistic career decisions.

3.8.3 Collecting the Data

According to Watts, (1983) the collected data related to work experience can be divided into two sections:

The first is 'objective' data, using either behavioural measures, or measures of attitudes, knowledge etc., which were administered without reference to work experience and only subsequently analysed according to whether or not the individuals concerned had participated in work experience schemes. The second category comprises 'subjective' data, based on direct questions about participation in the programme (p84).

The objective data collected includes the Career Development Questionnaires administered to all the pupils at the beginning of the year, and again to some pupils after their work experience. This information will only be used in the four illustrated case studies presented in Phase 4 of Chapter 4. The balance of the data collected will fall into the second category 'subjective data'.

Because there are no fixed rules regarding the methods employed in action research, the factor determining the particular methods used in any study appears to be the type of research questions being investigated. Mc Niff (1988) states there are two different, though related, perspectives to be considered;

- i which techniques are available for classroom data collection*
- ii which techniques are appropriate for which reason (p76).*

In answer to (i) above Mc Niff (1988) explains that techniques available for classroom data collection fall into three broad categories:

- *Paper and Pen methods; which include questionnaires,*
- *'Live' methods; which include interviews and discussions, and*
- *Ostensive methods (pp76-80).*

Referring to (ii) above, and the research questions generated, data was collected by the Pen and Paper and Live methods. Included in the former category were personal field notes, questionnaires, and the structured measures of the CDQ and the Hopson and Scally Work Shuffle. While the Live methods included interviews and lesson observations. No ostensive methods were employed.

3.8.3.1 Pen and Paper Methods

□ Personal Field Notes

During the course of phases 1,2 and 3, personal field notes kept by the researcher reflect the ongoing process of the lessons, the general impressions of events and the specific issues that arose. The pupils were aware of the role of the teacher as researcher. Keeping a diary is a relatively simple technique and is a good memory aide but it does require practice and can be subjective. (Hopkins, 1995: pp58-61)

□ Questionnaires

Mc Niff (1988) claims that questionnaires are:

notoriously difficult to create in order to get the information desired,... Enquiries conducted in an action research mode are usually to do with values and it is very difficult to capture nuances of opinion associated with questions of value through the precise formulation of questionnaires (p78).

Questionnaires provide a quick, simple way of obtaining rich information from pupils. Questions ranged from fairly structured questions to more open-ended questions in an effort to gain as wide a variety of responses as possible. The questionnaires were formulated by the researcher and the supervisor in consultation with one another. In this project, two sets of questionnaires were used: the first set were used by the pupils during and after work experience, the one to acquire career related information from their place of work and the second to capture their evaluation of the work experience; and the second set of questionnaires was aimed at the employers and their opinion of the pupil and the exercise. The questionnaires provided a more formal way of consulting with the pupils and the employers and the information gained was used to guide and feed into the

following set of activities.

As the research design reflected the principles of 'share, describe and reflect' and the attitude was to work with and for the pupils rather than on them, the researcher needed to gain some idea of the pupils' opinions of the process. Flanagan et al (1984) point out that, because educational action research is social action, the participatory element of action research extends beyond individual participation in the process to collaborative involvement. They claim:

It requires a special kind of communication, which recognises distinctive points of view, and engages them in practical and political deliberation about practice (with a corresponding political consciousness (p10).

emphasising the importance attached to the subjective experiences of all the people in the research experience.

□ **Structured Measures**

The Career Development Questionnaire

This was used only in the illustrated case studies of Phase 4. The Career Development Questionnaire was developed by Langley (1992) as a means of integrating the existing theories of Crites (1978), Super (1984) and Westbrook et al to determine the readiness of adolescents to make decisions on their careers. The test is based on the developmental approach - the domain of the theorists Super and Tiedemen. The five dimensions that the test covers are summarised by Langley (1992) as follows:

- obtaining information by the person on himself and converting the information to self-knowledge.
- acquiring decision-making skills and applying them in effective decision making.
- gathering career information and converting it into knowledge of the occupational world.

- integration of self-knowledge and knowledge of the occupational world.
- implementation of knowledge in career (p3).

The CDQ identifies for the users where they are in their career 'growing up' process. The questionnaire consists of a 100 true-false inventory of items covering five career development fields each of which is related to one or more career development tasks which have to be mastered during different stages in a person's life.

The five career development fields are:

- Self-information;
- Decision-making;
- Career information;
- Matching of self-information with career information;
- Career planning

The inventory was standardized by Langley, (1992) for use on all population groups in South Africa through administration to White, Asian, and Black Grade 10 and 12 pupils as well as first year university students.

Reliability

The reliability coefficient measures that characteristic of a measuring instrument that makes it possible to obtain the same result if it were administered repeatedly to the same person. Langley (1990) reports that the reliability coefficients of the scales for the three groups are satisfactory if they are used for guidance purposes.

Validity

The term validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures that which it is supposed to measure. The degree of validity which a measuring instrument has, is of particular importance in the practical use that is made of it. Langley

reports that only the content validity of the CDQ was addressed by examining:

- the items for face validity
- the wording of the items
- the item scale correlations

Hopson and Scally Work Shuffle

The Work Shuffle is a programme designed to help to broaden the concept of work for young people. It helps the pupils clarify what is important for them and relate that to their ideas about work. It considers the options for finding expression for these values either through a job, or in activities outside of a job.

The Values Card Sort is an exercise that involves each pupil individually, with his or own set of cards and the task of sorting 100 cards under 5 headings ranging from 'Very Important' to 'Not Important'.

3.8.3.2 Live Methods

□ Interviews

These are extremely valuable sources of data, but very time consuming. They are crucial in the validation of the researcher's claim that an improvement has taken place (McNiff, 1988: p79).

The interviews used in this dissertation include: personal interviews with certain pupils and a record of informal teacher-parent interviews.

□ Lesson Observation by Others

In the planning stage of the preparation lessons, it was decided that two observers would be present at all four of the preparation-for-work-experience lessons. A trial run in March revealed how much was involved in terms of pre-discussion, observation of the process and post discussion.

There was observation of one lesson, to two separate classes in April - this was a lesson on identifying work values, using the Hopson and Scally Work Shuffle. However physical problems arose as a result of the two observers working in Pietermaritzburg and Balgowan, and timetable restrictions. Although it is recognised that the scheme is inclusive of the preparation, the implementation and the debriefing stages, a discussion by the researcher and the observers on the emphasis of the research identified the work experience itself as the main focus and the lesson observation was discontinued.

This decision to abort the 'observation by others' part of the programme was a valuable part of the researcher's research training because it implemented the pragmatic difficulties of implementing the action research cycle. At face value, the term 'observation' seems easy to implement. However in reality this was not found to be so.

In Chapter 4, observer's comments on the Work Shuffle exercise are included, but the use of the other observers was abandoned due to the physical difficulty related to the location of the school and the time it would have taken to train and include other members of staff as observers (particularly bearing in mind the vagaries of the timetable and their full teaching schedules).

It was thus decided that the method of 'participant observation' should be followed. Jorgenson (1989) addresses issues related to participant observation and gives the

following two advantages of this methodology:

- i it *provides direct experiential and observational access to the insiders' world of meaning* (p15). In other words, it provides access to the thoughts and decisions of the participant, rooted in the day to day realities of experience; and
- ii since the researcher is a participant, he or she will not be intrusive as an 'outsider' and the resultant *concepts, generalizations and interpretations.... are useful for making practical decisions* (ibid.: p16).

3.8.4 Case Studies

Jorgenson (1989) claims that *case studies ... attempt to describe comprehensively and exhaustively a phenomenon*. Keeves (1988) explains the strong association between action research and the case study. He says that the case studies produce ordered reports of experience which offer evidence to which judgement can appeal. This then provides an understanding of educational action sought by action researchers (p50). Of particular relevance to this research, is Rowan's (Reason and Rowan, 1981) support of the case study in conjunction with participant observation and the holistic approach. His opinion is that this combination constitutes a logic which is most suitable for the study of whole human situations in their natural contexts (p189). However, there is a need to take note of the warning by Hopkins (1988) that there are two disadvantages of case study and they are both related to time: it is time consuming in its preparation and there is a considerable time lapse before any feedback is available (p81).

According to Keeves (1988), the conduct of case studies falls naturally into four phases: selecting cases and negotiating access, fieldwork, the organization of records and the writing of a report (p50). In this study, the pupils' selection was not strictly random. However, two girls and two boys were chosen from two 'middle' of the six ranked classes.

documentation, observation and test results which is discussed in 3.8.3. above. Keeves (ibid.) comments on the participant observer role of the teacher-researcher in educational case studies warning of the problem of becoming too involved in the process. However, Rowan (Reason and Rowan, 1981) claims the role: *exhibits the most respect for human dignity and freedom because it enables a person to work with, not on, his case, to treat him (or them) as fellow human beings rather than things* (p189). Two strategies for record keeping are progressive reduction of the records and indexing. Presentation of the case study can be through narrative, portrayal, vignette or analysis. The choice of the researcher in this study will reflect more of the vignette style than any of the others.

Hopkins (1980) makes special reference to educational case studies and ethical considerations. *In order to assure that the rights of human subjects are protected, the researcher should be certain that any risk to an individual is outweighed by potential benefits to that person* (p149). Not only do moral and ethical restraints bear on this question of risk, but schools also provide frameworks within which to work. The researcher continued to remind herself of her responsibilities in this regard throughout the research project.

3.9 How the Research Will Be Reported

If, as McNiff (1988) claims, *It is the systematic enquiry made public which distinguishes the enquiry as research* (p6), then the reporting on the research is of paramount importance. The aim of Chapter 4 is to describe and analyse the data gathered in the course of this study.

To summarise both parent occupations and the 'occupations' chosen by the pupils, various graphs have been used. The graph reflects occupations ranked on a nine point scale based on South Africa's Population Census figures (van der Merwe, 1993: p50). The first graph, at the beginning of the Chapter 4, gives an indication of the socio-

The first graph, at the beginning of the Chapter 4, gives an indication of the socio-economic level of the respondents as reflected by the parents' occupations. The second graph, using the same criteria and found in Phase 3 of Chapter 4, is a reflection of the pupils' placements. Since the reflections of the researcher as participant-observer are important in the process of action research, these are included in each phase. Various comments made by the researcher in the logbook entries are used to illustrate aspects to be reported.

Questionnaires and interview responses from pupils and employers are grouped in ways to lead us to some coherence and to illustrate points made.

The researcher became aware that she was practising the self reflective spiral of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and replanning, - her evaluation report of the programme to the Principal each year was proof of that - but, was she working on an intuitive rather than a conscious level? Ebbutt (Burgess,1985) has further demands that qualify action research:

If action research is to be considered legitimately as research, then participants in it must, it seems to me, be prepared to produce written reports of their activities. Moreover these reports ought to be available for some form of public critique (p157).

This dissertation is thus a response to the above and, following its examination, the researcher would like to publish the results of this project.

4.1 Introduction

The action cycle of action research is an on-going process. It is in the very nature of action research to repeat the spiral of action and reflection over again, always refining and amending activities in the classroom. The difference between what is done as a part of teaching, and research, is that when doing research the researcher makes explicit what might be done intuitively in other circumstances.

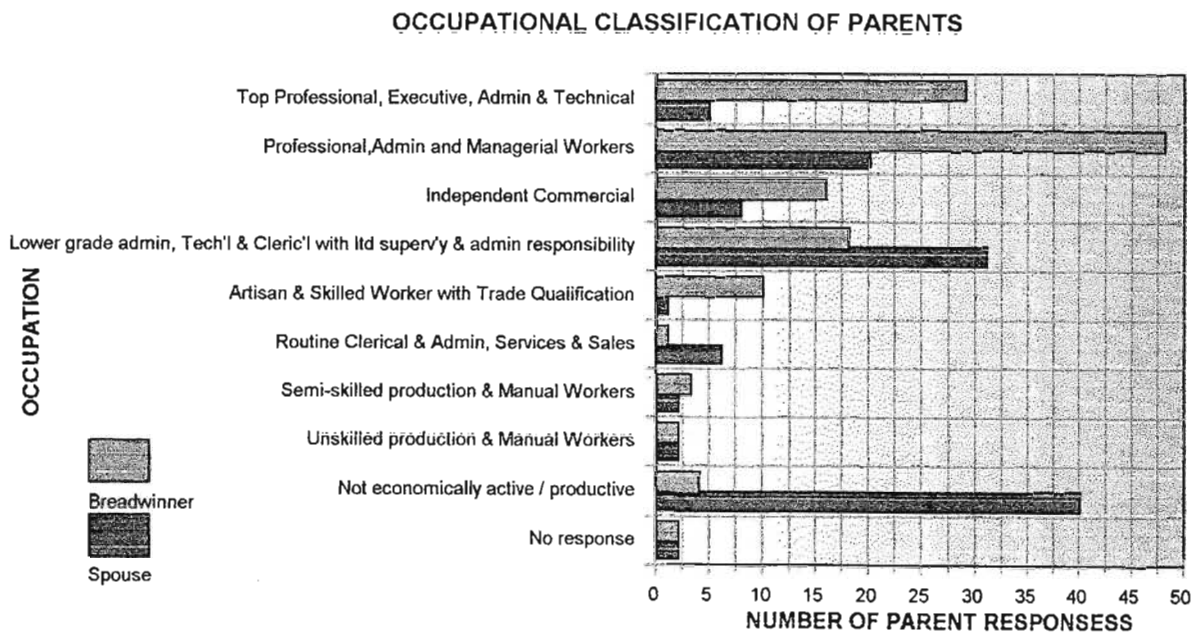
This chapter describes how the work experience came about and how it was conducted. The researcher documents how and when the data for the study was collected, and interprets it holistically within the framework of an action research design as described in chapter three. Impressions gained throughout the study are recorded and the data is interpreted at each stage. Simultaneously, an analysis of the issues central to the research questions is attempted.

Demographic Data

The subjects in this study are 158 Grade 11 pupils, 104 girls and 54 boys, from a multi-cultural, co-educational high school.

The occupations of their parents are classified on a nine point occupational scale (figure 9). This scale is one used by the Department of Labour (van der Merwe in de Haas, 1991) and it gives an indication of the socio-economic level of the respondents by considering their parents' occupations. The graph shows that the parents are in the middle to upper socioeconomic group. The sample thus will not be representative of the population. It also shows that the majority are employed in the upper four categories, with the exception of those 'not economically active'. It is worth noting that 90% of that category are housewives, and the other 10% are pensioners.

FIGURE 9 Occupational Classification of the Parents of the Subjects of the Study



Aims of this work experience programme

Consideration of the literature on work experience (Chapter 2) shows that the programme to be described has the following aims: maturational; investigative; expansive; sampling; and anticipatory (Miller et al, 1991: p22). Work experience can offer opportunities both for concrete experience and for active experimentation, but its

learning potential will only be harnessed if it is integrated into a curriculum frame which also provides opportunities for reflective observation and abstract conceptualization, and for maintaining the momentum of the cycle.

The work-experience offered in this research project is presented as an integrated programme which includes the phases of: preparation and briefing; the experience; and debriefing and follow-up. The dominant curricular frame is *careers education* with the associated aims of *expansive, sampling and anticipatory*. A second curricular frame, of almost as much importance, is that of *personal and social education* and here the related aim is *maturational*. A third, but less significant curricular frame is that of the *world-of-work* whose aim is *investigative*.

The format

The research project was divided into four interlinked phases and implemented over an eight month period. It was most intense over May and June, when most of the work was done.

Time frame:

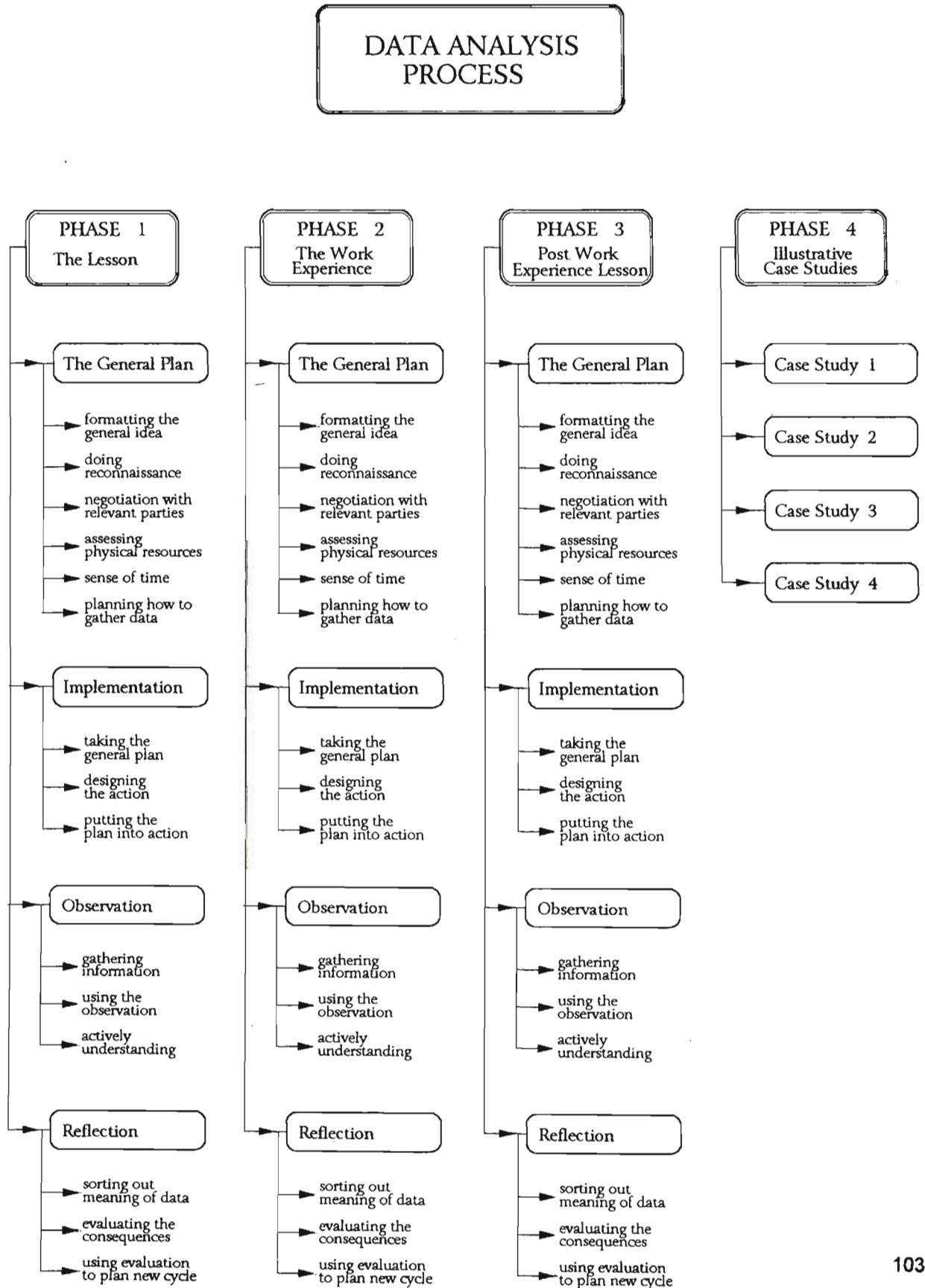
January 28	the initial CDQ test
January 28	the first work placement choice
April 9	work experience letters sent home
May 7- 21	work experience preparation lesson 1
May 21- June 5	work experience preparation lesson 2
June 06 -20	work experience preparation lesson 3
June 21-28	work experience preparation lesson 4
June 28 & 29	the work experience placement
June 30 - July 1	pupils' initial feedback and evaluation of the programme
June 30 - July 1	employers' evaluation of pupils and programme

July 25 - August 31	debriefing lessons
August 15	the second CDQ test

The four phases are:

- Phase 1 Preparation for work experience
- Phase 2 The work experience exercise
- Phase 3 Post work experience programme
- Phase 4 Illustrative case studies

The cycles encompassed in each of these phases is shown diagrammatically on the data analysis flow chart which follows:



4.2 Phase 1 - Preparation for Work Experience

4.2.1 Stage 1: The General plan

Work experience has been a part of the Grade 11 career guidance programme at Hillcrest High School for many years. It had initially been timetabled into the post-examination activities of the second term and was arranged rather tentatively at first because of the involvement of so many outside parties. However, the response from the parents and the employers was supportive and encouraging and there was more and more evidence that the pupils found the exercise stimulating and informative. Thus over the years the programme has become firmly entrenched as a school exercise.

As part of the careers education programme, the original aims had been to broaden the range of occupations that the pupils were prepared to consider as career options, to test their career preference before committing themselves to it, and to expose the pupils to the work environment so as to ease the transition from school to work. It became increasingly evident, however, that the experience had the added benefit of facilitating the pupils' personal and social development.

The new developments in education, in the country and in employment trends posed the question of the relevance of this work-experience scheme and its related aims. Hence the decision to study the work experience programme in greater depth.

4.2.1.1 Doing Reconnaissance

The village of Hillcrest boasts many employment opportunities. Building societies, banks, garages, primary and high schools, a hospital and many outlets for the servicing of the needs of the local residents are available to provide work experience for the pupils. Two

industrial areas are relatively close - Hammarsdale supports heavy industry while Westmead houses light and small industries. In addition, there are healthy agricultural and equine communities surrounding the village.

Since work experience had been an element of the Grade 11 programme for 6 years, the researcher was aware of the support the community. A number of companies and business ventures had provided places in previous years and had given positive feedback. In certain types of work there was no problem in finding places. However, there would be a need to investigate new placements. Enlisting the assistance of the pupils' parents would certainly lessen the load and widen the contacts.

4.2.1.2 Negotiating with Relevant Parties

The major parties who would need to be consulted before this project could be launched were the Governing Body and the Management of the school, the pupils and their parents, and the potential employers.

School Governance and Management: Negotiating with these school bodies is primary to the process. There is an element of risk in that the pupils, who are in fact representing the school could let everyone down by doing something wrong. There is also the question of the school insurance covering the pupils because they are, in fact, on a school exercise. It is important, then, to secure the support of governance and management by informing them of all that will happen and convincing them of the educational value of the exercise.

Pupils: Pupils are the most important people in this negotiating process. If their interest has not been stirred and their commitment not gained, this work experience programme would be of little value. It is important for them to feel part of the process from the

outset.

Parents: Parents generally appreciate anything that is done to assist their children in the career decision making process. They are essential cogs in the wheel and need to be well briefed so that they are in a position to provide maximum support at the time of the project. Besides being responsible for the transport to and from the place of work, and as already mentioned these parents were asked to help secure work experience placements for their children.

The employers: The Hillcrest community is large enough to provide a wide variety of employment, but small enough to enable many of the employers, teachers, pupils and parents to know each other. Indeed many of the local employers were, are or will be parents of Hillcrest High School pupils, and some were even pupils of the school themselves. This personal involvement together with the participation of the local Rotary and Lions Clubs, has led to a positive and constructive interest in the work experience programme.

4.2.1.3 Assessing Physical Resources

Work experience placements: The first and most important physical resource that is required is approximately 160 specific placements. Every effort is made to secure the pupil's first choice of placement. If for some reason this is not possible the second option must be pursued. Initial contact is made with potential employers by phone and, if agreement is reached, the telephone conversation is confirmed by letter or telefax.

Secretarial services: There is much communication with the employers and parents and this is by telephone, telefax and letter. Of necessity there must be access to a telephone, a telefax machine, and computer.

Documentation: Another important physical resource is the documentation.

A series of letters to the employers include:

- confirmation of the initial telephone contact, an introduction of the pupil and an explanation of aims of the programme and expectations of the employer;
- an employer evaluation of the pupil and the programme;
- a letter of thanks.

Documentation for the pupils includes:

- work sheets - a useful way to capture and keep job related information;
- instruction sheets - a list of and DOs and DON'Ts, and tips for the new worker;
- an evaluation sheet.

The above documents can be found in Appendixes B and C

Time: The most valuable and elusive resource in organising a work experience programme is time. Speak to people involved with, or consult articles on, work experience and without exception there will be mention of how time-consuming the organisation can be. Put that together with a full teaching load and it becomes a very busy term in the school year. There is no additional help available in schools so the school secretary and the teacher co-ordinator handle all the calls from the employers who are only available during working hours. Planning ahead allows for more time after the reply slips are returned and the employers are contacted.

4.2.1.4 Working Within A Specified Time

The tension between the educational value of work experience and disruption of the formal teaching routine, leads to this programme being timetabled to run in the last week of the second term, after teaching and the examinations for the term have been

completed. The Guidance lessons of the preceding 12 weeks of the term are used for the preparation of the pupils. The beginning of the term signals the initial correspondence being sent home for perusal by parents and pupils (Appendix A). This letter informs parents and pupils of the work experience plan and asks for their commitment and assistance. On return of the reply slips, approximately 2 - 3 weeks later, contact is made with potential employers. While the placements are being secured, the pupils are prepared for work experience in general and their placement in particular. The school's timetable formally allocates one period per class, every second 6 day cycle for Guidance, and the responsibility for the good use of this time falls to the teacher counsellor, in this case, the researcher. The lessons of the second term are scheduled to enlighten the pupils about the world of work, increase their self knowledge and to broaden the perspective of their career options. There is also time allocated to assist pupils individually in making a choice.

4.2.1.5 Planning How to Gather Data

The data to be gathered at this stage includes the return slips from the pupils indicating their preferred choice of placement and the information from the employers confirming these placements. Further data that has a bearing on this research project is the self-information the pupils gather about themselves in the preparation lessons and the daily entries in the log book of the researcher.

4.2.2 Stage 2: Implementation

4.2.2.1 Designing the Action to Test the General Plan

The main intention in designing this plan is to ensure that the work experience is a genuinely educational experience for each pupil. It is intended that pupils should have

the opportunity of broadening, not limiting, their experience. Proper preparation for and follow-up of work experience is required of pupils and employers so that the most is made of the opportunity. The preparation plan includes 5 steps:

Step 1 Preparing Documentation

- **For the parents**

Informing and motivating the parents is the intent of the **first letter** sent home. The reply slip from them will register the pupil's two choices, whether the parents have been able to secure a contact, and their signature ensuring their consent. For the parents 'securing a placement' means making the initial contact with the place of employment, ensuring whether it is the 'correct' place and if the employers would be prepared to take part in the exercise.

- **For the employers**

In response to the return of the reply slip from the parents, a telephone call is made to the employer confirming the parents' request or alternatively, requesting a placement.

The **second letter** is sent to the employers as a follow up to that telephone call. This letter confirms the dates, the times and the name of the pupil, and explains the aims of the work experience programme. Included with the letter is an **information sheet** which the employer has to return for use by the pupil. It asks for information such as the expected time of arrival and departure, the clothes to be worn, the name of the person to whom the pupil should report and the physical street address where the premises are situated. An **evaluation sheet** is presented to the employer by the pupil on his or her arrival at the place of work.

- **For the pupils**

The first document that the pupils have to prepare them for the work experience is a **TIPS sheet**, a list of Do's and Don'ts for the pupil preparing to enter the working world. The second is a **worksheet** containing questions that will help the pupils identify the relevant facts about the job and the third is a letter from the employer detailing the time and place of arrival and to whom the pupil should report. On their return to school the pupils are asked to complete an **evaluation form**.

- **For the insurance company**

A **letter** to the group insurers detailing the pupils taking part and the dates of the exercise will ensure coverage in case of accident. Special coverage is organised by the insurers for this particular programme for these particular dates.

(Copies of all of this documentation can be found in the Appendixes A, B and C)

Step 2 Preparing the Pupils

Preparation for work experience should begin with the assumption that, for many pupils, this will be the first real exposure to the working world - a world in which there are many new rules and expectations, a world that will open their eyes to new realities. Being unprepared could set a tone for later misconceptions. In the lessons preceding the work experience special attention should be given to:

- the world of work and career decision making skills
- discussion about the aims of work experience and the expectations of employers;
- clarification of the reports to be kept by pupils during the visit, and
- an explanation of the aims and content of employers' reports on the pupils.

The Lessons

The four lessons preceding the work experience are spread over eight weeks, almost four weeks after the initial letter informing the parents of the intended work experience exercise. By this time a fair number of pupils would have made a placement choice. These are usually based on 'what they always wanted to do' or parental suggestions. A smaller number of pupils are unable or unwilling to make a choice. These lessons are designed to broaden the pupils' perspective of the world of work and the approaches to choosing a career. Stress is laid equally on gaining self-knowledge and knowledge of the world of work and considering personal styles of decision making.

Lesson 1

The aim of this lesson is to help pupils identify what is important to them about work.

The Hopson and Scally Work Shuffle is a teaching programme designed to broaden the concept of work for young people. They argue that the primary assumption of 'work' being synonymous with a job, needs to be challenged as we approach the Post-Industrial Era. They categorise work as follows:

	LIKE	DISLIKE
PAID		
UNPAID		

The Work Shuffle card sort is designed to help pupils determine what their work values are, and to maximise their chances of satisfying them through the complete panorama of life roles and not simply through the role of paid employee. It consists of packs of forty cards, thirty five of them describing some aspect of work which someone might value. These are known as **work values**. Two examples follow:

ARTISTIC

You enjoy work involving drawing
designing, making music, making
models, etc.

LEARNING

It is important for you to learn new
things

This is a lesson that involves each pupil, individually. There is no interaction among the members of the class. Each pupil identifies for him- or herself the eight most important work values and is then asked to consider a job and lifestyle that will satisfy these. (Appendix D contains further information on the Hopson and Scally Work Shuffle.)

The last few minutes of the lesson will address the return of the reply slips and whether the placements have been secured.

Lesson 2

The aim of this lesson is to expose the pupils to the theories of Super and Holland and to encourage them to consider the relevance of these theories to their own age and stage of development.

Career decision making is a process and not an event. 'Career as a Quest' is an article from a career guidance magazine (Appendix D) and is suitable for pupils to read. As was seen in Chapter 2, Super's theory not only stresses the ongoing nature of career decision making but identifies stages of a person's life and typical tasks that are expected at each stage. An overhead transparency of the tasks of the exploration stage is appropriate and may be used to stimulate class discussion.

A discussion of Holland's theory can lead onto playing 'the party' game (Appendix D). Each pupil is given a handout of a diagram of Holland's Hexagon represented as a party

layout, and is asked to choose the group of people with whom they would most like to spend the evening. The classroom is divided into six points and the pupils are asked to move physically to their point of choice. When there, they should be encouraged to compare personalities with the others of similar choice. On their handout, in the block provided, they record the first letter of their choice. The pupils are then advised that all of those 'friends' had to go home and they are forced to choose another set of people they would like to join. This then becomes the second letter in their three letter code. The exercise is repeated to identify the third letter of their code. Discussion with those of similar and opposite persuasions should be stimulated. The pupils are informed that they have done their first 'career test' and have acquired a three letter code which will open a whole world of information to them. They are encouraged to seek more self information by talking to friends, family and teachers and by seriously considering their interests, values and hobbies.

Lesson 3

The aim of this lesson is to broaden the pupils' knowledge of the world of work and help them relate it to the three letter code they identified for themselves in the previous lesson.

As Holland identified different personalities in the work place, so he identified different working environments. A handout (in appendix D) highlights the Holland work environments and the pupils are asked to get into similar three letter code groups and consider 'their' working environment as opposed to all the others. A general class discussion will then consider the different fields of work. The pupils are encouraged to think of as many jobs as they can and these will be written on the board. These can be divided into categories of work - commercial, industrial, service and agricultural. Small group discussion will identify the difference in the environments, working conditions and training requirements of the different categories. The pupils should be encouraged to relate this to the information they found out about themselves in the previous lesson. Introduction to the career library is appropriate at this time. It is filled with books on careers, pamphlets,

brochures and year books from training institutions, and videos on specific careers and career decision making. The pupils are encouraged to gather as much career information as possible by talking to people in various jobs, reading about career paths of people in magazines and newspapers and identifying different careers on Television. The last part of the lesson will deal with administrative matters, checking on replies and returns and any queries about their work experience placements.

Lesson 4.

The aim of lesson four is to identify and practice the skills needed for the pupils to go on work experience.

A discussion of different work environments and the expectations of each will lead to identifying the concept of 'appropriate'. A comparison can be made between going to a lawyer's office or mechanic's workshop and how the clothing, behaviour and language will be different in each case. The pupils on work experience are encouraged to follow working hours, and each one will have received a return slip from the employer stating these hours, the clothes to be worn and any special instructions. Now is the time to discuss these and answer any queries. The pupils will break into groups of similar work environments and role play different situations - what to do when they arrive, how to introduce themselves to their employer and their fellow workers, how to ask questions about specific jobs and to fill in their work sheets. A screening of selected parts of the video 'Body Language' will illustrate the relevant points of this form of communication. The employers will be evaluating the pupils and a discussion of what they have been asked to identify will be of interest and concern to the pupils.

Once again there needs to be time for the final administrative chores. Each pupil must have the completed pack of documents referred to on page 107.

Step 3 Involving and Informing Parents

Motivating the parents to become involved in this project is helpful for all the parties. Many parents become 'employers' of other pupils, while all are involved with their own children. Keeping them informed of what is happening by letter and circular is of paramount importance.

Step 4 Conferring with Employers

Selling a new concept to potential 'employers' - especially when they have no previous experience of work exposure - takes a good deal of effort. The expectations and responsibilities of work experience must be explained. It is important to highlight the fact that, while no payment is involved, 'employer' supervision of pupils in the work situation is crucial to the success of the project. While there are different ways of making contact, for example involving the parents as 'employers', or asking the parents and their children to make their own contacts, it is essential that the co-ordinator establishes at least telephonic contact with all participants.

Step 5 Group Accident Insurance

In addition to asking parents to sign appropriate indemnity forms, it is essential to obtain short-term insurance cover for all pupils in work experience projects. The insurance is inexpensive and easy to arrange.

4.2.2.2 Putting the Plan Into Action

No matter how well planned the exercise is, the course of action inevitably varies from the intention. Below is a discussion of the implementation of the plan, following the 5 steps of the previous stage.

Step 1 Preparing the Documentation

This is a lengthy and expensive part of the project. The letters are the school's hallmark in a business environment. They need to be expertly typed and photocopied, and each letter, personalised. The computer is invaluable for this because it can merge the name and address of the employer with the name of the pupil. This requires yet another skill for the teacher/co-ordinator to acquire. The printing department needs plenty of time to prepare so much documentation to be ready at the same time. The scarcest commodity is time. Each day brings forth placement requests which needed to be followed up with a phone call and then a letter or a telefax to an employer.

Step 2 Preparing the Pupils

The plan was concerned initially with the pupils' return of the placement requests. Many of these came in timeously but others were late which caused a number of employers to be contacted at a very late stage. The initial euphoria about going into the work place was gradually replaced by a quiet seriousness as the pupils realized that they would be alone in a foreign working environment. In fact, a few pupils displayed sheer panic and were unable to make a choice and asked to stay at school.

A second area of preparation was in the Guidance lessons which were designed to enable pupils to acquire the skills of self-appraisal and self-knowledge in relation to the demands of employers. Practical issues such as how to get to the place of employment, what to wear and how to approach the boss and fellow employees and to understand some of the routines of work were addressed. The lessons included role play and group discussions of how to handle work related issues, such as the need for courtesy and cooperation, the importance of completing a task and punctuality. Although the same lesson plan was applied to each of the six classes, the interpretation and process differed according to the different groups

and the questions were relevant to their specific choices.

Of concern was a number of pupils who had delayed making a decision about where they would like to be placed. These pupils seemed unwilling to commit themselves and the reasons for this differed. It did, however, lead to a great amount of time spent in individual counselling, some pupils returning for several interviews before they felt confident enough about making a final decision. The problem is that time which should have been spent conferring with employers was limited and that then delayed the administrative work which had to be completed before the pupils departed. Many parents phoned seeking confirmation about the project or their child's choice and this was also time consuming.

Step 3 Involving and Informing Parents

The parental involvement came in different forms. As requested, the majority of parents helped their child make a decision about where he or she would like to spend their work experience time, possibly found a placement, and signed and returned the reply slip by the due date.

Other parents, a smaller number, opted out of any responsibility by simply saying: *its up to you - you choose and I'll sign*. Others, an even smaller number, did not even sign the form because of some or other form of absence.

The next group of parents, eight in number, can be labelled 'over-anxious'. They overplayed the importance of the choice of a work experience placement, at the same time underrating the skills of their child. These parents requested career counselling and testing before a decision could be made. Others phoned back over and over again to talk the decision through and seek validation.

The final, very small group of parents, was the one that caused most concern. There was

evidence of conflict between the child and parents and, seemingly, a strong desire for the parents to dictate the child's career path. In the two cases where it occurred, mothers declared that the choice that their daughters had made were not good enough for them. One mother phoned, after her child had returned her signed slip for modelling, and asked that I place her daughter as 'something professional' and then persuade the child to go there. The girl and her mother reached a deadlock and the pupil stayed at school as a facilitator in the Grade 8 programme (see p136). The other pupil was brought in by both her parents and we discussed the option of beauty therapist versus medical technologist for almost an hour. The pupil had chosen beauty therapy and the parents eventually persuaded her to do medical technology because it was a 'better career'.

Step 4 Conferring with the Employers

It was the limited time available to use the telephone that made this task difficult. Free periods are few and far between and a telephone call could bounce back between the place of work and the school for days before the co-coordinator and the employer, with the authority to say 'yes', could make contact.

Although it was of great assistance having parents make the initial contact, it still required that this be followed up and confirmed by the school and sometimes parents had not given a contact number or an address. This meant yet another phone call to track it down. Some employers could not be contacted by phone and this required letters being sent through the pupil.

The range and number of employers are reflected on the page 131.

Step 5 Conferring with the Insurance Agent

This was the simplest step. A letter to the school's insurance agent stating the nature of the project, the pupils who would be involved and the time it spanned ensured that they pupils were covered as on school business.

4.2.3 Stage 3: Observation

The data collected from this pre work-experience phase includes: the placement requests from the pupils; the reactions from the parents, recorded in the logbook entries ; and the feedback from the preparation lessons, particularly that from the observers. There needs to be consideration too, of the communication between all the parties involved and the reflection on the process recorded in the logbook of the researcher.

The lessons

Lesson 1

As in the case of all the other lessons, this lesson was presented to all six Grade 11 classes. However, two of these lessons were used as observation lessons. Two middle classes were identified and the supervisor of this research project and an observer monitored the proceedings. Comment on this lesson will be limited to what went on in these two particular classes. Initially, the pupils were distracted and disrupted by the intrusion of the observers but this turned to heightened interest as the observers introduced themselves and explained the purpose of their visit. The nature of the card sort exercise involved the pupils in individual and personal exploration. The theme of the lesson was *paid* and *unpaid* work and what is *liked* and *disliked*. The pupils were required to identify thirty five statements under four headings ranging from **Very Important** to **Not Important**. The cards under **Very Important** could not exceed eight in number and had to be ranked. These then represented the pupil's most important work values. When the pupils had each completed

their ranking they had a chance to see how these could influence their job choice and life style. This exercise interested and involved all the pupils and was particularly relevant to the work experience choices. A record of the pupils' top eight work values was filed in their Guidance files.

Observers' comments after seeing the 'Work Shuffle' being undertaken in two different classes:

In the process of the two lessons, different introductions were given. In the first lesson observed, time was spent discussing the concepts of paid and unpaid work and individual differences in forms of likes and dislikes. In the second lesson observed the exercise of the card shuffle was introduced at the start with discussion of the concepts paid/unpaid work, likes and dislikes taking place later in the lesson.

Furthermore, at the end of the Work Shuffle exercise with the first group, a discussion about individual differences in ranking of most important values ensued and then a table was created on the board to look at the most common values across the class. The overall class ranking was in descending order;

*friendship
money
security }
independence }
communication
competition
promotion }
decision-making }
physical challenged*

The final part of the discussion was not undertaken with the second class because of the time constraints.

The differences in the two processes show how the same lesson plan changes from group to group, based

on many variables, eg: teacher confidence, evaluation of different approaches, speed at which pupils work, pupils' questions and/or responses, the teacher's "felt" sense of the lesson.

The observers commented that the first lesson plan seemed to provide a better cognitive frame to the lesson and promoted greater discussion and pupils linking the values exercise directly to work. This was, however, achieved with the second group who might have approached the exercise in a less biased way without the frame being provided. The overall class ranking was not done with the second group. However, the observers wondered about its efficacy. It did provide a vehicle for discussion about individuals having unique sets of values, but could possibly lead to confident pupils feeling somehow different.

In terms of the content, the Work Shuffle exercise seemed to be effective in terms of directing pupils' attention to consciously identifying their values. The pupils showed evident interest - selecting and deciding takes time, and the observers noticed pupils talking a little to one another about the cards as they worked on the exercise.

*One of the observers noted one of the questions suggested as a discussion starter by Hopson and Scally: **Do I now need to find out about particular job conditions to check whether they will provide what is important to me?** The question seemed to be a good one to bear in mind when pupils are evaluating their work experience.*

Lesson 2

This lesson had more general appeal. The pupils obviously enjoyed identifying their personal Holland code. It was with enthusiasm that they moved into groups and discussed their personalities and likes and dislikes with their peers. The South African Dictionary of Occupations (Taljaard and von Mollendorf, 1987) was well used as groups looked up the relevant jobs for their codes.

Lesson 3

This lesson tended to be a little theoretical for some of the pupils. Their group discussions revealed a lack of knowledge of careers beyond those of their families and friends and they showed little interest in finding out more. They seemed content with what they knew. A group of pupils in the top class challenged this as they struggled to find the category for 'astronaut'. Work experience will certainly broaden the work knowledge of all these pupils.

Lesson 4

This was the most successful of all lessons. The reality of the situation, that they would be in a foreign environment in less than two weeks, was dawning on most of the pupils and this lesson addressed some of their queries in a practical way. There was a great level of interaction as the pupils role played different scenarios, all of them new. There was a great concern about such things as what to wear and whether to take lunch or lunch money.

The feedback from the preparation lessons was that they related directly to the work experience exercise. There was evidence of great participation in most of the activities, especially in identifying their Holland's code and role playing the work scenarios.

School Governance and Management

The support of both these bodies was evident and encouraging. The Principal in particular, expressed his belief in the educational value of work experience and this cast the entire exercise in a positive light.

Pupils

In general the pupils were interested and enthusiastic about the experience. The reply slips, however, were returned slowly and late and their delay caused an unprecedented administrative rush towards the end of the term. Placements for all grade 11 pupils had been secured - 174 placements had been secured for 158 pupils because some pupils were going to more than one place.

Parents

The majority of parents assisted in finding placements for their children and some even offered employment for other pupils. There were no complaints of having to find transport for the pupils. Some parents, however, seemed to believe that the choice of a placement had nothing to do with them. Some, on the other hand, saw it as their sole responsibility, allowing no participation from their children at all.

Employers

There was ample evidence of an interested and committed body of people outside the education system who are more than willing to get involved with helping pupils. The majority of them did not hesitate to agree in principal before they had even heard the details of the plan. Appendix E provides an example of the programme prepared by an engineering for the pupil visit.

Log book entries

These reflect the feeling of pressure at the work load especially as it increased towards the end, yet there are also diarised success stories of pupils finally deciding on where to go and securing a placement.

22 June

L is a quiet, bewildered-looking girl from 11a. She always seems to be in my office, claiming she does not know where she wants to go on her experience. She came in again today with a card from a cosmetics/make-up artist. It appears that her Mother went to a demonstration of this art form and brought home the card for L. After a discussion L declared her intent to be placed there. I suggested that we phone there and then because time is running out. Well that was not as easy as it seemed. The artist had vacated the premisses sometime ago but there was a contact number. That contact revealed another change of address and phone number. Eventually we tracked the company down and they agreed to have L for the two days of work experience. She went away beaming and I was relieved that one more Grade 11 has been placed.

4.2.4 Stage 4: Reflections

The planning for the next phase, the work experience, is dependent on what was achieved in this phase and I was pleased to have achieved placements for all the pupils, but at great cost in terms of stress for me. On reflection of the stress I experienced trying to cope at the end of the term, there is no doubt that when this cycle is reimplemented next year, more time must be allocated for the pupils to return the reply slips. Perhaps to send the letter home at the end of the first term and set a deadline for their return - three weeks into the new term.

A further consideration is whether the pupils have gained the maximum benefit from the work experience by being properly briefed and prepared and having their employers aware of what to expect. The preparation seemed to be thorough and covered most areas of concern. There is considerable evidence that the pupils were motivated and excited about the forthcoming experience and that, within the time limitations, I had done as much as possible to prepare the employers. The literature of Watts (1983) and Mosupye and Sakalis (1994) indicates a far greater involvement of the employers in the planning stages of their exercises. In the U.K. some employers are involved from the inception stages of work-experience and Mosupye and Sakalis (*ibid.*) mention that they meet with the employers and help them plan activities for the students. Although this is highly desirable, it is physically impossible for a single co-ordinator who doubles as a teacher to aspire to this level of preparation.

It is the opinion of this researcher that phase one had adequately prepared all the participants for the launch of the next phase, the work experience *per se*.

4.3 Phase 2 - The Work Experience

4.3.1 Stage 1: General Plan

This phase extends over a period of 4 days in the final week of the second term. The general plan is that the pupils will go out on their work experience placements for a period of two days and on their return to school, for the last two days of the term, will complete an evaluation and present oral feedback on the work experience and write letters of thanks to their employers. The evaluation of the work experience will be completed by considering the written feedback of pupils on their experience and on the programme, and the written feedback from the employers on the pupils and on the programme.

4.3.1.1 Formulating the General Idea

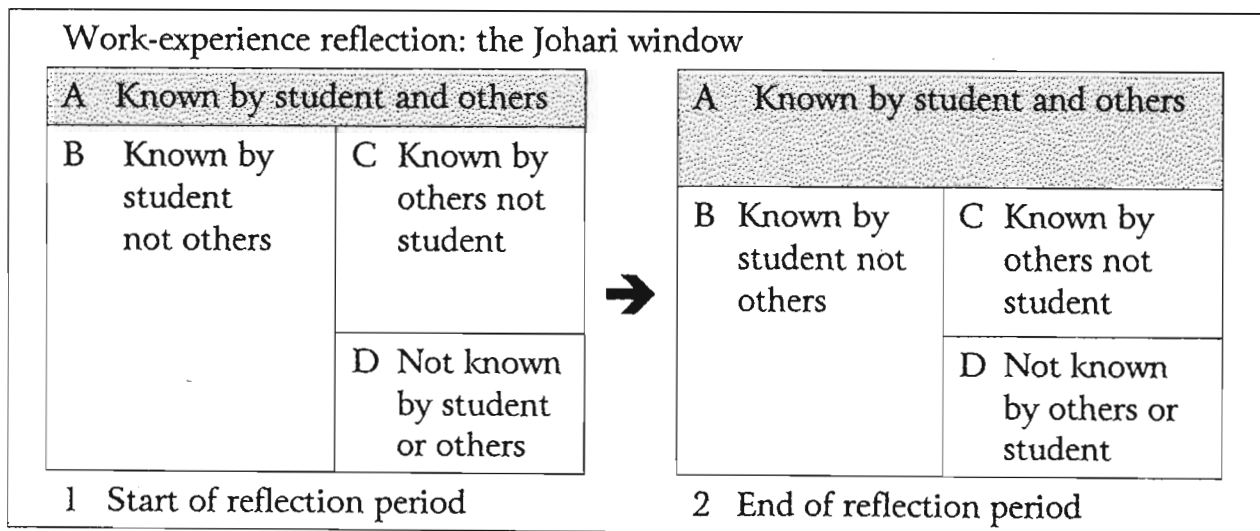
Work experience is a way of learning about the realities of the world of work. The pupils are encouraged to 'keep in step' with a worker of the pupil's choice, learning about the role and observing the various tasks performed. It forms part of the career development process and is a powerful form of experiential learning. The objectives to be considered when formulating the general idea include:

- To enable pupils to gain a more dynamic insight into the essence of work, and a more realistic idea of what it is like to work.
- To broaden the pupils' concept of careers and to enable them to evaluate the world of work with reference to themselves, the workplace, and the future, so that they realize that to make a career decision is an on-going and complex process.
- To facilitate a better understanding of skills in the workplace.
- To consider the meaning of personal values and how they relate to work experience.

Also to be considered in the formulation of the general plan is the evaluation and reflection on the work- experience by the pupils and the employers.

Reflection, for the pupils, often involves sharing the experience with peers and teachers. The adaptation of the Johari Window by Miller (figure 4.2) illustrates this process. At the start of the debriefing period most of the knowledge rests with the pupil, although the teacher may have some information which the pupil does not possess such as the employer’s assessment of the pupil. At the close of the reflection period, much of the knowledge has been shared, although both teacher and pupil may retain some knowledge which they have not revealed to the other. Sharing experiences with peers can also shed additional light on the pupil’s individual experience.

Figure 4.2 Work experience reflection: the Johari window. (Miller, 1991: p228)



The evaluation of the work experience by the pupils and the employers raises a methodological dilemma that needs to be noted here. Is this evaluation of the work experience itself, or the effect of the experience plus the preparation, briefing, and subsequent debriefing and follow-up work? This researcher regards the work experience

as only being complete if it is integrated into the school programme (chapter 2 p43). However, for the purpose of this phase of the research project, the pupil and employer evaluations of the work experience per se will be recorded, observed and reflected on. The evaluation of the integrated programme will be discussed at the conclusion of phase three.

4.3.1.2 Doing a Reconnaissance Exercise

The placements had been secured and confirmed. What was needed now was an accessible compilation of this information. Grade 11 class lists recording the name, address and telephone number of the employer next to each pupil's name would facilitate this.

Reports back from the pupils and the writing of thank you letters to the employers was the next consideration. On consulting the timetable it became evident that there would not be enough time to see all the pupils in Guidance lessons before the end of term. The only departments that do see the pupils each day are those of English and Mathematics. I would therefore need to negotiate with the teachers concerned.

As important role players, the employers have a great influence on the work-experience scheme. Their evaluation of the programme and of the pupils is important, and it was necessary to have the questionnaires ready for the pupils to hand to them.

4.3.1.3 Negotiating with the Relevant People

The relevant parties for the work experience were, once again, the parents, the employers and the pupils. Negotiating with them about the placements was now complete. What should be secured, however, are contact names and telephone numbers of the employers

of all the pupils. In the case of an emergency or a pupil not getting to the place of work, there must be contact between the parties.

Because of timetabling constraints on the Guidance department, the English department agreed to be part of this project by allowing their lessons of the last two days of term to be devoted to work experience. The pupils were required to give oral and written feedback of the experience and to write a thank you letter to their employer.

The evaluation form referred to earlier was sent to each employer via the pupils. It was requested that the employers complete the evaluation and return it with the pupil or post it back to the school.

4.3.1.4 Assessing the Physical Resources Required

The class lists referred to in 4.3.1.2., reflect where each pupil is - the physical address and a contact telephone number of the employer. A telephone is the most valuable resource at this stage.

The pupil evaluation form for completion by each pupil in the English lesson is a physical resource which needs to be compiled, photocopied and counted into class numbers to be ready for the day the pupils arrive back at school. Another physical resource that must be available for the pupils when they return is headed letter paper, envelopes and stamps for their letters.

4.3.1.5 Working Within A Specified Time

The time period for the work experience placement is quite specific. It takes place over two days - Tuesday and Wednesday of the last week of the second term. This time suits the teachers and the academic programme of the school because the pupils have just

written their exams and the teachers are busy marking and collating the marks. It is also a good time for the firms in commerce and industry. During the end of the year holidays, the university students do their compulsory training for their degree courses. The factories and businesses also slow down or some close down at the year end.

After the work experience, the pupils return to school for the final two days to complete their evaluation forms, present their English orals and write thank you letters. If the experience did not have school days both before and after, briefing and de-briefing and optimisation of learning from the experience would be effected.

4.3.1.6 Planning How to Gather Data

The pupils' feedback, after the placement, is captured in various forms. Watts (1983) says teachers ought to be ready to take advantage of any opportunity that may arise for discussion, writing and evaluation of the pupil's work experience (p 59). The first form of feedback was an individually, written, immediate evaluation of the experience in relation to the skills, values and expectations of the pupil (Appendix C). Watts (ibid.) claims that although pupils don't particularly like writing they consider the completion of a questionnaire of this sort to be an acceptable task because it is relevant (p 59). The second form of data capture is a more ordered and structured account offered through the medium of an English oral the day after the pupils return from the work experience. The logbook entries record the spontaneous reflections of the more excited and surprised pupils who were encountered by the researcher during the two days following the programme.

The employers' feedback (Appendix B) is an evaluation of both the individual pupils in relation to the job and of the work experience programme as a whole. Jamieson (Miller et al, 1991) suggests that most employers report on the attitudes and social and interpersonal skills of pupils rather than their job related skills and knowledge. This is because of the lack of opportunity for the pupils to demonstrate more specific skills and

knowledge and because they all arrive at the work place with a set of relevant attitudes that employers can assess. The measurable attitudes that he regards as important are: initiative, co-operation, self-confidence, motivation, responsibility, communication and teamwork (pp. 248-256). The employers' opinion of the programme and its organization is important feedback to elicit. They are essential stakeholders and their response will influence the planning of subsequent exercises.

4.3.2 Implementation

4.3.2.1 Designing the Action to Test the General Plan

The general idea is that all the Grade 11 pupils will have the opportunity to go to a place of work of their choice to 'experience' everything about it for a two day period. Some pupils will be able to 'do' the work , while others will only be able to watch and experience the environment. There will be no payment for the pupils who will be expected to work the hours of the job. They will have the opportunity to interview workers in the field and ask about training and work opportunities. During that time it is important to make sure that all the participants respect their commitments - that the parents transport the pupils to the place of work, that the pupils go to work and that the employers expose the pupils to the work tasks and environment.

While it was not possible to visits the work places, the telephone ensured contact with pupils and employers.

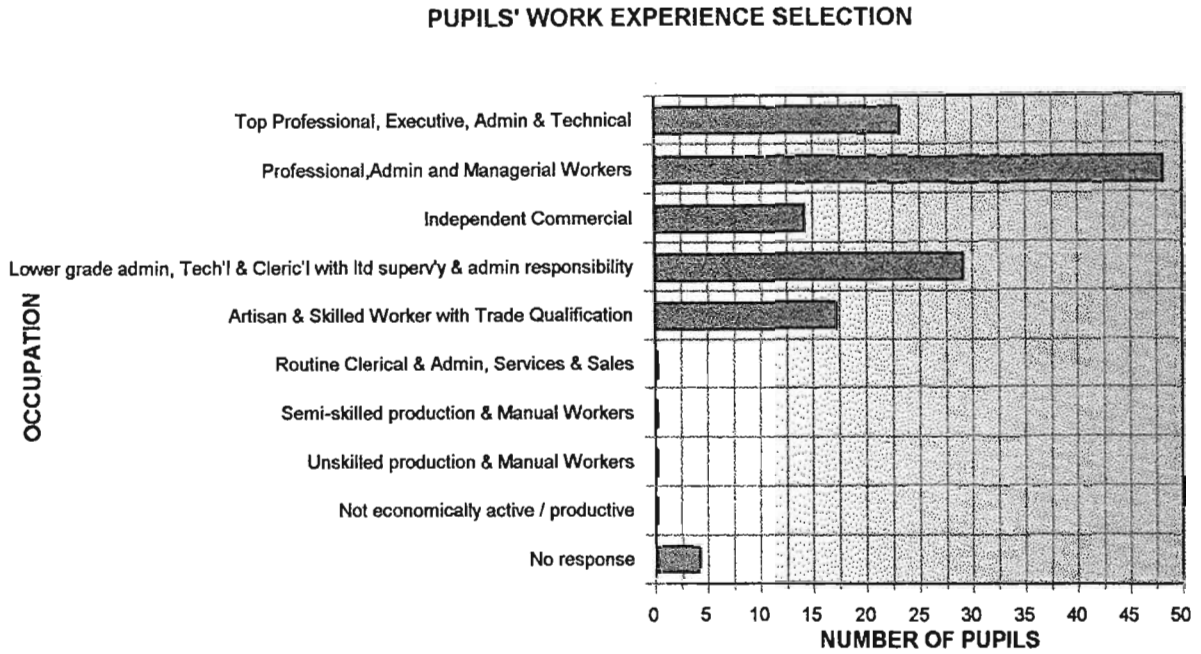
As a backup to the general plan, a visit to a large carpet factory for any pupils who could not get to their 'workplace' was organised. The personnel manager promised that he would be able to expose pupils to different work options within his organisation.

4.3.2.2 Implementation of the Plan

Some of the pupils had requested more than one placement. Below are the 174 placements of the 158 pupils in Grade 11. For added interest the data is presented on the Occupational graph used at the start of this chapter, and as a graph using the Holland classification of careers.

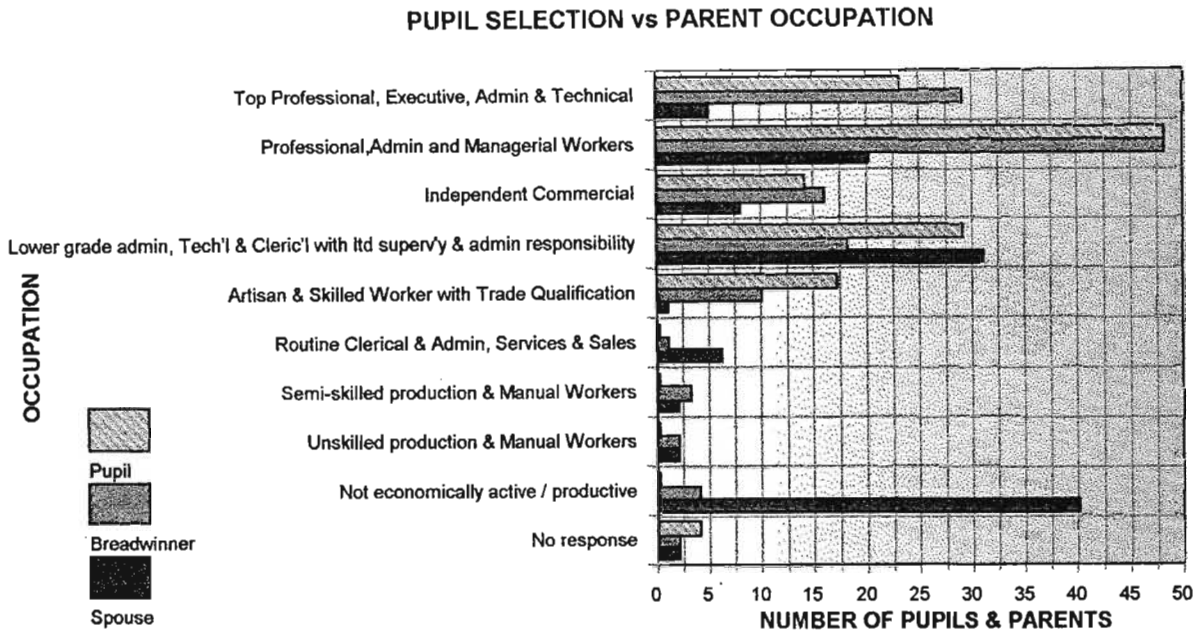
accountant	actress x 2	advertiser x 6
ambulance service x 4	architect x 2	blood bank technician
chef	child care	computer operator
conservationist x 7	designer - clothes x 2	diver in the SA Navy
dog trainer	engineer - civil x 4	engineer - sound x 5
engineer - mechanical	facilitator	farmer - chicken
geologist	geotechnician	goldsmith
gym instructor	hairdresser	homeopath
horticulturist	hotel manager	instructor- gym x 2
journalist	lawyer x 2	makeup artist
manager -marketing x 2	manager -personnel x 2	marine biologist
mechanic -motorcycle x 4	medical technologist	missionary
model x 5	nurse x 6	occupational therapist
paramedic	pharmacist	photographer x 5
physiotherapist	pilot x 7	police - watering x 2
police x 7	public relations officer	radiographer
sailor - SA Navy x 2	sailor - ocean x 4	salesperson - car
salesperson - car hire	salesperson - motorbike x 2	secretary x 2
social worker	sound technician	systems analyst
teacher - pre-primary x 3	teacher - primary x18	technician -auto electrical
technician -computer x 4	technician -electronics x 2	technologist -medical
therapist - physio x 5	therapist - beauty x 5	therapist -occupational x 2
trainer -dog	trainer -horse x 2	travel agent x 2
veterinarian x 9		

Figure 11 Pupils' Work Experience Selection Classification by Occupation



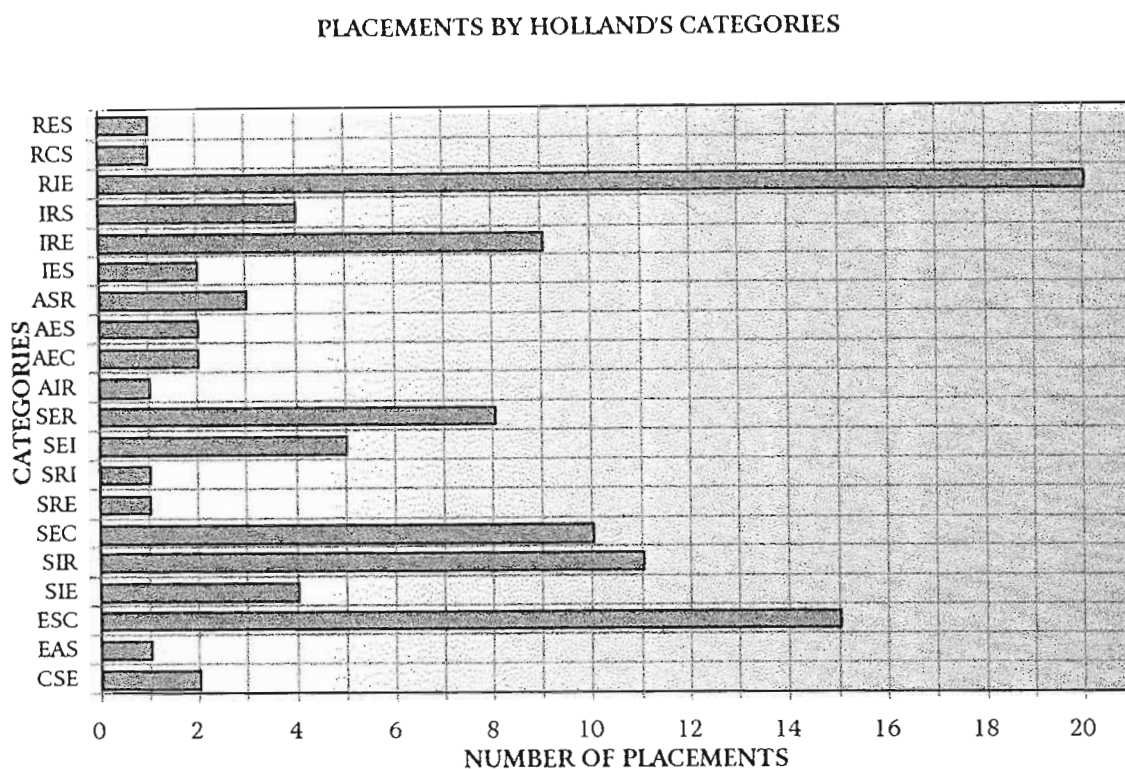
The lower three categories had no placements at all, the pupils all aspired to the top 5 categories. The majority of placements fell into the 'Professional, Administrative and Managerial' category. It is also interesting to note that only 8% chose some sort of entrepreneurial enterprise although the predictions for them is that less than 10% of them will find employment in the formal sector.

Figure 12 Pupil selection vs Parent Occupation on Occupational Classification scale



The comparison of what the pupils selected for work experience placements bears a remarkable resemblance to the careers already occupied by their parents. Except, of course the 'not economically active' category. Comment from the career development literature (Chapter 2) is that exposure to role models is responsible for predetermining career patterns. There is also mention in study 3 of phase 2 of the pressure put on some pupils by their parents to choose the 'better' jobs.

Figure 13 Work Experience Placements by Holland's Categories



Holland's three letter code defines types of people and environments. His codes were applied to the jobs chosen by the Grade 11 pupils and are presented in this graph form, figure 13. The highest ratings were RIE, ESC, SIR, SEC, IRE and SER. Together RIE and IRE account for 16% of the placements, this is a combination of the realistic, investigative and enterprising personalities and environments. The realistic personality is a practical person who enjoys working with animals, plants and things. 34% of the replies have an R in the three letter code, these are the pupils who say they want a job that does not require that they 'sit behind a desk all day', it may also reflect their perception that working is very different from school. The social category is also well represented.

Monitoring

Monitoring meant staying at school, the central point, and handling the queries and mishaps as they occurred. The first mishap of the day was a pupil who had a placement at Kloof police station. He and his father had driven around for a long time trying to

find the station. They came back to school and they were given the correct directions. I phoned the officer in charge to explain the pupil's lateness.

Another pupil had a placement at Hluhluwe Game Reserve. On the day of the programme she and her parents left very early to be at the gates at 08:00. On their arrival they were informed that because of the severe drought and the predicted high temperatures for the day, no one was being allowed in because of the fear of fire. They drove back to school and she was placed at the horse hospital in Shongweni.

One pupil 'bunked'. His employers phoned to say that he had not arrived and so we checked to see if he was at school but could not find him. On his return to school after the programme, he admitted to not going because, as he explained, he did not want to go to work and there was nothing going on at school so he took the two days off.

Yet another pupil was due to go to the Veterinary Hospital in Waterfall but could not organise transport there. Instead of contacting either the coordinator or the hospital, she went to the local Pre-primary School and it was only after the programme that these self made plans were discovered.

It was intended that the feedback should be returned as a written evaluation and an oral. The researcher had not accounted for the excited, spontaneous accounts that heard from the pupils as they returned to school. This feedback could not be contained to a classroom discussion. What had happened to some pupils was a social and emotional experience and, as such, had to be shared immediately with friends, teachers and the coordinator.

The debriefing exercises did not run according to plan. The written evaluations were completed and returned to the co-ordinator. However, it was the thank you letters which took longer than anticipated. Because it was presumed that the pupils would know the name and address of the employer to whom they were writing, no information had been supplied to the English teachers. In many cases the pupils were unaware of this

information and time was wasted procuring it from the Guidance Department. In some cases the completion of the evaluations and the thank you letters took the entire period and there was not enough time the following day for each pupil to present an oral. A further problem was that the absentee rate was fairly high because some pupils had started their holiday early.

The plan to go to the large carpet factory was not implemented. The few pupils who did not go out into the workplace and came to school were used as facilitators in a Grade 8 programme which the coordinator had organised to run concurrently with the work experience programme.

The employers' feedback was mostly returned to the school via the pupils and represented a disappointing response. 148 forms were sent out since 10 pupils did not go out to their placements, and 43 were returned.

4.3.3 Stage 3: Observation

The information that was gathered for this phase includes: the logbook entries of the researcher; an evaluation from the pupils; and the feedback from the employers.

4.3.3.1 Logbook Entries

The first set of observations are the diary entries during this term

The first thing that the diary entries reflect is the enormous workload.

Friday 24 June

A dreadfully tiring and frustrating day. By no means are we finished with the preparations. Pupils have been in all day and I have had to say sorry we haven't had final faxes from their employers yet.

The work needs to be done over and above all that happens in a normal day in a teacher-counsellor's role.

Friday 10 June

I came into work this morning quite determined to spend two solid periods phoning. Well! always be prepared for the unprepared, especially during exam times. Before 07h.30, the first crisis of the day erupted; a run away. A boy had been dropped at school, changed out of his uniform and hitched a ride from the school. A phone call from his Mum alerted us and we spent then next 30 minutes trying to find him. In the panic I'd forgotten the arrangement that a boy with a broken foot would write exams in my room. The next rush was to get him an exam paper and settle him down to write. By now it was almost time to go and invigilate in the exam room. The phoning for work experience placements had moved down on the agenda! I did manage to get through to the local pharmacist and the Technikon Homeopathy Department to arrange placements for two pupils.

There is further evidence of being unable to phone for placements day after day because of the workload. Time pressure is the next point that becomes evident from the diary entries. Pupils tend to leave everything very late or change their minds at the last minute because they saw or heard of something better or more exciting.

There are some interesting logbook entries that show how seriously the pupils take the exercise. Some interesting cameos that presented themselves follow:

CAMEO: Unexpected blossoming

This pupil has slipped through school, just bordering on expulsion all the way through. He is uninvolved and most times only physically present in the classroom. He is usually dirty and his uniform untidy. However, in the Counselling he always sits in the front of the class and just listens and watches, seldom contributing much to the lesson.

When he had not returned his form by the due date I was not at all surprised. The Friday before the pupils were due to go out on their work experience, he brought me a tatty piece and

on it was a phone number scribbled in pencil. Not expecting much I recorded this next to his name, fearing it to be a non-productive piece of information.

My diary entry for the first day after the work experience is as follows:

The first person I saw this morning was K.... blocking my doorway, quietly intense, he was determined to tell me blow by blow about the experience. He brought me a fat pamphlet from the company and a report that he had written. You could have bowled me over with a feather. Although I was giving him body messages of urgency (because I had 60 std 7s waiting to write their IQ tests upstairs) he continued telling me of the wonderful, interesting time he had. The highlight of it was that he had been treated as an adult and left alone with an important task and only a two way radio as a link with the boss. This is what makes the whole thing worthwhile!

CAMEO: People are more important than the job.

W's first choice for work experience was a policewoman and that was because her boyfriend worked at the local police station. When she was not able to be placed at the same station as he, she changed her request to fashion model. That was granted her but changed again very quickly when she discovered she did not know any of the other school girls who were going to the modelling agency. Finally, W chose photography because she was an acquaintance of the photographer who was offering the placement. In the report back to her group W said that the highlight of her experience had been the invitation to her employer's birthday party.

CAMEO: The unexpected choice

A is an acclaimed actor. He has played a major role in every school and house production since he started school. He is in the choir and takes Speech and Drama as a subject. He has also participated in several productions at the Playhouse Theatre. All expectations were that A would explore this career further. His father is the Public Relations Officer for the Playhouse Company and has many contacts in the field. However, A surprised everyone by finding a placement for himself at the equine hospital at Summerveld. His claim was that he intended to go into the world of theatre as a career but he wanted to know something

of what he was missing.

CAMEO: From social worker to dress designer

F's initial choice was that of social worker. Her mother decided to help her look at all the implications of this choice and at her interests and hobbies. When she returned she asked to be placed with a dressmaker/designer. A very successful, self employed local dress maker agreed to have F for her work experience. The reportback from this young lady attested to the genuine joy of finding out about being self employed and of combining interests with earning a living.

4.3.3.2 Feedback from Pupils

According to Watts (1983):

Most young people who go on work-experience clearly enjoy the experience. A Project Trident survey of 252 young people found that 85% thought that they had a good experience (p87).

The feedback received by this researcher seemed to reflect a similar statistic. Generally the exercise was interpreted in a positive light. On the whole the pupils had a good experience and were motivated to continue their career exploration. Although difficult to measure, the self confidence of the pupils seemed to have increased. There was an indication of positive identification with the employers and the work environment.

Many had gone out not knowing what to expect, in fact fearing the worst, and came back pleasantly surprised, as is indicated by these four replies to the question: *What surprised you most during the visit ?*

The friendliness of the staff,

The willingness of those already in the practice to share their knowledge and let us into the operating theatre.

The way in which it was very different from school - everyone so much more independent.

The huge proportions of the nurseries - the public doesn't know ANYTHING about what goes on behind the scenes.

The last comment highlights the appreciation the pupil felt having been exposed to the whole organisation.

Two pupils identified a trend in the work place:

What surprised me most was the ability of computers.

The extent to which computers are used in the compiling of an advert.

To define the results further, I have grouped the comments in terms of the typology of objectives described in stage 1 of phase 2 - formulating the general plan on page 125.

- **To enable pupils to gain a more dynamic insight into the essence of work, and a more realistic idea of what it is like to work.**

Many pupils have had limited experiences on which to base their perceptions of the world of work. Here are some comments which reflect pupils' new perceptions related to the working world:

It gives you an understanding of what is going on out of the well secured school. You learn about what happens in the world.

What surprised me most was the way in which it does not have a definite schedule, you just have to wait and see what comes up.

You must be prepared to work all hours - not to expect anything because this is an

unpredictable job. You need to be able to cope with stress very well.

What surprised me most was how much time and energy the career takes up. Not much time for a family.

You get to experience what the job is all about, not just the image painted in our minds. Welcome to reality!

The work experience made me realize that hairdressing/beautician work is NOT for me. I could have studied for this career and only then discovered how much I disliked it

- **To broaden the pupils' concept of careers from it's narrow stereotype, to a process whereby they evaluate the world of work with reference to themselves, the workplace, and the future, so that they realize that to make a career decision is an on-going and complex process.**

The first comment is from a girl who had set her heart on becoming an architect and was doing well at Technical Drawing at school.

It is a chance to speak with someone in the field you are interested in. You have a chance to ask any questions. You can see what they do - their projects etc. and talk about the varsity course. Its good to experience your interests and see what you will do.

The next comments show how the individuals were able to widen their perspectives:

I think what surprised me most was the broad spectrum that one can look at in the health industry. There are really so many options available to one.

Another pupil was as limited in his perception until he went out to experience engineering.

Engineering is such a wide field but it is really dynamic, there are so many different situations you could be in.

Some pupils gained enough confidence to reject their initial choice and look further:

It gave me a good insight into what a 'business life' really entails. I however, have realized that the rent-a-car business is not the sort of place where I would like to work.

I have confidence and brains (probably too many brain cells as you need very little). Height and good looks are about all one needs to do modelling.

Nothing really surprised me as I have always heard models do very little, yet I never realized how boring it is and how much money one has to spend before earning.

These comments show how changed perceptions can lead to further exploration.

Comments from the following three pupils show an ability to project beyond the immediate consequences of the experience.

It gives us a realistic understanding of the working world and it dispels any glamorous illusions a person might have about a career.

The work experience shows people the real life behind what one sees in books etc. It teaches people the independence that is needed to make important choices that influence your career and ultimately, your life.

The work experience taught me a lot and I really think that I will become a sailing instructor in the future. This will be my first step in owning my own chartering company.

- To facilitate a better understanding of skills and to teach pupils work related skills, such as how to process different sources of career

information and how to write business letters.

I will consider only the skills related to the chosen job in this section. The more specific skills such as letter writing will be looked at in the final assessment of the programme. The pupils showed some ability to identify the skills they already possessed, and those they need to develop, to be good in the job. These reflections show insight into the skills needed for the specific jobs:

Patience, initiative and the interest in speech therapy.

Engineering needs logical thinking, quick thinking, decision making and good communication.

The girl who worked as a veterinarian said she had:

The love of animals, the ability to function accurately in an emergency, and patience.

Further comments are:

The ability to appease customers (useful in the nursery situation) and a deep interest in botany. Basic horticulture knowledge.

What I need to develop is the ability to be thorough in every aspect of the job, even if it doesn't interest me.

An insightful comment, more about herself than the job was this one from a girl who worked as a physiotherapist:

A skill I desperately need is confidence because it is hard to help somebody and make them confident that they will get better if you're not confident yourself.

The potential architect identified the skills she already had as:

an ability to draw and be creative. I love all buildings and am imaginative

and those she needed to develop as:

definitely patience and a knowledge of the project at hand down to the last detail.

The secretary said she had the skills of:

confidence with people and an outgoing personality

but what she needed in addition were the skills of:

another language, using a computer and learning to dress very smartly.

- **To consider the meaning of personal values and how they relate to work values.**

The following was recorded by a pupil interested in a veterinary practice:

The values here, such as being expert and having a flexible job fitted very closely with my own but in this occupation I found little room for creativity.

The gym instructor considered how his personal values could relate to the relevant work:

There is definitely a physical aspect of it to which I can relate. The environment in which one works is also what I would like. The creative side of the job also appealed to me.

Other values that pupils could identify were:

helping people, listening and teamwork.

adventure, working with people, excitement, physical activity, travel and outdoors.

More importantly, it seems as if the values identified in the workplace can have a motivational effect on the pupil's attitude to school work:

One of the values that struck me was that one does the best one can for each client, regardless of one's personal preferences. I think that this ties in with the fact that I want to do the best I can with each thing I have to do (even it is something like a project dealing with a subject I don't enjoy).

4.3.3.3 Feedback from Employers

Of the 148 evaluation forms sent to the employers, 43 returned them to the school. Although the researcher was disappointed with this 29% response rate, on consulting the literature she realized that for questionnaires this response rate is normal and predictable (Keeves, 1988: p481). The evaluation covered two sections - an individual assessment of the pupils they had at their place of work, and an impression of the work experience plan as a whole.

The employers' feedback on the individual pupils is reflected in the table below. The employers were asked to rate pupils from 1 (negative) to 5 (excellent).

An overall scanning of the Table 5 below shows a generally positive response. If scores 1 and 2 are taken to be negative, 3 neutral, and 4 and 5 positive, the following emerges:

for interest and enthusiasm, 88,37% were positive and 4,65% were negative;
for punctuality, 87,81% were positive with only 2,44% negative;
for appearance, 87,50% were positive with only 2,5% negative;
for courtesy, 95% were positive and again only 2,5% negative.

Table 5 Employer assessment of pupil

RATING 1= POOR 5= EXCELLENT		1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Interest and Enthusiasm	Number	0	2	3	21	17	43
	percent	0	4,65	6,98	48,84	39,53	100
Punctuality	Number	0	1	4	15	21	41
	percent	0	2,44	9,76	36,59	51,22	100
Appearance	Number	0	1	4	21	14	40
	percent	0	2,50	10,00	52,50	35,00	100
Courtesy	Number	0	1	1	15	23	40
	percent	0	2,50	2,50	37,50	57,50	100
Suitability for this field	Number	0	1	3	18	13	35
	percent	0	2,86	8,57	51,43	37,14	100

This reflects the good impression the pupils made on the employers in the area of personal and interpersonal skills. Only the last rating reflects anything related to the job and even here there is an 88,57% positive response compared with a 2,86% negative reply.

The questionnaire allowed for further open ended comment on the pupil by the employer. Only 69% (30 of the 43) used this opportunity. Jamieson's (Miller et al, 1991: p 249) opinion is that the employers prefer the box-ticking format because it is relatively quick to complete. The comments that were returned reflected the different frames of reference of the employers. The majority commented on the social and interpersonal skills of the pupils. Jamieson (ibid., pp248-258).

She was enthusiastic and eager to learn

Well balanced personality, trustworthy and will be a great paramedic one day.

A very mature and well mannered individual

She was hesitant to really interact and obtain much information from our patients. But she was good.

She was interested but a bit scared of what to do. Overall she was helpful on and off the scenes.

Very young to form an opinion re career choice

The following employers considered the pupils in relation to the work:

We felt that the pupil showed an above average flair for the work and was a credit to his school

She has a good rapport with young children and is clearly interested in working with them, therefore I do believe she is suitable.

I have recommended that she approach a larger accounting firm for more exposure in this field to help her make a decision about her career.

The final comments say more about the programme than the individual pupils:

It is not possible to accurately rate a person on such a short period especially that it necessitates that he spend time with each of the Departmental Managers

This evaluation is not very accurate as they were here for a very short time and none of our staff spent a long time with them.

He was a pleasure to have at SAS Scorpion for his two days. We hope that he enjoyed the sea trip that he went on.

53% (23 of 43) responded to the statement: *We would be grateful for any suggestions as to how we may be able to improve this programme.* Their comments can be divided into different groups.

The large majority were positive comments and included:

Wonderful idea - I just wish we had these opportunities when we were at school.

As an instructor, I felt that the programme showed excellent promise and would perhaps suggest a higher turnover of pupils on the programme. It would be our pleasure to assist you toward this if required.

I responded to your request for support for the programme with some hesitancy as I wondered what kind of support I could give somebody over two days towards making a career choice which would last a lifetime! My hesitancy turned to both appreciation and wonder as I was given the opportunity to introduce C..... to certain aspects of the law.

I think that what you are doing is excellent.

A very good idea as I saw it.

Some employers thought that the length of time should be extended:

They should stay longer than two days . Opinions cannot be formed in such a short time;

It could perhaps be better to extend the visit slightly as there was not enough time to expose him to all the various options that the SA Navy has to offer.

I suggest a bit more than one day just to see the basics of the job if possible.

5 days, Monday to Friday instead of just two.

In answer to this dilemma there were suggestions such as:

Pupils should be given a chance to do more voluntary work in order to expose them to a wider spectrum of situations.

Expose them to more voluntary duties.

Expose the students to other areas of physiotherapy too eg hospital work.

Others suggested repeating the programme:

Not every pupil is sure what career they would like to venture into. I suggest that pupils should have a couple of these programmes in various different fields in order to have a wider outlook.

Two final comments were more negative, although the second contains a suggestion:

It is disappointing when students fail to arrive as a great deal of organisation, time and effort go into making their work experience enjoyable.

The pupils must be encouraged to bring their forms with them and to ask questions and be more spontaneous.

4.3.4 Stage 4: Reflection

4.3.4.1 Critically Evaluating the Consequences of the Action

The subjective data and the feedback from the pupils and employers showed that they thought it a valuable exercise and that they enjoyed themselves and felt more motivated. Watts (1983), however, says to bear in mind *that for sound psychological reasons, people tend*

in general to be predisposed to evaluate their experiences positively, as a way of justifying the time they have invested in them (p87). Nonetheless the response was positive, noticeably more so than that elicited by other educational experiences.

Most comments from the employers, were encouraging. On page 129 of this chapter, Jamieson suggests that the nature of employer assessment tends to highlight the attitudes and social and interpersonal skills of pupils rather than their job related skills and knowledge. By far the majority of employers were willing and obliging and often went to a lot of trouble to organise interesting and exciting programmes for the pupils. Suggestions of how to improve the programme often included volunteering additional help.

Reflection at greater length will be guided by the following points

- **the length of the placements**

A considerable number of employers and pupils feed back that the time was too short. More time was needed both to give pupils wider exposure to the more complex settings, and for employers to get to know them better, to help them more in their decision making.

More time is required to expose the pupils to all the various career options that are available.

As a solution, one group suggested that the pupils be encouraged to do more volunteer work in order to be exposed to a wider spectrum of situations.

- **pupil and parent involvement**

This was the first year that I had allowed anyone else to be involved in securing placements. This was done more by default than design. My workload forced me to ask

the parents if they had any contacts and were prepared to follow them up on their children's behalf. The response from those parents who did get involved confirmed that the family can play a valuable role and appreciate being involved. It also became evident that the range of contacts increased.

A disadvantage could be the loss of control and co-ordination. The role of the parents should be limited, firstly, to helping their child identify a job and then to exploring the market and noting which company or institution could offer appropriate employment. This information, together, preferably, with the name or designation of a contact person, should be conveyed to the co-ordinator. All that remains to be done is for the co-ordinator to phone the company and explain the aims and expectations of the work experience programme and request that the company become involved.

- o **pupil report back in the English lessons**

The evaluation feedback from the pupils is a valuable source of information about the pupils, their reactions and the placements. Bearing in mind the original aims of this programme, listed at the beginning of the chapter, there is evidence of the greatest development in the area of pupils' personal and social development. The career educational aims of broadening the pupils' range of occupations and testing their vocational preferences do show evidence of being met but by a smaller percentage of pupils. A major problem for the researcher was that the constraints on her time meant that she was not present for the feedback in each of the six classes. This meant that many of the informal comments made and the pupil reactions have not been included.

4.3.4.2 Using this Evaluation to Plan the Next Action Cycle

The successful completion of this phase ensures the next phase getting off to a good start. All the evidence supports just such a start. The pupils had plenty to reflect on during the holidays and the debriefing lessons have enough material available for them to be productive. I will consider the planning of next year's programme under these steps set

out in phase 2 of this chapter.

The same steps will be followed in preparing the pupils and the documentation. Involving the parents in finding the pupil's placements proved to be a most successful move. I believe I will still have to place the majority of pupils, but gradually the parents will become more involved. Conferring with employers was limited to telephone conversations and letters about placements. Future programmes could involve them at the planning stage. Teacher visits to selected workplaces would serve to enlighten the teacher and reinforce the relationship between the school and the workplace. The feedback, particularly from the employers commented that the time period was too short for the pupils to really absorb the environment. The programme could be lengthened by a day or two. The Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of the last week of the term would allow sufficient time for feedback and time too, for the administrative tasks to be completed. The debriefing will flow over into the new term.

4.4 Phase 3 - Post Work Experience

One of the limitations of work experience, is that we are inclined to think of the process as the outcome. The debriefing phase is by the accounts of Petherbridge (1996), Watts (1983) and Miller (1991) a vital stage in the work experience exercise. It provides the pupils with the opportunity to reflect on the experience, to analyse it and then form generalisations which provide a body of ideas from which new ideas can arise and be tested.

This phase will focus on the debriefing and follow-up after the work experience. According to Miller (1991: pp225-230) there are four main purposes of debriefing. Firstly, there is the need for the pupils to make sense of their experience through reflection, then to draw out the main learning points through analysis and forming generalisations. Thirdly, debriefing provides the opportunity for the assessment of the pupil and evaluation of the placement. Finally, the debriefing offers the opportunity to

complete the administrative duties such as writing thank you letters.

The second set of pupil responses on the work experience after the holidays reflects a more realistic and considered opinion of the event. The break gives the pupils the opportunity to order their thoughts and reactions into a meaningful form that can be measured against the original perceptions of their career choice.

4.4.1 Stage 1: General Plan

Reconnaissance reveals the importance of this phase which provides pupils with the opportunity to express their reactions to such an important event in their school lives and to integrate it into their learning. The experience itself is but a part of the learning process. Analysing it in the light of the knowledge of themselves and what they already know of the job, is more enlightening. The programme is designed according to Miller's (ibid.) four main purposes of debriefing of: reflection; analysis; assessment and evaluation; and administration (pp225-230). There is also a need for the co-ordinator to evaluate the programme through the eyes of the users. The Guidance lessons for the third term are allocated for this purpose.

The first part of the debriefing stage is reflection.

Work experience is above all a learning experience for students who acquire knowledge, skills and understanding of a particular work-place. The notion of experiential integration involves reconstructing different aspects of the experience, in order to add meaning by examining the links between them. In terms of the experiential learning cycle, this is the stage of reflective observation when students attempt to describe their experience. Such a description can focus upon what they did (actions), what they perceived (observations), what they thought (cognitions), and what they felt (feelings) (Miller, 1991: p 226).

The second stage of debriefing, analysis, involves placing the particular knowledge, understanding, skills and experience acquired by each pupil in a wider context. In terms of the experiential learning cycle, this is the stage of abstract conceptualization, which involves drawing upon experiences and reflection in order to make generalization (fig

7,p44). (Mosupye and Sakalis, 1994). Small groups within the Guidance lessons provide the framework for the pupils to reflect on their experiences and to analyse this new found knowledge with their peers. The assessments which result are also pupil centred. Pupils have privileged awareness of their own learning, and in work experience they are usually in a good position to judge what they able and not able to do (Miller et al, 1991: p 241).

Administration is the final stage of debriefing. Other than writing the thank you letters and completing the evaluation form, both done in Phase 2, the administration tasks fall mainly to the co-ordinator and in this case, the researcher, and include collecting and compiling all the written and recorded information gathered throughout the work experience project

The follow-up stage refers to the curricular activities which occur after the debriefing and draw on the individual and group learning. In this sense, the period of reflection and analysis during debriefing can provide a springboard for further work. The Grade 12 career education programme will be based on the level of self-knowledge and job knowledge the pupils have demonstrated in this debriefing period.

The next stage in this phase involves negotiating with the relevant people involved and these are the pupils. Reflection on work experience enables pupils to identify what they have experienced. This is done by sharing their reaction to the experience with peers and the teachers. The work-experience Johari window on page 126 of this chapter has relevance here. Asking pupils to share their feelings with the whole class is sometimes less productive than small group techniques. However, working in small groups requires that the pupils are aware of the responsibilities of this type of interaction. Hopson and Scally (1981) talk of the *interdependence* of the parties involved and of the benefit of *contracting* with the pupils (p 126). Both of these concepts must be shared with the pupils before the small group work can begin.

The physical resources for this phase are the pupils, their experiences and their willingness and ability to share with and listen to their peers. Petherbridge (1996)

willingness and ability to share with and listen to their peers. Petherbridge (1996) claims:

The place of debriefing within a broader mentoring role cannot be overlooked, if guidance is to be the key means of empowering individuals to manage their career in the way defined by Watts, where career education within the curriculum is designed to develop skills, attitudes and knowledge which enable students to make career decisions to relate what they are learning to the wider society and their future career development. Here debriefing would relate to the wider mentoring role, encouraging regular review of learning, outside the mainstream curriculum, as well as within, identifying skills and competencies students are developing, and defining long term goals, supported by short-term objectives and the ways to achieve them - in other words recording achievement underpinning action planning.
(p251)

The element of time is the next consideration in this phase. If the main objective of experiential learning is to change some aspect of behaviour then time has to be allowed for the changed perspective to emerge. Petherbridge (1996) questions whether the immediate return from work experience is the most appropriate or perhaps the only time that debriefing should occur. To cover all options, these additional debriefing lessons were scheduled for after the holiday break. These take place in the Guidance lessons and will continue until all the pupils have had the opportunity to complete their debriefing. The follow-up activities will be the natural consequence of these lessons.

Planning how to gather data is the final consideration for this stage. The debriefing lessons are a valuable and comprehensive source of information about the placements, the employers, and how the pupils used the experience. The data gathered will be used by the co-ordinator cum researcher to assess and evaluate the phase, the individual pupils and, when, combined with the data from the other phases, the entire work experience scheme. Assessment is focussed narrowly on the pupil, while evaluation is concerned with a much wider range of phenomena. Evaluation considers the effects on the students but it is also interested in the effects on the teachers, the school and the employers and the unintended consequences as well as the intended ones, and in the costs of work

4.4.2 Stage 2: Implementation

The general plan was to provide enough time and space for the pupils to work through their experience; to analyse it in the light of their own expectations, strengths and weaknesses and considering the requirements of work in general and the job in particular. There needed to be the opportunity for immediate feedback and then for a more reflected and considered opinion.

Small groups would allow each pupil an opportunity to report back to the group on his or her work experiences. The six Grade 11 classes are ranked academically and it became apparent that the lower classes would need more time in developing small group skills and dynamics. In these cases the pupils reported back to the class as a whole. Each pupil addressed the class on where he or she had 'worked', what they had experienced and how it had influenced their career decision. They also filled in on general points about the job in general, such as: the entry requirements, the training offered, chances of promotion and employment etc. A specific point was made of asking each pupil to identify the skills he or she thought they had in relation to the job and those they thought they would need to develop to be a success in that field. We talked about values in relation to the jobs and the work place. The reports back varied from positive reinforcement of their initial choice to total rejection. A small number of pupils seemed to have overestimated the job or underestimated themselves and they determined to try something a little more demanding next time. Some pupils were more influenced by external factors, such as the office environment or food. A cocktail party laid on by the SA Navy was the most impressive point of comment from 2 boys who had spent their days and nights on board a naval strike craft at sea. A significant comment from a pupil was that it was different from school, in fact better than school. The level of attentiveness in these lessons was exceptionally high. The pupils appeared genuinely interested in the reports back from their peers and the questions they asked were relevant.

Three classes were involved in the small group reports back. The requirements and

Three classes were involved in the small group reports back. The requirements and expectations of small group work were discussed and the group 'contract' was projected onto the screen. Evidence, in the form of participation and commitment, was that they found it stimulating and helpful. The disadvantage was that there was no formal input and each group took on its own identity and went in its own direction depending on the personalities of the group members. As facilitator I sat in on different groups and stimulated discussion of topics that appeared to have been neglected.

The requirements for debriefing to be effective are specific. According to Petherbridge (1996):

The teacher has in the first instance to understand what the experience was, what it meant to the young person experiencing it, what generalisations have been drawn from that reflection and what influence that will have on future action. This is a means of enabling the learner to formulate real personal learning goals (p248).

I doubt that these requirements were met in either of the two scenarios. What was evident was a supportive and empathetic environment in which the pupils enjoyed the opportunity of recounting their unique experiences. It appeared as if the personal and social skills were the areas most influenced by the encounter, but in some cases the career education of the pupils was clearly enhanced.

For some classes these sessions went on for three or four successive lessons, while for others especially the small groups, the exercise was completed within two lessons. The follow-up activities depended on what was identified in each class. The Senior Aptitude Test was scheduled to be written in the third term and preparation for this was included in the follow-up lessons as complementary to the work experience exercise.

4.4.3 Stage 3: Observation

Although there was a congenial and interested atmosphere for reporting back on the work

by Miller (1991) and Petherbridge (1996) for optimum pupil learning. However, I wonder whether it was that pupils did not learn as much as they could, or whether, as a teacher I felt I did not hear all of their opinions.

An additional source of information about the placements and the employers can be gleaned from the pupils as they report back to the class. In the small group feedback it was not possible to have access to all these. However, in the class reports back any discrepancy about the placement or the employer was noted and followed.

The administrative material was relatively easy to collect and collate. The organisation of phases 1 and 2 ensured that as the information came in it was collated and filed for easy access. Before the pupils went out on their placements comprehensive class lists recorded the name and telephone number of each contact person. Tidying this up meant merely recording which pupils had not attended which placements and for what reason. As the pupils reported back additional information was noted about the employers and the placements. Collecting and storing the data for this research project became an additional administrative task.

It is the opinion of this researcher that the expectations of Petherbridge, quoted on page 60, were not achieved. The pupils enjoyed feedback and the listeners were empathetic but that was the limit of their involvement with the pupil learning. This is an area that will need attention in the planning of next year's programme.

The understanding of the researcher is that the majority of the pupils were pleased with their placements of employ and their work experience. The family involvement in procuring these placements had an effect on this success.

The researcher felt relieved at the conclusion of the programme that whilst there were 'hitches', the administrative work was complete and could provide valuable data, and on the whole the pupil, parent and community responses had been rewarding.

4.4.4 Stage 4: Reflection

4.4.4.1 Critically Evaluating the Consequences of the Action

In contrast to the work experience, this phase is quiet and non active. It requires that the pupils interact with the experience in an intellectual way. Some pupils would prefer the activity of the experience to this quiet reflection. We have noted however, the importance of this activity to pupil learning particularly. This phase also requires the assessment of student learning from the experience. This is difficult to assess. This task is by nature subjective and reliant on pupil reports.

As the co-ordinator certain aspects were of concern. Firstly, there were some pupils (very few) who did not or could not use this exercise to enhance their learning. The boy who bunked was an example. These pupils must be identified and their self esteem increased in whatever way possible. In the general guidance lessons they must be encouraged to take part in the career related exercises. Individual counselling could help ascertain the reasons for the non participation and corrective measures suggested to the pupil and even perhaps to his or her parents.

Secondly, the employers' assessment will reflect a specific opinion from the work place. Through effective debriefing the pupils can be encouraged to incorporate this into their frame of reference and that of the world of work. The pupils must be assisted to incorporate these new constructs with those they already possess.

A third area of concern is the evaluation of the placements and the work-experience programme. This is necessarily made through the eyes of the pupils and, on the whole, it is regarded as a beneficial and enjoyable programme by the pupils. Their participation and involvement speaks for itself and their feedback both in written and oral form

confirms this.

The placements were what the pupils wanted and expected in most cases. A few pupils were disappointed by the lack of stimulation but this was overshadowed by the vast majority of pupils who were pleasantly surprised by the people, the way in which they were treated and the work related tasks.

Administration is the next consideration. Reflection on this is that it was effective but that it could be improved. A permanent database should record the names, addresses and the areas of involvement of the employers which could be updated annually. To facilitate smoother handling more time needs to be allocated to the procurement of the placements.

The opinion of this researcher is that because of the demands of this research project the administrative tasks were performed better than in previous years and as a result the next year's programme will be easier to handle.

4.4.4.2 Using the Evaluation to Plan the Next Stage

The concept of formal debriefing is new to this researcher and consequently to her pupils. Small group work is often used in informal class exercises but in the context of debriefing the work experience, a more in depth approach is required by the participants if this is to be successfully deployed in the following work experience. The large class groups inhibited the relationship between the pupil and the teacher prescribed by Petherbridge (1996). However, what the pupils lacked in skills they made up for in enthusiasm, interest and support. Reference to Hopson and Scally's (1981) literature on small group work is planned for preparation for next year's programme. The Grade 11s will be introduced to the principles and dynamics of small group work early in the year as they

prepare for the work experience and will practice the skills at every opportunity. This will better prepare the pupils to cope with the debriefing exercise after the work experience.

Evaluation of the placements reveals a high level of success. The help of the parents will again be enlisted in the planning of next year's programme. Not only does this involvement lighten the work load of the co-ordinator, but it enhances the communication between the parent and their child in the area of career decision making.

The administration of a work experience scheme is an unwieldy job. Keeping track of all the information so that it can be simply accessed will make the following year's programme all that easier to organise.

4.4.4.3 Conclusion

This evaluation and reflection completes Phase 3 which, in turn, completed the action research spiral. Davidoff and van den Berg (1990: p46) describe a spiral as consisting of four stages:

- the general plan
- implementation
- observation
- reflection

In this study each of the four stages were followed within a phase which could be said to constitute a micro-cycle. But in terms of the broader view - the macro-cycle or full spiral, Phase 1 only covered the 'general plan', Phase 2 the 'implementation', and Phase 3 the 'observations' and 'reflections'.

Where Phase 1 constituted formulating the general plan, doing reconnaissance, negotiating with the relevant parties, assessing the resources and planning how to gather

data, Phase 2 was concerned with the implementation of the plan. Phase 3 then saw the gathering of all the information and reflection thereon. The flow of the action research cycle through these phases is reflected by the natural construction of the work experience programme. Miller (1991), Petherbridge (1996) and Boud (1993) all call for work experience to be presented as an integrated whole, including preparation and briefing and subsequent debriefing and follow-up.

Planning for the second action research spiral.

Significant factors that emerged from the data analysis of Phases One, Two and Three were kept in mind when the new revised 'general plan' was devised.

The concept and implementation of the programme are sound and confirmed by all accounts. However the changes that will be implemented are as follows:

- As suggested by many employers the time of placement will be increased by a day, starting on the Monday of the final week of the second term.
- The involvement of the English Department will continue to be encouraged, it not only lightens the workload but highlights the cross curriculum nature of work experience. Reports back in the form of orals and thank you letters for submission for marks, lends credibility to both departments and to the exercise as a whole.
- The administrative procedures will have to be improved. More conclusive information is necessary for the completion of the thank you letters.
- The pupils' workbook is a potential source of valuable information but was not used to its best advantage during the debriefing lessons. In the next application of this scheme they will be incorporated as a written report back, possibly for some form of accreditation.

The concluding chapter will consider this programme in the light of the aims of this research study and the underlying theory of Chapter 2.

4.5 Phase 4 - Illustrative Case Studies

4.5.1 Introduction

A review of the effects of work experience schemes indicates benefits in terms of enhanced motivation, increasing the pupil's knowledge of themselves and society, helping to ease the transition to adult life, and providing more information on which to base career choices. These effects are difficult to measure. The evaluative evidence collected during the course of this project (Chapter 2, pp56-61) is divided into two categories: objective and subjective data.

In this research project the objective scores on 'before and after' measures such as the career Development Questionnaire (CDQ) (see Chapter 3) have not been recorded, since the first administration occurred in January, 5 months before the project and the second administration in August. Many factors could influence any change in scores, such as the passage of time and other career exposures. Therefore the researcher did not believe this would be a valid way of measuring the effect of work experience. The data however will be included in the four case studies below because it is interesting to consider.

Much of the data collected for this research project falls into the second category, subjective data, and is based on direct questions to the pupils and employers about participation in this particular work experience project.

4.5.2 Case Studies:

To illustrate the variety of individual experience, four illustrative case studies have been included. The responses from four pupils, from class groups of average academic ability, will be considered in depth and presented as ordered reports of the work experience programme. Two boys and two girls were chosen and the data includes: their personal documentation, their test results, their responses to lesson material, their choices and eventual placement for work experience and the observations by the teacher-researcher. This data collection was generated over the eight month period laid out in the time frame at the beginning of this chapter and is representative of what was collected from all the Grade 11 pupils of that year.

There will be a comparison of the CDQ results of four pupils with the means of the national sample of high school pupils according to the school Grades 10 and 12, gender and language groups. As a conclusion to each case study there will be comment on the implications for each individual and a discussion of the results in the light of present theories and educational practices.

At the beginning of the school year the pupils wrote the first CDQ test. At this stage we discussed the plans for the year and the importance of making the decision of their work experience placement. There was an explanation of what work experience meant and how it worked. The pupils recorded their first, spontaneous thoughts of where that they would like to do after they left school and therefore their work experience placement. The preparation lessons took place from the 7 May to the 28 June and during that time they completed the Hopson and Scally work values exercise. The work experience took place on June 28 and 29 and the pupils evaluation on June 30 and July 1. The employers evaluations were returned any time from immediately after the experience to the middle of August. They were asked to assess the pupils on a 1 - 5 scale, 1 being poor and 5

excellent. The second CDQ test was completed on the 15th August. These interventions will be discussed in the same sequence for each of the case subjects.

4.5.2.1 Case Study I

B is a gentle, quietly spoken boy with an average academic record. His family is originally from Europe with English as a second language and are well known bakers and confectioners. He took part in most of the work experience activities and tests that were planned for the Grade 11s for the year.

B's first CDQ results compared with the standardised norms are shown in the following table:

Table 6 CDQ I of subject B

SCALE	B	Grade 12	Grade 10	Boys
self information	12	15.23	14.52	14.65
decision making	8	15.46	14.55	14.94
career information	4	13.46	11.97	12.53
integration of self and career information	10	15.48	14.41	14.77
career planning	8	14.12	12.66	13.15
average	8.4	14.75	13.62	14.00

According to these results, each of B's career maturity score is below the average for all the groups, - the Grade 12s, the Grade 10s, and the 'boys'. Because it was taken so early in the year, the Grade 10 measurement would be the more accurate. Even here, B falls well below the average. His highest score is self information and he indicates some ability to integrate this with career information. However his career information score is his lowest, and he needs to work on both career planning and decision making.

would try to identify a commercial diving firm and bring me back a contact name and telephone number. A few days before the actual placement he had got no further and he said he would go with a friend to a Mechanical plant as an engineer.

The day before the work experience was due to begin, B discovered that a classmate was going to the SA Navy, he asked if he could go as well. A telephone call to the Public Relations Officer gained him an entry. It was at the last minute of the day before the work experience that the indemnity forms were faxed through to the school. He had to take them home for his parents to sign to take with him the next day.

My diary entry reflects:

B was the last pupil to be placed on the programme. I don't know why he left the decision so late. He had made an initial choice and would probably have gone quite happily if I had found him a placement. I think the delay was in him having to find his own contact. He is not very forthcoming and probably did not have the courage or the skills to phone around. His family don't speak English very fluently and besides I don't think they have much contact with commercial divers -they're confectioners. But I do believe diving was where he wanted to go -it was his choice at the beginning of the year and he quietly persisted with this preference until the very last minute.

On his evaluation of the work experience, B identified that he had the required academic qualifications for diving but added, that he needed to develop more physical skills, *fitness, a lot of fitness and swimming is needed*. Of interest here again is the mention of food. It was what surprised him most, together with the friendliness of the people.

The values that he identified were:

respect, politeness and eye contact they matched well my personal values.

B's final comment on this evaluation is that the work experience placement *helped me choose my career, showed me the ups and downs of the career.*

The employer's evaluation ranked him:

- 3 for enthusiasm
- 3 for appearance
- 4 for courtesy
- 5 for punctuality
- 4 for suitability for the field

His highest score was for punctuality, a good habit especially in the navy. Most importantly they considered him suitable for the career - i.e. 4 on a scale of 5. I wondered if this indication is matched by the same belief from B. It is interesting to note that at the last moment he added 'catering' to the 'diving' when he filled in the form to be returned to the navy.

The scores for the second CDQ test and their comparison with the first CDQ are as follows:

Table 7 CDQ 2 and difference from CDQ 1 of Subject B

SCALE	B's 2nd CDQ	Std 10	Std 8	Boys	B's 1st CDQ	Diff. 2nd - 1st
self information	13	15.23	14.52	14.65	12	1
decision making	17	15.46	14.55	14.94	8	9
career information	18	13.46	11.97	12.53	4	14
integration of self and career information	16	15.48	14.41	14.77	10	6
career planning	17	14.12	12.66	13.15	8	9
average	16.2	14.75	13.62	14.00	8.4	7.8

The final column reflects a significant change in the perception that B has of himself and

The final column reflects a significant change in the perception that B has of himself and careers. His average score now is higher than the Grade 12 score, where his first test average was lower than all three averages. Each point shows a positive increase in scores. He views himself and his career decision making skills more positively than he did at the beginning of the year.

The greatest point of growth is 'Career Information' which grew by 14 points. This represents exceptional growth. It is obvious that B had previously had little exposure to career options. It seems that he has not read or explored much at all, and that he identified 'diving' and the SA Navy as career fields through chance involvement with them as interests. The next two growth points are career planning and decision making. Both of these grew by 9 points, also a significant growth for B. He had seen and learnt enough to be able to feel more confident about making a career decision. It would seem as if the work experience process had some impact on his perceptions and understanding. Integration of self and career information represented a +6 improvement. The smallest increase in scores was that in Self Information. There was a +1 increment. B is a quiet, introverted personality and I believe he is aware of his strengths and weaknesses hence small growth factor.

A discussion of B's results.

On balance the available evidence is positive. The objective evidence, though sparse, indicates that the measurable outcomes of B's interaction with the work experience programme are positive. The subjective evidence shows that Brett enjoyed himself and felt that he got something useful out of it. The employer's evaluation of Brett is equally positive.

Two threads run right through: The first is B's opinion of himself. The first CDQ score shows a lack of self confidence related to career maturity. As a result of this there appears

to be a lack of assertiveness in B's behaviour. His initial choice was influenced partly by his peers and possibly by a desire for excitement. It is significant that he was the last pupil in the programme to be placed. On the other hand the second CDQ score shows significant growth. In reply to the last question on the pupil evaluation form, *Do you consider the work experience programme a worthwhile programme?* He replied *Yes!!!*

4.5.2.2 Case Study 2

S is an outgoing, gregarious class member. She relates very well with her peers and has a friendly confident attitude to her teachers. She is enthusiastic and willing to participate in the lessons.

The results of the first CDQ are;

Table4.4 CDQ 1of Subject S

SCALE	S	Grade 12	Grade 10	Girls
self information	19	15.23	14.52	15.03
decision making	12	15.46	14.55	15.04
career information	10	13.46	11.97	12.82
integration of self and career information	14	15.48	14.41	15.04
career planning	13	14.12	12.66	13.53
average	13.6	14.75	13.62	14.29

Consideration of these results show S's average score on a par with the Grade 10 score and 1.1 below that of the Grade 12 score. This test was done so early in the grade 11 year that the results could well be compared with the Grade10 rather than the Grade 12 scores. The exception to this average score was *self information*, which is above the average *Integration of self and career information* and *career planning* are on a par with the Grade 10 scores but *career information* and *decision making* are slightly below.

S's first chosen career options:

a disc jockey

residential child care

This initial, spontaneous choice reflects two aspects of the self she portrays in the classroom. An extrovert, friendly person who has a genuine concern for others. She has an ability to relate to a wide range of her peers - boys and girls from different groups. She communicates with equal ease with her teachers and yet manages to maintain a good teacher pupil relationship.

S's top 8 'very important' values are;

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|
| 1 | friendship | You would or do like close friendships at work. |
| 2 | learning | It is important for you to learn new things. |
| 3 | physical challenge | You enjoy doing something that is physically demanding. |
| 4 | excitement | It is important for you to have a lot of excitement in your work. |
| 5 | independence | You like being able to work in the way you want, without others telling you what to do. |
| 6 | artistic | You enjoy work involving drawing, designing, making music, making models etc. |
| 7 | variety | You enjoy having lots of different things to do |
| 8 | creative | Thinking up new ideas and ways of doing things is important to you |

As a work value S identified friendship as being of top priority. Her friends are important to her at school and she claims will be equally so in the work place. To learn new things', 'to be physically challenged', 'to be surrounded by excitement', and 'having lots of different things to do' conjures up an image of a girl with restless energy seeking a work environment which is both a physically and intellectually stimulating. This is

complemented by her choice of 'artistic' and 'creative'. To complete this interesting picture, this pupil wants 'to be able to work in the way she wants to without others telling her what to do'.

S's work experience placement choices were:

First choice: Sea world

Second choice: Radio Port Natal DJ

Actual placement: Natal Assoc. of the Performing Arts Council

Many pupils selected the Durban Aquarium as a placement point but they were not able to accommodate us. She and I both tried to get her into the local radio station but also to no avail. In an individual interview with S it seemed as if she was more keen on the 'showing' the dolphins to the public than training or caring for them. As we discussed further interests and options, S settled for the Playhouse Company as a placement. All three of S's choices fall into the 'arts and entertainment' category of Roe, in the major orientation of 'towards people'.

S's Evaluation Of Work Experience

Her present skills, she identified as; *"Acting and Dancing. Enthusiasm"*

Those she needs to develop; *"singing, miming, accents"*

What surprised her most were; *"The wardrobe where they made wigs and costumes."*

On the comparison of her values with the work values, she said; *There is not much money and I will be travelling around a lot.*

Her opinion on the value of the work experience programme was: *It is worthwhile. It gives*

us insight of a career after school and helps us make decisions of the career we wish to pursue.

It is interesting that S identified 'enthusiasm' as one of her skills. Her self knowledge in the initial CDQ was higher than the average standard 10 and here is an example of her sound self analysis. It appears as if S regarded 'travelling around a lot' in a slightly negative light, contrary to what one would have believed seeing her original value selections.

S did not return her work book to school. She took it with her to the visit and presumably completed it but did not bring it back. The employers evaluation was not returned to the school either.

The results of the second CDQ

Table 4.5 CDQ 2 and difference from CDQ 1 of Subject S

SCALE	S's 2nd CDQ	Std 10	Std 8	Girls	S's 1st CDQ	Diff. 2nd - 1st
self information	15	15.23	14.52	15.03	19	-4
decision making	14	15.46	14.55	15.04	12	2
career information	16	13.46	11.97	12.82	10	6
integration of self and career information	16	15.48	14.41	15.04	14	2
career planning	16	14.12	12.66	13.53	13	3
average	15.4	14.75	13.62	14.29	13.6	1.8

S's perception of her self knowledge is once again the significant score on the test. It may be that on the first test she overestimated her knowledge of herself and that this score is now more realistic. The minus 4 is an indication that this is the area of the greatest challenge for S. All the other areas show a positive change, the most significant being in the field of career information.

A discussion of S's results

S's choice of 'occupation' was a good reflection of her first value of friendship, according to Roe showing an orientation people. To her teachers and her friends S appeared outgoing and confident. She herself endorsed this perception in her first CDQ test by reflecting a *self knowledge* score higher than the average standard 10 pupil. She was a girl who fitted in well to the school system and related with ease to everyone around her. With the exception of the Durban Aquarium, S's career choices showed her preference for working with and relating to people, most times in a creative and stimulating way. This is reflected in her Holland classification of AES. According to S's account of her experience in the debriefing lessons, she was a little disappointed that the work environment was not as exciting as she had hoped, it seemed as if they were taken on a tour of the Playhouse and allowed to watch rehearsals. She had hoped to do more and watch less. The final CDQ reflects a drop in the score of self knowledge for S while all the other scores have escalated. This is not necessarily a reflection of negative self growth, it may in fact reflect an area of positive growth as she reconsiders herself more realistically in the work environment.

4.5.2.3 Case Study 3

C is the second male in these case studies. He is a slightly rebellious and somewhat depressed young man. His response to all the exercises was untidy and in class he was lacking in energy.

The results of Cs first CDQ test are;

Table 4.6 CDQ 1 of Subject C

SCALE	C	Grade 12	Grade 10	Boys
self information	14	15.23	14.52	14.65
decision making	13	15.46	14.55	14.94
career information	15	13.46	11.97	12.53
integration of self and career information	19	15.48	14.41	14.77
career planning	16	14.12	12.66	13.15
average	15.4	14.75	13.62	14

C scored above average in all the scales of the CDQ , except ‘self-information’and ‘decision making’. His strongest point being the integration of self and career information. This was in contradiction to how he was perceived by the researcher. He seemed to have little interest in career information and had showed no signs of gathering any. C had expressed resentment towards his father who was putting undue (according to C) pressure on him to achieve better academic results.

C’s first choice was to be a nature conservationist.

C identified his top ‘very important’ values as;

- 1 excitement It is important for you to have a lot of excitement in your work,
- 2 peaceful You prefer to have few pressures or uncomfortable demands
- 3 risk You like to take risks
- 4 physical challenge You enjoy doing something that is physically demanding

Excitement -Risk - Physical challenge - go together well and fit in with the rebellious nature of C. *Peaceful* -seems to be in direct contrast to the other three and could be an indication of the inner conflict of the boy. The first three endorse the choice of nature conservationist. The choice of nature conservationist falls in Roe's 'outdoor' category, as an orientation 'not toward people'.

C actual placement was as a conservationist at Shongweni nature reserve

It is disappointing to note that C was absent from school that day the evaluation were completed and there was no return from the employer.

The results of the second Career Development Questionnaire and the difference between CDQ 1 and 2 are recorded below:

Table 4.7 CDQ 2 and difference from CDQ 1 of Subject C

SCALE	C's 2nd CDQ	Grade 12	Grade 10	Boys	C's 1st CDQ	Diff. 2nd - 1st
self information	14	15.23	14.52	14.65	14	0
decision making	13	15.46	14.55	14.94	13	0
career information	15	13.46	11.97	12.53	15	0
integration of self and career information	19	15.48	14.41	14.77	19	0
career planning	16	14.12	12.66	13.15	16	0
average	15.4	14.75	13.62	14	15.4	0

These results are exactly the same as the previous test. That there is no change in any of these scores implies a consistency in the pupil. However, it may also indicate unrealistic self-evaluation by C.

A discussion of C's results

There is a consistency about C that is reflected throughout his profile. His initial choice corresponded with his work experience choice and eventual placement as a nature conservationist and the results of his two CDQs done eight months apart did not differ at all. Since C seemed to be reflecting an orientation not related to people, this may be reflective of his perception of his father as ‘overdemanding’. It is a pity that there is no feedback from either C or his employers on the work experience. It is the teacher-researcher’s opinion that in this instance personal and family counselling is needed for C and his father to resolve their personal conflict before he can effectively explore his career options further.

4.5.2.4 Case Study 4

P is the fourth pupil and second girl in the case studies. She is a self motivated, mature young girl who participated actively in the work experience programme.

The results of her first CDQ were as follows:

Table 4.8 CDQ 1 of Subject P

SCALE	P	Grade 12	Grade 10	Girls
self information	14	15.23	14.52	15.03
decision making	14	15.46	14.55	15.04
career information	9	13.46	11.97	12.82
integration of self and career information	13	15.48	14.41	15.04
career planning	10	14.12	12.66	13.53
average	12	14.75	13.62	12,29

P’s average score is in line with that of ‘girls’ more so than any other. Her *self information* relates to Grade 10 as does her *decision making*. Scores in *Career information* and *integration*

of self and career information and *career planning* are lower than any of the categories. This pupil has expressed a conservative opinion of herself.

There is no record of this choice, P was absent from the lesson in which this choice was made.

The work values lesson revealed her most important values as:

P's 'very important' values were

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| 1 | security | it is important to know your work will always be there for you |
| 2 | money | earning a large amount of money is important to you |
| 3 | contact with people | you enjoy having a lot of contact with people |
| 4 | status | you enjoy being in a position where people respect you |
| 5 | promotion | you like to work where there is a good chance of promotion. |
| 6 | well known organisation | you like being part of a well known organisation. |
| 7 | competition | you enjoy competing against other people or groups. |
| 8 | learning | it is important for you to learn new things. |

P has identified fairly strongly with a large organisation, the *security*, the *status* and *promotion* are all associated with a *well known organisation*. *Money* and *contact with people* come a close second and third. The last two items on her list are *competition* and *learning* but undoubtedly, also within the large organisation.

P was placed at well known company to learn more about the world of advertising on the 28th June and at a travel agency for the 29th.

Her evaluation of the work experience included the following replies:

She decided that she had the skills of:

determination, perseverance and dedication

and needed to develop: *sociable and creative skills*

What surprised her most: *How many different people are involved in the company. How dedicated and cheerful everyone is.*

The values of the workplace and her personal values that matched were:

polite

artistic

inspirational

sociable.

Her final comment was: *I was able to see exactly what advertising was all about, it made me more interested than before.*

The employer's evaluation was not returned to the school by either of the two organisations.

The results of the second CDQ and the difference 1st and 2nd CDQ are:

Table 13. CDQ 2 and difference from CDQ 1 of Subject P

SCALE	P's 2nd CDQ	Grade 12	Grade 10	Girls	P's 1st CDQ	Diff. 2nd-1st
self information	15	15.23	14.52	15.03	14	1
decision making	14	15.46	14.55	15.04	14	0
career information	19	13.46	11.97	12.82	9	10
integration of self and career information	13	15.48	14.41	15.04	13	0
career-planning	10	14.12	12.66	13.53	10	0
average	14.2	14.75	13.62	12,29	12	2.2

There is very little change in these test results other than in the field of *career information*

where the change is significant. The conservative opinion expressed by the pupil of herself originally still stands. However it is in the range for her grade and gender. Where she felt that the work experience contributed to her career knowledge it did not really affect the other more personal scores such as *self knowledge*, *decision making skills* and the *integration of her self- and career information* and her *career planning*.

Discussion of P results.

Her Work Shuffle card sort showed work values which were reflected in her two work placement choices. Despite the relatively low CDQ scores there is a consistency running through this profile. It seemed as if she had identified this as a career information collection exercise and it would seem that the work experience impacted on P's career information score.

4.5.3 Conclusion

The work experience programme consists of: the preparation; the exercise; and the debriefing; and the case studies discussed above give a view of how this was experienced by four grade 11 pupils over a eight month period. The preparation period is reflected by 'the initial choice' and the 'work values' list, while the work experience is represented by the actual placement and the debriefing includes the pupils' comments about the experience. That each pupil reacted uniquely to the similar events is documented above.

Finally, there is a comparison of a 'before' and 'after' CDQ scores. It is interesting to note that there is no decrease in overall CDQ scores: Super comments that, from role-salience research on high school pupils, the relationship between sex and career maturity favours females, rather than males. This may be that females generally do better than males on verbal tests of knowledge, not because of career maturity (Brown et al, 1990:

p247). These results show the boys as scoring higher than the girls, the first and second average scores are recorded as follows: the boys, B - 8.4 and 16.2; C -15.4 and 15.4; and the girls, S -13.6 and 15.4; and P - 12 and 14.2.

These results cannot be attributed to the work experience alone, as so many other factors have impacted on the pupil's lives during the same period but it has had provided an opportunity for them to identify their interests, aptitudes and values and involve themselves in career decision making in a practical way and so prepare them for the next stage of their career plan.

5.1 Introduction

To conclude this dissertation, the findings will be discussed in terms of the specific aims of the project (pp73-74). These were to: to describe the process of the Grade 11 work experience as implemented by the researcher; to evaluate this process; and to consider ways of optimising the programme. Conclusions are drawn at the end of each phase of the project described in Chapter 4, based on the mode of analysis and reflection of action research. This chapter summarises these conclusions.

The limitations and weaknesses of the research design and methods will be discussed in so far as these pertain to the work experience project. Recommendations will be made for areas of further research.

The conclusion includes recommendations for the introduction of work experience in high schools as a means of better equipping the school leaver for the world of work.

These recommendations take into account the problems identified with regard to pupils who are ill prepared to make career decisions and will consider the extent to which the adoption of work experience addresses these problems.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Description of the Process

This study was implemented over an eight month period and focussed on the perceptions of the major role players: the pupils, the employers and the co-ordinator as elicited through participant-observation, questionnaires and class group discussions. The reflection of the participants and the observations of the researcher revealed the changed perceptions and increased self confidence in the pupils. It was evidence of this that was sought in the data collection and analysis phases. The action-research design allowed data to be collected over an extended period enabling the pupils to assimilate and understand new concepts, implement new ideas and to reflect on the process in an on-going way. The process was interactive and allowed for the researcher and the pupils to reflect on progress at each stage (Chapter 4).

Work experience is part of a career education programme based on theories which show the developmental nature of the process by which an individual develops career maturity. It is designed to foster greater self awareness in pupils and to enable them to learn the basic process of decision making. During adolescence the individual is in an exploratory stage, experimenting in a variety of adult roles with increasing self-awareness and realism (Chapter 2).

The study highlighted the complex nature of: (a) teacher characteristics, planning and decision-making, (b) pupil characteristics, attitudes and perceptions, and (c) the interactions between the two within the context of school and working community. It illustrates a 'teacher-directed activity rather than a manifestation of the hierarchial imposition' (Kincheloe, 1991: p17) common in some schools. The researcher's attitude was one of striving as much as possible to accommodate the diversity of pupil attitudes, interests and needs. The process encourages students to have a voice rather than merely being receivers of what someone else decides they should have. The

greatest demand of this teacher-driven, school-based programme was in terms of the coordinator's time and highlighted the need for coordinated planning.

Reports by teachers of their action research reveal significant points, perhaps the most obvious one is being teacher education. Walker (McNiff, 1988) made the point that *what is changed most by research is the researcher - it is almost the researcher who learns most, changes most, has most commitment to the project and most at stake if it fails* (p88). The researcher agrees with this sentiment.

Work experience programmes need to be examined in terms of the aims of the programme, the learning process involved and their value in terms of easing the school-to-work transition. A report to the US congress (p35) noted 5 learning processes that can be used in work settings. With reference to these the work experience programme described in this study would seem to involve some experiential and observational learning. The nature of the structure excludes mentoring, workplace instruction or technology assisted-learning.

In the light of the points made by Bride and Knights (p34), the knowledge of the world of work gained by the pupils has served to lessen their anxiety about the unknown. Refer to the pupils comments in Phase 3 (pp139-149). Identifying some of the positive and negative aspects of their chosen career has assisted the pupils in their decision making. Of greatest relevance to this research, however, is the point made by Bride and Knights (1981) that knowledge about the world outside school is needed, not at the moment when the transition is imminent but when the young person is making the series of small decisions at every stage in their educational progress. This serves to iron out misunderstandings about educational opportunities and the expectations of people in the working world at an earlier stage of schooling. It is the contention of this researcher that the work experience described has, to some extent, served to provide such information.

To further describe this project, the aims of Watts (1983, and in Miller et al, 1991),

described in (pp45-47) will be considered. The curricular frame of *career education* and the associated aims *expansion, sampling, anticipation* and *placing*, dominated the scheme, followed by the *personal* and *social education* and *world-of-work* frames. With reference to Watts' definition of work experience (pp5-6), this programme more accurately fits the description of work observation or more specifically work shadowing. In addition, as far as organisation is concerned, it could be called a 'school-organized, self-seek' scheme. These schemes, in which students find their own placements, have some drawbacks in terms of matching. They have the potential to reinforce stereotyping and narrow career horizons. Students with two parents in white collar occupations will often have an advantage over students whose parents are unemployed. Students without a network among the employed and self-employed community will be disadvantaged: this may apply in specifically to particular ethnic groups. These problems should be taken into account by work-experience coordinators when planning the guidance programme to accompany self-seek programmes. An alternative would be to involve local service organisations or chambers of commerce in the organisation. An advantage of this involvement is the centralised control that may become necessary if all the schools in an area implemented work experience programmes and the employer market became flooded. A further point in favour of some sort of central control is that teacher driven schemes are limited by teacher experience, whereas if it were commerce or trade union driven, the emphasis might be different. The Institute for Partnership Between Education and Business (IPEB) (N.U. Focus, 1996: p15) states as one of its aims the development of school focussed programmes such as work related experience within its broader goal of investigating the potential of business-education partnerships.

5.2.2 Evaluation of the Process

What is taken to be the problem for research is the result of a flexible, open-ended, ongoing process of identifying, clarifying, negotiating, refining and elaborating precisely what will be studied (Jorgenson, 1989: p32).

This research project is seen as a start in the ongoing process of evaluation in an attempt to strengthen school-work association. It is also a necessary part of the teacher-counsellor's role, in terms of the resource implications.

Evaluation of the work experience is concerned with assessing a wide range of phenomena: the effects of work experience on pupils, teachers, schools and employers; the intended and the unintended consequences; and the benefits and costs of the work experience.

In relation to the curricular frames and their associated aims (pp45-47) the work experience had varying effects on the pupils, but in the light of the observation at the end of Phase 3, the majority were effected positively, one way or another, by the experience. 60% reported that work experience had helped in their career choice, either by confirming or rejecting their initial choice. For a few pupils the *placing* aim was confirmed when they were offered a bursary or an apprenticeship by the organisation where they were placed. Pupils do believe that there has been a development in their social and life skills and this is confirmed by the observation of the teacher-researcher in the debriefing lessons.

Referring to Smith and Rojewski's (p45) desired outcomes of work experience, there is sufficient evidence to show that the practice was connected to significant career development theory and that the pupils had sufficient opportunity to develop personal and career maturity, to gain personal awareness and to attain professional insight.

The employers who participated in this programme were willing to be involved. Referring back to Table 2.1 (p49), the researcher's impression was that the local employers were motivated more by a sense of wanting to be involved in a community project, while the larger firms in the city seemed to have a policy of 'social concern'. They also used the opportunity to advertise the company and their products and services more than the local concerns. Both sets of employers used the work

experience as a recruiting exercise in selected cases. The researcher was disappointed at the low rate of return of the evaluation forms from the employers and thought will have to be given on how to improve this.

Protec's expectation, (p63) that preparation of the pupil should include conceptual as well as practical preparation, was met by this work experience programme with the lessons preceding the work experience. Referring to the pupils comments on the work experience (Chapter 4, Phase 3 pp139-149), there is evidence that many pupils gained a realistic impression of the world of work and its norms and values and this experience facilitated informed career decision making and goal setting. The evaluation done in Lothian (Malcolm and Johnstone, 1991) (p59) claims that more than half the students asked, said the experience had made them work harder at school. There was no such direct question put to the pupils in this study and none of them mentioned it in the open ended questions, but many alluded to increased motivation in meeting the requirements of their chosen career which may be taken to read 'doing better at school'. For some pupils it was the exposure to successful role models that made the greatest impression on them. However, for the majority of pupils there is enough evidence to suggest that, in one way or another, work experience will help bridge the gap between school and the work environment.

Jamieson (Miller et al, 1991) discusses a variety of approaches to and uses for assessment (pp235-259). While there is assessment and it is fed back to the pupils this has limited utility in the work place. In the past, a couple of pupils applying for bursaries or admission to places of training have used their employers' assessment forms in their curriculum vitae.

With reference to the opinion of Boud(1993) and Petherbridge (1996) that work experience is being limited by ineffective debriefing of the pupils, this researcher believes she needs to do more in this regard. Her belief was that the process of work experience is the outcome and she failed to see that until the pupil has been allowed to assimilate the observation and reflections, the learning has not yet begun. Before

embarking on this research project, she regarded work experience more in the light of job sampling and an acquisition of social and life skills rather than meeting the deeper educational aim of learning from experience.

5.2.3 Optimisation

The opportunity offered by this cyclic form of study is that the process can be repeated - with improvement. The analysis and evaluation have revealed areas of optimisation and these will be discussed below.

The suggestions of some of employers that the programme be lengthened, has to be weighed against the academic demands made on the pupils. However, it seems appropriate that the programme be lengthened.

Watts (Miller et al, 1991) suggests that the aims of work experience can be met by activities other than structured work experience. His definition of work experience (pp5-6), applies to schemes in which pupils experience work tasks in work environments, but without taking on the full identity of the worker, whereas his broader definition includes vicarious experience, constructed experience and simulated experience. If part of the function of work experience is to develop students' concepts of work, it is important that it is not seen in a vacuum. There is a need to recognise the experiences of work the pupils may already have had. A structured programme in the curriculum, enabling the pupils to draw on and explore their prior experiences will have the greatest impact on the participants.

As the academically less able pupils are more likely to leave school at the end of Grade 9, now that the school leaving age has been lowered, a programme should be especially designed for them. It should include two or three weekly placements at least twice a year.

An optimisation of resources in this study would be in the administrative area. An

extra pair of hands would greatly relieve the pressure and the enormous work load.

Improving and increasing the links with the English department would enhance the programme by spreading its curricular base. It would also provide an opportunity for improved debriefing if more time was allocated to reporting back on work experience as an 'oral' exercise.

Watts (Miller et al, 1991) mentions an education and business initiative in the UK which allowed teachers to have direct experience of the world of business and enterprise (p9). Quin (1994) refers to the teacher place programme of the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) saying that their philosophy is to focuss on teachers rather than pupils. They contend that a single teacher will influence 1600 pupils during his or her career and they regard this as a very cost effective way of reaching young people (pp23-24). The Karlsruhe Nuclear Research Centre in Germany is quoted: *teachers are the opinion leaders in school - they are important for us* (Quin, 1994: p50). The opinion of Bride and Knight (1981) is that Australian teachers could overcome their own lack of knowledge by teacher work experience (p54). If some, or all of the teachers of the school were given the opportunity to 'go out to work' in an environment different from their own familiar one, the pupils would benefit in many ways. Certainly their knowledge of the working world would increase.

In the light of all the discussion above and based on Table 2.3 (p55) this coordinator-researcher has compiled her school-work policy statement:

- All pupils must select an activity which will give them experience in the working world.
- Equal access available must be available to all activities irrespective of a pupil's gender, race, or physical ability.
- Pupils must be actively encouraged to consider activities beyond limits of traditional roles.

- Pupils will be encouraged to consider a wide variety of work-related activities to cater for all interests and the full ability range within the school.
- The teacher counsellor will be the organiser of the programme.
- All aspects of the programme will be centred in the guidance and counselling curriculum.
- The pupils experiences will be closely linked to the pastoral curriculum of the school.
- The pupils will be encouraged to build on experiences gained within the programme with further work-related activities.
- The programme should be seen as one part of a whole-school commitment to partnership between education and business and industry.

5.3 Limitations and weaknesses of the project

It is particularly important to acknowledge the limitations of the research study and the curriculum itself.

Qualitative research has proved it has a place in school guidance projects. It has informed us descriptively and in depth and has provided us with detailed information in the language of the main role players in this work experience project. The information is to be used constructively as the foundation to formulate ideas. However, the methodology of action research has limitations and these will now be discussed.

5.3.1 Subjectivity and Bias

In choosing an action research design and qualitative research methods, the problem of bias of the researcher was taken seriously. The researcher was not only the participant observer in the classroom but also the presenter of the programme, and was responsible for teaching, observing, interviewing and reflecting. Measures taken

to guard against these problems were as follows:

- limited triangulation with the observers commenting on a lesson;
- the pupils were informed of the teacher's research role;
- much of the data collected was in a written form, i.e. pupil and employer evaluations.

There is no doubt that the investigation was subjective. However, to provide for richness and detailed information and to describe the process in the detail required, a participant observer stance was useful.

5.3.2 Action-research and the Skills of the Enquirer

Mc Niff (1988) suggests that much of the success of action research depends on the skills of the enquirer. Because action research is participatory and collaborative it requires a high degree of interpersonal skill and also the ability to ask the right questions. As a novice researcher, inexperience in this field would be considered a limitation. Certainly the researcher found this a rich learning experience, and realised the complexities of the research process and the dedication and commitment required to carry through.

5.3.3 The Questionnaires

In discussing the format of a questionnaire, Keeves (1988) and Hopkins (1980) concur that the scope of the survey must expose the area to be explored. A limitation of this research project is that the data that was generated by the employers on the pupils was skewed in the direction of personal and social education. Only one question referred to the suitability of the pupils to the career field.

The pupil questionnaire, too, needed to be more explicit particularly in the areas of work related skills and the linking of their values to the work place. Miller (p60) makes the point that too few questionnaires go beyond eliciting the satisfaction or

otherwise of the pupils about their placements and the observers (p121) noted that the pupils' evaluation of their work experience should include the Hopson and Scally sentiment, *Do I now need to find out about particular job conditions to check whether they will provide what is important for me?*

5.3.4 Restriction of the Research Design

This researcher did not feel inhibited. The action research design presented enough scope for individual interpretation and adaptation.

5.3.5 Impact of Research on Teaching

While it is true that the normal teaching is disrupted by the action research, it is the opinion of this researcher that it is not time wasted. If the researcher has the interests of the pupils as her prime concern and the project is well prepared and presented, there will always be a greater gain than loss no matter what the result. The process of learning extends beyond the limits of a syllabus and involves the pupils as much as the teacher. In fact, there is counter proof from Boud (1993), Petherbridge (1996) who see this as a valuable approach to experiential learning and thus lifelong learning.

5.3.6 Work Related Life Skills

There is a need to more consciously address the life skills related to work in the pre-lessons. These were referred to in the questionnaire and identified in the debriefing after the work experience. They are implicit in the programme and need to be made more explicit to the pupils.

5.3.7 Pre-lesson Material

The meaning of 'work' is of paramount importance to this programme. There is a need to broaden the pre-lesson material to include the meaning of 'work' as referred

to by Watts (p69-70).

5.3.8 Evaluation of Pre-lessons

How to improve the evaluation of the pre-lessons is an area of concern to the researcher. Kinchloe (1991) suggests some questions that can be asked of the pupils:

What did you learn in the class?

What do you know after the class that you didn't know before?

What one point did the teacher emphasise the most? (p105), and

What was going on in your mind during the lesson?

Did you see any relation between the lesson and your life out of school? (p158)

5.3.9 Debriefing

Petherbridge's reference to effective debriefing (p60) makes the point that to optimise on an understanding of the experience for the pupil, the teacher or the group must first understand what it was, what it meant to the pupil, what generalisations have been drawn from that reflection and what influence that will have on future action. It is the opinion of this researcher that this was not achieved in this project. The pupils enjoyed the feedback and the listeners were empathetic but that was the limit of their involvement with the pupil learning. There is a need to formalise this in the debriefing planned for next year's programme.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Since the purpose of the research design chosen is to provide information as a foundation for the development of ideas and hypotheses, and to lead to further investigation of the phenomenon, it is appropriate to consider possible areas for further research.

5.4.1 A Longitudinal Study

de Haas (1991) judged that most young people had made a career choice within three years of leaving school. A longitudinal study, five years after the work experience and three years after leaving school would put the work experience programme into perspective as the career paths of young workers were followed and they were asked to assess the value of the experience in relation to the formal and informal career counselling they had received.

5.4.2 A Quantitative Study

The relationship between the important criteria, such as career maturity and work experience could be further highlighted by a quantitative study which could lead to important generalisations.

5.4.3 Work Experience Or Exposure Earlier in the Pupil's School Career

Super (Brown et al, 199 : p243) suggests that career guidance programmes should be implemented in the elementary year which would seek to foster curiosity and thus exploratory behaviour, autonomy, time perspective, and self esteem. At the same time the pupils would be exposed to a variety of adult role models. Exploration in breadth would normally begin in the middle school. It would phase into exploration in depth when the individual appeared ready to focus on one or two groups of occupations that would phase back into exploration in breadth if depth exploration proved unfruitful. This flexible, ongoing process could well include work experience in some form or other, being introduced lower down in the school, possibly at Grade 9, as a preparation for the Grade 11 programme. Further research would be needed to indicate the validity of such a suggestion.

5.5 Conclusion

Almost 15 years ago, Robert Burns (1982), commenting on career education in South Africa, stressed the need to emphasise the whole person and his totality of life roles and life skills, and the need for preparation for an uncertain future and a variety of adult roles and changing career patterns. More recently, the NEPI documents (1993) recommended that provision be made for a broader based Senior Secondary phase of education with greater opportunity for vocational training. Since a broader base will, of necessity, require greater collaboration between education and the work-place, development and refinement of work-experience programmes will be an obvious area needing attention in future years.

Work experience programmes are needed to connect youth in school with the world of work and knowledge of themselves as well as to consider the skill-deficient young workforce which is hampering the nation's economic growth, productivity, and the ability to compete in a global economic marketplace. Projections for slow labor force growth and increasing demands for technological literate workers will exacerbate this problem into the next decade. A new educational reform should be based partly on bringing school and work closer together: to enhance the workplace as a learning site and to make school learning more relevant to problem solving and social skills that young adults will need on the job.

(Source unknown)

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HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL



Dear Parents / Guardians

GRADE 11 WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME

WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME

Creative career decision making involves identifying personal interests, values, abilities and strengths and then exploring the options available in the world. Our students must be encouraged to make decisions about their futures based on the realistic present. Work Experience offers them the option to expand their experiential base and I urge you as a family to become involved in this important stage of career development.

WHAT : Work Experience involves the placement of a student in a work environment for two or three days to shadow-a-worker and to experience the working environment. It also provides an opportunity for the student to glean as much information as possible about the chosen field. There will be no remuneration for the student.

WHEN : The Work Experience programme will run the last week of the second term.

HOW : Placements for the students can be procured by contacting the employers. I encourage you to build up a network of contacts. These will be useful when you are job or bursary hunting next year. If you are unable to find a contact I will be willing to assist as best I can. What is important is that after making the initial contact you give me the name, telephone number and address of the contact so that I can reinforce that this is a school exercise. From then on I will handle all the ensuing correspondence.

=====

Reply slip : HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL WORK EXPERIENCE

Name :

Grade :

Choice of work placement :

If you can secure placement please complete the following :

NAME OF COMPANY	CONTACT PERSON	PHONE

HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL



Date

Employer's name
Employer's address
Fax:

Dear Mr

HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME

Date:
Pupil:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in our Work Experience Programme. Students need to learn how to adapt what they learn in school to what they will be expected to do when they are employed. They need the opportunity of seeing and learning as much as possible about work, specifically about careers that fit their needs, interests and capabilities.

We would be happy if pupils could be exposed to as many aspects of your job situation as possible. If appropriate, the pupils should be taken on a short, guided tour, given the opportunity to discover the basic routine and to speak to as many people related to the chosen career as possible. Pupils could be given specific career related tasks to do as well, and we urge that they be given no preferential treatment or remuneration.

Enclosed is a reply form to assist the pupil in knowing what time to report for work, what to wear and to whom he or she should report. Please complete this and return it to the school and the pupils will be prepared in all ways possible for their work experience.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours sincerely,

B.H. HARRIS (Mrs)
TEACHER COUNSELLOR

HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL



WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME

Name/s of pupil/s:

Name of Organisation:

Street address to which pupil/s should report:

Will the pupil require any specific clothing? Please state:

Required time of arrival:

Required time of departure:

Any further comments that will be of relevance:

HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL

40 Ridge Road
Hillcrest, 3610



Thank you

Thank you for participating in our work experience programme. Great benefit can be derived from feedback from the employers. If at all possible, please complete the attached form and return it to the school.

Private Bag X1012
HILLCREST
3650

Tel / 031-751215
Fax / 031-751062

HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL



WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME

Name of Host organisation: _____

Name of Pupil: _____

Work/Career scene: _____

Please would you rate this student, on a 1 to 5 scale, in the following areas using the following scale:

- 1 - poor
- 2 - fair
- 3 - average
- 4 - good
- 5 - excellent

Interest and enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5
Punctuality	1	2	3	4	5
Appearance	1	2	3	4	5
Courtesy	1	2	3	4	5
Suitability for this field	1	2	3	4	5

Any further comments:

We would be grateful for any suggestion as to how we may be able to improve this programme:

Signature

Date

HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL WORK EXPERIENCE PROJECT
STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR OBTAINING
CAREER INFORMATION

You should endeavour to obtain the answers to as many of the following questions as possible:

1. Job/Career title and/or description.
2. Specific requirements for entry to study or job, e.g.
 - (a) Specific subjects which are essential or useful;
 - (b) Do you have to produce an example of your skills/work, e.g. Portfolio?
 - (c) Does this career demand/need particular personality traits, e.g. perseverance, empathy, dexterity, patience, logical thought, etc.
 - (d) Are there any physical requirements, e.g. age, weight, height, stamina, strength, appearance, etc?
 - (e) Is language proficiency essential - if so in what languages?
 - (f) Are there any documents or certificates required, e.g. driver's licence, medical certificate, specific passport, etc?
3. Places of study and/or training.
4. Type of study/training, e.g. full-time, part-time, day release, practical, theoretical, etc.
5. Total number of years required for basic training.
6. Further qualifications available after initial training.
7. How, when, where, specific entry requirements, etc for post graduate / further training qualifications.
8. Approximate cost of basic training and any forms of financial assistance available, e.g. loans, bursaries, etc.
9. Approximate basic salary and possible fringe benefits, e.g. medical aid, pension scheme, transport costs, discounts, etc.
10. Prospective places of employment after training.
11. Opportunities for promotion, advancement, "up-date" courses, 'side-ways' moves into other branches of career, etc.
12. Specific requirements of job, i.e. job description, various types of activities, skills, operations expected during course of a normal working day / week / month / year.
13. How to set about obtaining employment, e.g. through adverts, agencies, direct contact, etc.



HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL WORK EXPERIENCE PROJECT

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR PUPILS

1. Make sure you know where you are going, (the address and the firm), who is in charge and to whom you will be accountable, expected time of arrival and departure.
2. Arrive in good time.
3. Dress appropriately.
4. Be positive.
5. Be prepared to learn all you can. (See attached "Guidelines for obtaining career information").
6. Remember you're "on show" and this could be your future place of employment - be yourself.
7. Respect and good manners go a long way towards covering inadequacies - also a friendly disposition and smile.
8. Be prepared to listen and give your full attention - remember eye to eye contact is important.
9. Take enough cash to be able to pay for tea (if necessary) and to buy lunch (either at work canteen or elsewhere - whatever is the normal practise).
10. Speak to as many of the employers/employees as possible (without interrupting the work schedule unduly) and try to discover why they entered this particular job/career, where they trained, pros and cons, etc.
11. Take a note pad and writing utensils.
12. Be prepared to do any task that you are asked to do.



HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL

NAME OF STUDENT: _____

HOST ORGANISATION: _____

WORK/CAREER SCENE: _____

Start by spending no more than five minutes on a brief, factual account of how you spent your day - from your arrival at to your departure from your host organisation.

APPENDIX C

Please answer the following, which are based on your student guidelines:

1. Specific requirements for entry to study or job, e.g.
 - (a) Specific subjects which are essential or useful: _____
 - (b) Do you have to produce an example of your skills/work, e.g. Portfolio? YES/NO. What? _____
 - (c) Does this career demand/need particular personality traits, e.g. perseverance, empathy, dexterity, patience, logical thought, etc. YES/NO. List _____
 - (d) Are there any physical requirements, e.g. age, weight, height, stamina, strength, appearance, etc? YES/NO. Indicate _____
 - (e) Is language proficiency essential? YES/NO. Which? _____
 - (f) Are there any documents or certificates required, e.g. driver's licence, medical certificate, specific passport, etc? YES/NO. Which? _____

2. Places of study and/or training. List _____

3. Type of study/training, e.g. full-time, part-time, day release, practical, theoretical, etc. INDICATE _____

4. Total number of years required for basic training _____

5. Further qualifications available after initial training. LIST _____

6. How, when, where, specific entry requirements, etc., for post graduate / further training qualifications. LIST _____

7. Any forms of financial assistance available, e.g. loans, bursaries, etc. for study or training _____

8. Approximate basic salary and possible fringe benefits, e.g. medical aid, pension scheme, transport costs, discounts, etc. INDICATE _____

9. Prospective places of employment after training. INDICATE _____

10. Opportunities for promotion, advancement, "up-date" courses, 'side-ways' moves into other branches of career, etc. INDICATE _____

11. How to set about obtaining employment, e.g. through adverts, agencies, direct contact, etc. INDICATE _____

REPORT BACK

Please answer these questions frankly as your comments will be of great value to us in assessing the value of the Work Experience Project.

REGARDING YOUR HOST ORGANISATION

1. Did you find your hosts well prepared to receive you and organised throughout your visit: YES/NO
 COMMENTS _____

2. Were any personnel particularly helpful? YES/NO
 SPECIFY _____
3. Did you feel welcome or were you intruding?
 COMMENT: _____

4. Did your hosts make it possible for you to speak with all the relevant personnel? YES/NO
5. Would you consider working in this organisation if you were given the opportunity? YES/NO
 COMMENTS: _____

6. Would you recommend us to send future students with similar requirements to your own, to this organisation? YES/NO
 COMMENTS (Please be specific): _____

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Did you find your day
 (i) enjoyable? YES/NO
 (ii) useful? YES/NO
2. Has it helped you in your career choice? YES/NO
 SPECIFY: _____
3. Has it helped you in other ways (e.g. confidence) YES/NO
 SPECIFY: _____
4. Do you think we prepared you sufficiently? YES/NO
5. Did you find the two sheets of 'guidelines' helpful? YES/NO
6. Have you any suggestions on how they may be improved? _____

7. Do you think this was a worthwhile venture? YES/NO

9. Please make any relevant suggestions for improving the scheme:

Standard 9 Work Experience Programme

Name: _____

Afrikaans Class Group: _____

1 Where were you placed? _____

2 What skills do you already possess that would be useful in this career?

3 What skills do you think you will have to develop to be successful in this career?

4 What surprised you most during the visit?

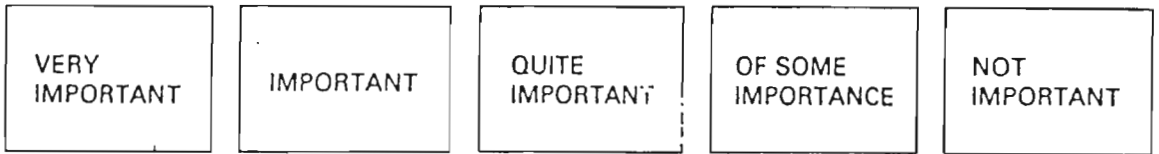
5 You considered values, particularly work values, in the counselling lessons leading up to the work experience programme. What values were you able to identify in your particular work place and how do they match with your personal values?

6 Do you consider the work experience programme a worthwhile exercise?

Why? _____

STAGE 1 — INDIVIDUAL WORK

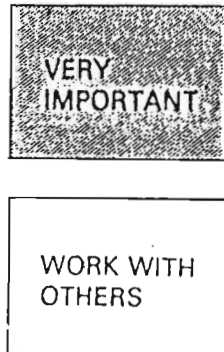
1. Lay out the HEADINGS cards across the table, desk, floor, or any suitable area.



2. Now take the cards with values printed on, look at the cards one at a time and ask yourself, 'How important is the value described on the card to me?'
On the basis of your answer place the card under the heading which is most correct for you.

For example:

If it is vital for you to work as part of a team then the card saying 'WORK WITH OTHERS' will be placed below the heading VERY IMPORTANT, as shown below.



If it is not so important to you that you work in a team alongside others, then place the card under the heading which most describes how important it is for you.

3. Place each of the cards under the heading that is appropriate for you, so that columns of cards are formed, but do not have more than eight cards in the 'VERY IMPORTANT' column.
4. When you have laid out all the cards in the columns which are correct for you, look at those under the heading 'VERY IMPORTANT' and arrange these in order, with your most important value at the top and working down to the least important for you, in that column.
5. When you have them in your order of priority, write down the statements on the cards. These are the values which you have identified as being those you would most like to find represented in any job or activity, or combination of activities you become involved in. Look at the list and ask yourself whether any other value, which is important to you but which is not covered by the cards, is missing. If you can think of any then add them to your list.
6. Look at your list and write down your thoughts, reactions or views on the following questions:
- What do the cards say is most important to me?
 - Is there anything which surprises me or anything I have become aware of about myself as I thought through my values?
 - Looking at my 'VERY IMPORTANT' values what type of *paid work* would provide a chance for me to find what I value? Would it provide for all my values or just some?
 - Again, considering my 'VERY IMPORTANT' values, what kind of *unpaid work* could provide a chance for me to find what I value? Could unpaid work provide for all my values or just some?
 - What combination of *paid and unpaid work* could provide what I would value.

Career as a quest

"Why don't you leave then, Chris?" Nuala asks.

"I've been in finance all my life," he replies "and I'm mortgaged up to my ears. I'd love to step out... go into something new... but I'll be better off sticking to what I know. It's too late to change, really."

The short story reflects some common false assumptions about the notion of career: that it is a single, permanent, lifelong decision - occurring once somewhere between the ages of 20 and 23 - that it can be right or wrong, and if it is wrong, there may often be little we can do about it.

Where does this static view of careers come from? At the beginning of the century occupations were for life and defined an individual's position in society. Since then, myths about making a single, sound career decision have persisted strongly, ignoring that change has become an inherent part of living. Most of us have grown up with this perspective, and it has affected the way we shape our careers.

A lifelong process

Now, in a global society where change has become the norm, the nature of work is changing dramatically; and theories of career choice have emerged which describe it as a dynamic, lifelong process. Now, we speak about career more than occupation, about career *imagining* as well as career planning, about not just "What can I do?" but also "Who am I becoming?". Life choices are seen as dynamic and emerging.

Richard Homan has proposed the idea of career as a *quest* - as a journey in search of something, involving adventure and openness to experience... The career quest is like a river, passing through many landscapes, changing shape along the way, but still maintaining its essential identity.

It requires effort. It is not easy to put aside the business of our daily lives and pause, to work creatively at finding purpose and at being true to ourselves. It involves continually choosing activities and life roles that best express our deepest needs, talents, and values. This may also involve taking risks. Is it worth it? Albert Camus says "Without work all life goes rotten. But when work is soulless, life stifles and dies." Career is central to our general life satisfaction and well-being.

A dynamic concept of career is more complex and means a more difficult task for the individual. It takes time and energy. It requires firstly that we identify and face up to those areas of our lives which are out of harmony and which call out for change. We need to make sense of and even appreciate our dissatisfactions in order to transform them. (Career-related problems or dilemmas are not necessarily all that bad: they demand that we face them with a new way of thinking, and we can grow in the process.) It then requires that we discover, and build on our passions and talents - by imagining bold new solutions and new goals, then aim to live authentically. Our career ideally would consist of what we do well and what we like to do. How do we find our direction? By identifying those activities to which we are automatically drawn in terms of our interests, values and skills.

All our lives we must deal with new urges, new challenges, new conditions. Consequently "career choice is no single event," as McAuliffe says. "It is a way of living in tune with our changing needs, it is a way of making sense of our lives, and it is the way in which we continually contribute to our community." This notion of career choice is relevant to people of all ages and all walks of life.

Let goals emerge

The quest can take us into some strange places: it is our task to learn all we can from our experiences and to act on the knowledge we gain. A quest is a particular kind of journey, because one is not chasing after a predefined goal - instead one is exploring and letting goals emerge in the process. Instead of defining ourselves in terms of our current role in life, we must recognise that the role we are each in at the moment is but one among many in which we can express our talents, interests and values. The continuity in one's career is oneself, not the occupation one happens to be in at the moment.

Are we up to the challenge of this journey? We may be tempted to say "Yes, but give me a map!" However, although we can look to others for assistance and support, nobody else can provide easy answers - we must answer our own questions. Career guidance has historically been the "test 'em and tell 'em" kind; when career is seen as a dynamic, developmental process however, this approach needs to change.

What personal qualities are required for a successful career quest? Firstly, it takes honesty and openness, to face the differences between who we are and what we are doing, then to act on what we find. Secondly, it takes courage to live in uncertainty for a while, and to commit ourselves to living up to our potential. Thirdly, we need imagination - to go beyond our current, limited views of reality and consider new possibilities. We need to leave behind the "but's and 'if's and 'can't's until later.

Pinpointing problems, imagining solutions

How do we go about our quest? Richard Loder suggests that we first allow our irritations, our internal conflicts to surface. Then we need to 'pause' - to take a step back from our busy daily lives in order to make sense of our experience. We may consult with others and make personal assessment lists, but we *must* stay open to our own inner voice and not limit our options. What emerges is an image of who we are becoming. We can then give detail and substance to the image - through setting goals, planning, and reality testing. Says Henry Thoreau, "If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them."

The career quest is not easy because it means that we take the responsibility of choosing. "The career quest provides no answers," McAuliffe says, "only choices. It means that we must choose our life roles, that we are largely the authors of this career script that ends only when our life ends." We need courage, then, to live with the lifelong tensions between risk and safety, action and reflection. We need honesty to recognise true (not self-imposed) opportunities and limitations, to recognise whether we are on an authentic search, and to answer ourselves whether we can risk the 'death' of our old selves in order to take on new ways of being.

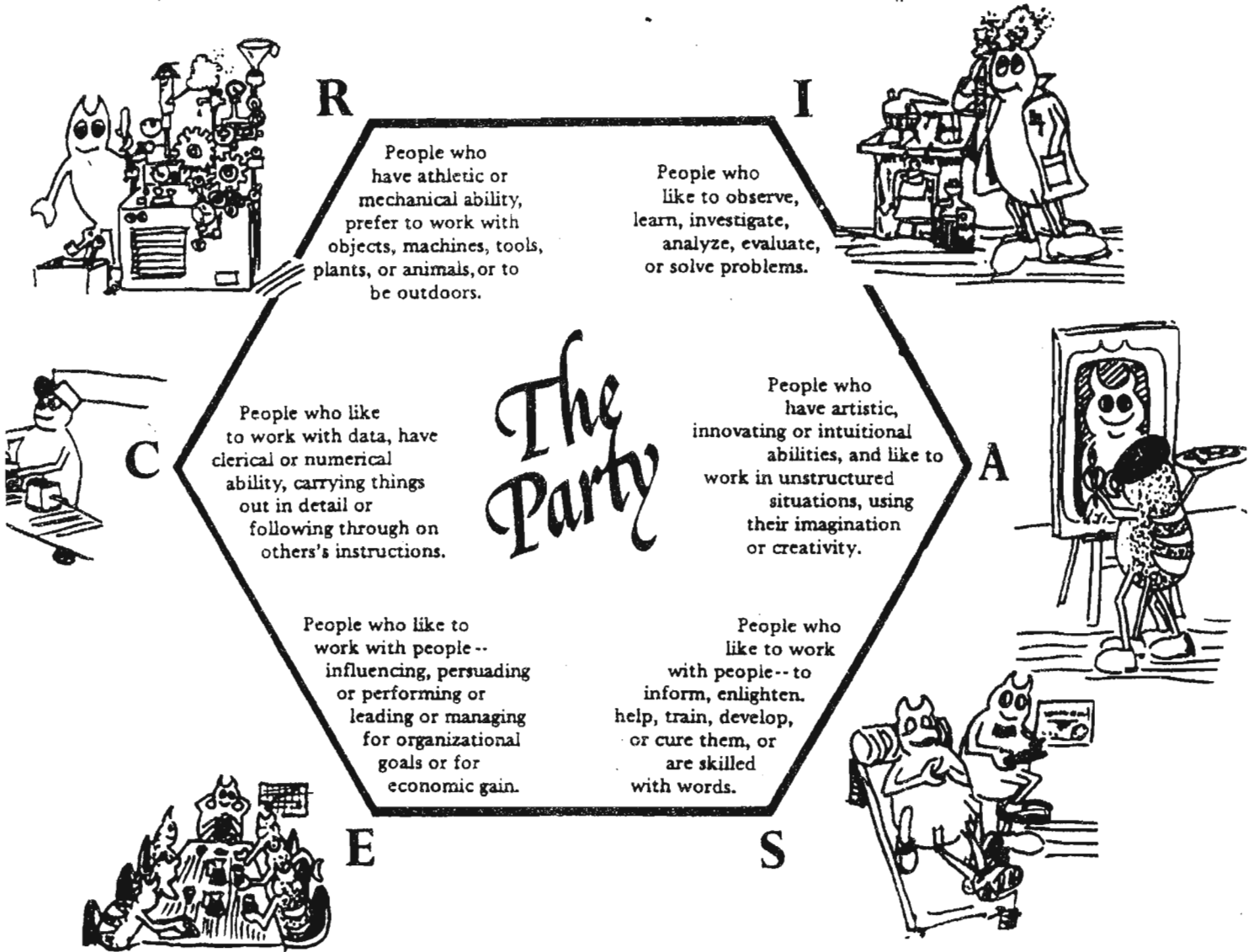
The promise of the new

What do we find through the quest? No single, simple answers, no final resting places, but the promise of shaping something new. If we make a commitment to something, we have to leave out other possibilities: that is okay. McAuliffe says "For it is choices and new choices that compose a career, not any one right answer, not one life role or leisure pursuit or occupation. Career, instead, is an open-ended quest that may have its pauses, but which never seeks final rest."

Adapted from "Career as an Imaginative quest" by Garrett McAuliffe, *American Counselor*, Winter 1993



Below is an aerial view (from the floor above) of a room in which a party is taking place. At this party, people with the same or similar interests have (for some reason) all gathered in the corner of the room as described below.



1. Which corner of the room would you instinctively be drawn to, as the group you would most ENJOY being with for the longest time? (Leave aside any question of shyness, or whether you would have to talk with them.) Write the LETTER for that corner in this box:

2. After 15 minutes, everyone in the corner you have chosen, leaves for another party cross town, except you. Of the groups THAT STILL REMAIN now, which corner or group would you be drawn to the most, as the people you would most enjoy being with for the longest time? Write the LETTER for that corner in this box:

3. After 15 minutes, this group too leaves for another party, except you. Of the corners and groups which remain now, which one would you most enjoy being with for the longest time? Write the LETTER for that corner in this box:

<i>Working environment</i>	<i>Examples of occupations</i>
<p>I <i>Realistic.</i> Tasks requiring the use of tools and machinery. Requires care, persistence and often physical movement, sometimes outdoors. Involves minimal social skills. Requires fairly materialistic and conventional values.</p>	<p>Draughtsman, surveyor, engineer, miner, farmer, laboratory technician, serviceman, builder</p> <p>Specify:</p>
<p>II <i>Intellectual.</i> The work is more with ideas than people. Usually indoors. Tasks tackled by intelligence and imagination through reading and often writing (or talking).</p>	<p>Computer programmer, statistician, technical writer, information scientist, research scientist, economist</p> <p>Specify:</p>
<p>III <i>Social.</i> Tasks requiring the ability to interpret and modify the behaviour of others, and an interest in caring for and communicating with them. Fluency in talking. Emotionally demanding.</p>	<p>Teacher, social worker, clinical psychologist, clergyman, youth worker</p> <p>Specify:</p>
<p>IV <i>Conventional.</i> Tasks requiring systematic processing of words or figures, often according to set procedures or sequences.</p>	<p>Bank manager, accountant, civil servant, stock controller, office manager</p> <p>Specify:</p>
<p>V <i>Enterprising.</i> Tasks requiring the ability to direct or persuade people. Social skills all important.</p>	<p>Hotelier, public relations officer, advertising executive, representative, entrepreneur</p> <p>Specify:</p>
<p>VI <i>Artistic.</i> Tasks requiring one to draw on intuition and emotion. The creation or interpretation of artistic forms. Information often evaluated against sensory criteria.</p>	<p>Author, cartoonist, commercial artist, journalist, copywriter, interior designer, literary translator</p> <p>Specify:</p>