A CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVE FOR SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY FOCUSING ON EMPOWERING SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS

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DECLARATION

I declare that A CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVE FOR SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY FOCUSING ON EMPOWERING SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

ZULIAKHA MOOSA

15 December 2014

DATE
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all the people with special needs, especially intellectually disabled learners. Being a disabled person does not remove your respect and dignity. Always be proud of yourself, knowing that you are God's chosen star and that God is always your shining light.
DECLARATION OF THE EDITOR

I declare that I, the undersigned, have scrutinised the language used in this thesis and made the necessary corrections and suggestions, which the student and the supervisor can accept or reject.

Signed............................................................

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ABSTRACT

Currently, South African special need schools that cater for intellectually disabled learners are implementing the continuous assessment policy statement (CAPS). This study explored the CAPS curriculum which is used in special needs schools, in order to determine whether or not it can develop disabled learners intellectually. In other words, can the curriculum be used to ensure that disabled learners are also prepared for future employment opportunities? Disabled learners also have a constitutional right to be lead through education to independent adulthood.

This study looks at the characteristics of the intellectually disabled. It mentions some of the official South African documents in this regard and then discusses the theory of Paolo Freire. The researcher addresses two programmes that she feels could improve the curriculum quality of learners with special needs in special needs schools. A few negative aspects, as well as the time frame for South Africa to completely implement inclusive education, according to the White Paper, contributed to this research. Comparisons are drawn between two international policies and acts and South African policies and programmes, in order to determine the effectiveness and standard of South African inclusive education.

This research was conducted in a special needs school in a suburb of Laudium in the Gauteng Province South Africa. It was a qualitative study and adopted a case study design.

The researcher collected data from the principal, HOD, occupational therapist, two teachers and an administrative staff member, who were the participants in the study, using a questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. Inclusive analysis was used to narrate and explain the data. The researcher found that the CAPS curriculum does not equip, prepare or develop learners who are intellectually disabled. The teachers and staff members feel that they need more training and development to support learners with special educational needs, together with a suitable curriculum to ensure effective teaching and learning.

KEY WORDS: curriculum, severely intellectually disabled, continuous assessment policy statement skills, programme-to-work linkage, SANASE, White Paper, constitution, IDEA, UNESCO’S Salamanca Statement.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE - GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION.................................................................1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY............................................1
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM...........................................3
  1.3.1 Research questions...................................................3
  1.3.2 Sub-questions...........................................................4
1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY..................................................4
1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.............................4
  1.5.1 Main aim.................................................................4
  1.5.2 Objectives..............................................................4
1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY..............................................4
  1.6.1 Research Strategy....................................................4
  1.6.2 Case Study..............................................................5
  1.6.3 Qualitative Research................................................5
1.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS........................................5
  1.7.1 Questionnaires.......................................................6
1.8 SAMPLING.................................................................6
1.9 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT.................................................6
1.10 DATA ANALYSIS..........................................................7
1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.......................................7
1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.........................................7
1.13 SCOPE OF THE STUDY...................................................7
1.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS..........................................8
1.15 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS............................8
1.16 CHAPTER DIVISION.....................................................9-11

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW ON SPECIAL NEED LEARNERS IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

2.1 INTRODUCTION.............................................................12
2.2 IDENTIFICATION OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNER...............12
  2.2.1 Extrinsic factors......................................................13
  2.2.2 Intrinsic factors......................................................13
2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS...............14
2.4 SOUTH AFRICAN LEGAL DOCUMENTS...............................15
2.5 CURRICULUM THEORIES...............................................16
  2.5.1 PAOLO FREIRE’S THEORY........................................17
  2.5.2 A CURRICULUM THEORY OF PAOLO FREIRE...............17
CHAPTER THREE-RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION.............................................................................34
3.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE.............................................35
3.3 VALIDITY OF QUALITATIVE DESIGNS......................................35
3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH..............35
3.4.1 The researcher’s role.................................................................35
3.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH................36
3.6 SAMPLING STRATEGIES............................................................37
3.6.1 SITE SELECTION......................................................................37
3.6.2 SAMPLE SIZE.........................................................................37
3.7 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS STRATEGIES................38
3.8 RESEARCH ETHICS IN FIELDWORK........................................39
3.9 SUMMARY..................................................................................39
3.10 CONCLUSION...........................................................................39

CHAPTER FOUR-DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION...........................................................................41
4.2 BACKGROUND...........................................................................41
4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY....................................................42
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, a curriculum for learners with special educational needs is scrutinised to determine its educational validity, since The South African Constitution, in Chapter 2 Section 29 (1) (a), states that: "Every child has the right to basic education". Thus, we have at present one curriculum for all, with effective differentiation and support that ensures that everyone obtains meaningful learning that will lead to a qualification. Therefore, all schools without exception are enjoined to admit learners, even those who have a below average Intelligence Quotient (IQ), as part of the mainstreaming that is now taking place.

The consequence is that the current South African national curriculum and policy statement, with reference to the Continuous Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS 2011), also applies to learners with special needs. To this end, the policy of "CAPS describes the components of each subject as well as the planning and assessment requirements. It also spells out the progression requirements that have been set out in the National Policy Statement" (CAPS Participants Manual, 2012:5). This study intends to determine how suitable this curriculum is for learners who are unable to develop cognitively, due to the nature of their disabilities.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The setting of this study is a special needs school in the city of Pretoria, which is located in the Gauteng province of South Africa. This school caters for learners who are intellectually disabled. The learners in this school have cognitive difficulties in various forms and thus have a lower IQ level than that of their chronological age. The cognitive abilities of the intellectually disabled are divided into mild, moderate, severe and profound categories. An IQ test is used to measure certain intellectual abilities in comparison to others in the same age group.

An intelligent quotient, or IQ, is a score derived from one of several different standardised tests designed to assess human intelligence, because “There is in intelligence, it seems to us, a fundamental agency the lack or alteration of which has the greatest importance for practical life; that is judgment, otherwise known as good sense, practical sense, initiative, or the faculty of adapting oneself....Compared to
judgment the rest of the psychology of the intellect seems of little importance” (Binet, 1910). The objective of this case study is to explore the possibility of designing a curriculum for learners with special needs, which focuses specifically on empowering these learners so that they will be able to enter the world of work effectively and efficiently.

Special needs children contribute to approximately 474 000 of the South African population (South African Census, 2001), and it is therefore of vital importance to cater for the needs of all learners in South Africa. There is thus a significant need for the implementation of an appropriate special needs curriculum in all schools. A programme for special needs should cater for the different classifications relating to the different needs required by the different abilities of the learners. The programme should be based on continuous development and aimed at allowing each individual in the special needs setting to reach his/her full potential.

Currently, special needs learners are placed into mainstream schools, full service schools or special resource schools, depending on the ability and intellect of the individual learner, as stated in the White Paper 6 of 2001. More detailed information in this regard can be found in chapter 2 of this study. At the end of the academic year, these learners are assessed and graded, which often keeps them behind or leads to them being assessed unfairly given their circumstances. The individuals who cope and also pass through the educational system are able to continue with a ‘normal’ life, whereas the majority of them are left to struggle without further help. It sometimes happens that the severely disabled, mostly intellectually disabled individuals, struggle through the education system without any hope for a future.

Later in their lives, these individuals either remain at home without any employment, or are placed in special care facilities or places of safety, which often results in them becoming a financial and emotional burden to their families. Such people wander around the community and are often taken advantage of in a physically or sexually abusive manner. An example that highlights this is the brutal gang rape of a 17- year old mentally impaired girl, which was reported in almost all media on 19 April 2012. This took place in Soweto in the Gauteng Province of South Africa and also made news headlines that devastated the country.
Generally speaking, education is used to prepare learners, through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, to be able to lead successful lives in their adulthood. The government assists with providing schools and bursaries as a means of completing compulsory education. Intellectually disabled learners do not reach the required minimum in order to be able to gain assistance from the government, as they do not have a relevant curriculum in place and are therefore ‘robbed’ of a future and the ability to become independent. In South Africa, every learner has a right to free education, with compulsory education from 7 to 15 years of age, as stated in section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution.

Intellectually disabled learners do not cope with the current continuous assessment policy statement (CAPS) because it is not tailored to their special circumstances, due to their progressive requirements, which demand that they be promoted from one level to the next. This has forced the schools with learners with special needs to alter, modify or adapt the curriculum statement to suit the needs of the learners. Otherwise, if implemented as it is, learners will have to stay in the same classroom for 4-5 years and pass their time there, with no suitable education to develop them to their full potential.

Thus, teaching and learning is restricted to that of a day-to-day work, with no continuation or development. The South African education system, with regard to special education, has programmes for learners with special needs, to the extent that these individuals can develop their self-esteem and thus appreciate their rights to have a sense of security and belonging in a school situation. This programme-to-work linkage programme, as well as the SANASE document, will be explained in more detail in chapter 2 of this study.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study focuses on the issue of an appropriate curriculum for the learners with special needs, who are now, like all other learners, placed in the mainstream education system.

1.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question in this study is the following:
1.3.2 Sub-questions

Based on the main research questions, the following sub-questions can be asked:

- Does the (CAPS) document effectively develop learners who are intellectually disabled?
- How can the schools catering for special needs learners be managed and developed to ensure effective education?
- Can intellectually disabled learners in South Africa be adequately prepared in special needs schools for their adulthood?

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to explore the possibility of designing a curriculum that caters or is suitable for addressing the needs of learners with special needs, especially those who are intellectually disabled or challenged.

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Main aim

To evaluate the current national continuous assessment policy statement (CAPS) and determine if it can adequately accommodate the special needs of intellectually disabled learners.

1.5.2 Objectives

- To find out how teachers assist and guide learners with special needs, in order to facilitate their learning.
- To determine if intellectually disabled learners in South Africa can enter the community and world of work after the completion of school.
1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research strategy

The research will be conducted using a case study qualitative research approach. The case study is applicable, as this study is focused on a clearly defined group, namely learners with special educational needs in a structured school environment.

1.6.2 Case study

Gillham (2000) defines a case study in terms of the following characteristics: (brackets related to this study)

- a unit of human activity embedded in the real world (special educational need learners);
- which can only be studied in context (learners with special educational needs in schools); and
- which exists in the here and now (research completed in present).

"Through case studies, researchers hope to gain in-depth understanding of situations and making for those involved" (Hancock & Agozzine, 2006:26). In this study, the participants are employed at the special needs school in Pretoria, Gauteng. The current curriculum will be investigated in this study.

The specific school that was selected is the same school at which the researcher is employed, and she felt that a more suitable curriculum would benefit the learners who are in a special needs school, in comparison to the present curriculum at the school.

1.6.3 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is concerned with "understanding a phenomenon from the participant's perspective" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:315). This qualitative study aims to examine the perspective of the various participants regarding the CAPS curriculum, which is currently being implemented in special needs schools.
1.7 Data Collection Methods

"Data collection is one through social interaction with participants, field studies, participants", (Maree; 2012:78). The researcher collected the data by distributing questionnaires to the participants in the selected special needs school, which will be reported on in chapter 4 of this study.

The researcher obtained a research permit from the principal. After the authorisation had been granted, the researcher took leadership of the site to map the field for conducting the study, as well as to determine her role.

The data was collected on the agreed dates. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the principal, HOD, occupational therapist, two teachers, and the administrative staff member.

1.7.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study sought to determine if:

- the school follows a departmental curriculum
- the curriculum equips learners who are intellectually disabled with appropriate skills
- there is a substantial future for special needs learners after the completion of school
- the curriculum prepares the learners for the world of work
- the participants have any suggestions on how to improve the curriculum of special need learners, so that they will be able to contribute to the community after the completion of school.

1.8 SAMPLING

"Sampling is used to select a portion of the population for the study" (Maree, 2012:79). Maree further explained that stratified purposive sampling means selecting participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. This study targets a school in Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa. The target population will be a principal, an HOD, an occupational therapist, two teachers, and an administrative staff member. The reason that this school was chosen to be investigated by the researcher is because it is a government school, where the
teacher feels that the curriculum should be improved in order to benefit special needs learners who are severely intellectually disabled (SID).

1.9 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The researcher will use a single research instrument in this study, namely questionnaires.

The questionnaire was distributed to the principal, HOD, occupational therapist, two teachers, and the administrative staff member. The questionnaire has simple questions which will direct the participants to be specific in the information relating to whether the learners are taught using a suitable curriculum, considering the needs of the learners at the school.

1.10 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher ensured that a high degree of accuracy in the analysis of data in this study was achieved, and all the responses from the principal, HOD, occupational therapist, two teachers and administrative staff member were considered.

Inductive analysis is the process through which qualitative researchers synthesize and draw meaning from the data. “Inductive data analysis is more likely to help researchers identify the multiple realities potentially present in the data.” (Maree, 2012:37). The narrative structure will be explained in an inductive analysis according to the purpose of developing a curriculum for special needs education. The report depends on the design and the audience. The researcher’s role will be described. The narrative will be framed and the participants’ language presented by using a political orientation.

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The fact that the current curriculum of special needs schools are not developing learners who are intellectually disabled to reach their full potential, the researcher chose to research this topic, in order to benefit the learners with special educational needs.

This study could assist the South African Department of Education to evaluate the (CAPS) document, in order to adequately accommodate the needs of learners. In
other words, the study will assist special needs schools in suggesting ways of providing appropriate education to the learners who are intellectually disabled. In this way, the learners who are intellectually disabled will have the opportunity of remaining in the education system until their potential is fully developed. Hopefully, intellectually disabled learners will be assisted to be able to lead as ‘normal’ a life as they can.

1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to participants in school X and cannot be generalised to other schools due to the nature of the learners in the selected school.

1.13 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted in a special needs school in a small suburb in Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa. It included the principal, HOD, occupational therapist, two teachers, and an administrative staff member. The focus of this study was on an intellectually disabled environment, with the aim of empowering special needs learners.

1.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Due diligence was taken with regard to ethical considerations embedded in the responsibilities of the researcher. An application was made to the Ethics Committee of the College of Education at UNISA (Appendix A) before any field work commenced. Following the ethical clearance, permission was granted by the principal of the school for the research to be conducted.

A permission form was completed by the principal, and the researcher explained the process and procedures that would be followed in collecting data (Appendix B). Each participant signed a consent form before participating in the study (Appendix C). The consent letters and permissions letters contained the following information: the title of the thesis; information regarding who would participate in the study; how each member would be involved in the research through completing a questionnaire; assurance of anonymity and confidentiality; and an emphasis on the fact that participation was voluntary and that withdrawal without reprisal would be accepted.

1.15 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS
Curriculum: This is a plan for action or a writing document that includes strategies for achieving the desired goals or ends (Ornsten, 2004:10). In this study, the words curriculum and programme will be used interchangeably, as the recent term for developing curriculums now uses the word ‘programme’ instead of the word ‘curriculum’.

Special educational needs/ barriers to learning: This refers to difficulties that arise with the educational system as a whole, the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself, which prevent both the system and the learners’ needs from being met. When based on the objective evaluation made by an educational authority, it is found that teaching and learning are hampered where such needs are not met, and educationally sound measures must be applied. (Terminology, tutorial letter MEDSN1A/102/2011).

Severely intellectually disabled (SID) learners: “Mental retardation refers to substantial limitation in present functioning. It is characterised by significantly sub-average intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the applicable adaptable skills areas: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure and work. Mental retardation manifests before the age of 18”. (Kruger, 2009:381).

The term “mental retardation” is now outdated and is often referred to as mentally/intellectually/cognitively disabled. The most recent term is severely intellectually disabled (SID). In this study, the researcher used most of these terms interchangeably.

1.16 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter one: This chapter serves to establish a background and context to the study, in order to introduce the research problem and highlight the significance of the study. The purpose of the study emerges from the identified problem, and the aims and objectives are created to ensure that the purpose is achieved. The researcher highlights the research questions that have to be answered in order to achieve the purpose of the study. An outline of the research design and methods used in the study is also provided. This design and methodology are aimed at obtaining a better
understanding of learners with special educational needs with regard to current formal education in special needs schools. Definitions of the key concepts are included in this chapter, in order to ensure that the reader understands the terms within the context of the study. The participants and techniques chosen for this study are outlined, so as to ensure that the data obtained is provided by reliable and valid sources. The ethical considerations adhered to in this study are also explained, with the aim of ensuring that research ethics are applied throughout the research process. The limitations and scope of the study are also discussed in this chapter, in order to frame the context of the study.

The literature review is presented in chapter two, in which the researcher begins by discussing the identification and characteristics of the special needs learner. This is followed by an examination of the South African documentation contributing to this chapter, which is followed by the curriculum theory of Paolo Freire. The programme-to-work linkage programme, the SANASE document and some skilled education topics/themes are also discussed in this chapter. In this regard, the researcher finds alternative programmes that are part of the educational process and which could benefit learners in special needs schools. This chapter also includes a time frame that South Africa has established according to the White paper 6, which is used to implement inclusive education. The negative aspects that should be considered, as well as other special education policies and acts, are mentioned at the end of this chapter.

**Chapter three** focuses on the research design and methodology used in the study. It explains the procedure followed in the study, whereby the participants answered a questionnaire regarding the current curriculum that is implemented at special needs schools.

The fieldwork and data that were collected in the study are discussed in **chapter four**. In this study, the questionnaire was distributed to the participants in various positions, such as the principal, HOD, occupational therapist, two teachers and one administrative staff member, who are all employed in special needs schools that are currently using the CAPS document.
The analysis of the research is presented in chapter five, as well as a summary of the questionnaire’s findings, in which the most important aspects of learners with intellectual disabilities are highlighted in relation to their future after the completion of school. A conclusion and recommendations are also provided in this chapter. These recommendations are aimed at improving the quality of education of learners who are intellectually disabled, so that these learners will be able to participate in the world of work after the completion of their schooling.

1.17 SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the study to the audience, which focuses on a curriculum perspective for special needs learners. It investigates a special needs school, hence using a case study design to determine if a more suitable curriculum could be implemented in the school to benefit special needs learners after their schooling is completed. As the research progresses, the research questions will be answered and the objectives achieved. The process allows for a conclusion to be drawn and recommendations to be made. The recommendations are based on the data that has been collected and the findings that emerge from this data. This study could be used to assist the Department of Education with regard to inclusive education.
2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on special needs education for intellectually disabled learners. "Special education, in its early years, moved away from teaching subjects and toward and teaching skills" (Kugelmass, 1995:245). Education for special needs learners is a vital part of the development of a learner with special needs, because education provides learners with knowledge, skills and values to develop into independent adults. In other words, special needs education needs to equip learners with knowledge, values and attitudes, in order for them to continue leading a successful life in their adulthood. Thus, special needs education should also allow learners to experience the school environment, and to socialise and interact with their peers. This allows special needs learners to feel a sense of belonging, and shows an understanding by educators that learners with special needs are differently abled and require a specialised programme to meet their educational needs.

The realisation that a child who is intellectually disabled will not benefit from the current curriculum taught at mainstream schools or institutions is therefore of utmost importance, in order to design a special needs programme that caters for learners with intellectual disabilities, which could help develop them to their full potential and ultimately enable them to become successful adults. The problem is that each learner is so unique, and in life we come across various levels of disabilities, which means that developing a special needs programme to address the individual needs of different learners is a challenging task. "To achieve an appropriate, inclusive education, a balance must therefore be developed among the children, the content, and the process of instruction" (Kugelmass, 1995:246).
2.2 IDENTIFICATION OF THE INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNER

There are two factors that could lead to the identification of a special needs learner, namely extrinsic and intrinsic factors.

2.2.1 Extrinsic factors refer to exterior factors such as poverty, linguistic deprivation, low literacy level of parents, unsuccessful child-rearing practices, lack of motivation, lack of schooling, poor nutrition, environmental toxins, poor medical care, and harmful negative attitudes (Kruger & Nel, 2005:382). The negative external environment of learners, such as poverty and poor nutrition, influences their background and results in the learners being unable to reach their cognitive milestones, in order to ensure successful cognitive development. This hampers the learner's progress towards that of his or her chronological age, thus causing cognitive delays caused by their external situation. When these learners enter school, they are unable to cope with the academic work and are not physically or emotionally equipped to handle their schooling environment, which leads to them being classified as special needs learners.

Sometimes, the external situation of the learners is so neglected that learners are not sent to school. This also influences learners negatively, to such an extent that when learners are eventually placed in a school, due to their chronological age they are unable to cope with the grade in which they are placed, resulting in setbacks, and they are then categorised as special needs learners. This brings to mind a little boy in the researcher's class, who is exposed to drugs, alcohol and lack of food at home. He is ten years of age, but looks like a six year old and is very skinny. He struggles to pay attention and finds it difficult to grasp concepts when taught on an abstract level using a board. He does, however, love singing and dancing.

2.2.2 Intrinsic factors are biological and psychological factors, such as physical, cognitive, moral, affective and social factors, as well as self-concept and self-independence (Kruger & Nel, 2005:382). Internal factors focus on the individual self.
In this study, the main focus will be on learners’ cognitive aspects, such as the inability to comprehend, understand, memorise and categorise. Learners do not progress on an intellectual level according to their chronological age, and thus fall behind and are ultimately classified as learners with special needs.

These learners make up the majority of our school, ranging from mild to profoundly intellectually disabled learners. All of them have a lack of understanding or ability to follow instructions, and about 90% of these learners are unable to read with comprehension.

2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS WITH REGARD TO INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

For a learner to be classified as a special needs learner under the intellectual disability category, the learner would have to show certain characteristics, such as the following:

Mental or cognitive impairments:
- Learners who have cognitive impairments will go through typical developmental stages, but at a much slower rate;
- short attention span;
- easily distracted;
- difficulty with transition;
- prefers to play with younger children;
- afraid of trying new things;
- difficulty in problem-solving;
- does not remember things well;
- may not be able to transfer learning to a new situation; and
- finds it difficult to comprehend and remember, etc. (Oesterreich, 1995).

The researcher agrees with these characteristics of an intellectually disabled learner. At a special needs school that caters specifically for learners with intellectual
impairments, such as the school selected for this study, almost all the learners have these characteristics to some extent. This confirms that these learners are cognitively impaired, along with reports from occupational therapists and other medical documentation, which attest to the fact that this learner is intellectually disabled.

2.4 SOUTH AFRICAN LEGAL DOCUMENTATION WITH RESPECT TO SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), chapter 2, section 28 (f) (ii), “Every child has the right not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development.” In Section 4 of the White Paper 6 (1998), an emphasis is placed on the development of:

1) “A society for all”: this implies that disability issues must be integrated into all government initiatives. These initiatives must be equitable, sustainable, accessible, people-centred and developmental, and must also promote independence within mainstream society.
2) “Building an inclusive education and training system to address the needs of all children, youth and adults, with specific focus on those who are vulnerable to exclusion”. It holds that educational institutions should strive to accommodate all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other disabilities.

The implementation of the White Paper refers to the transformation of schools to meet special needs, thereby becoming effective resource centres. Could these resource centres not become training centres to prepare learners in special needs schools to become productive citizens in the country? (White Paper 6 (1998), Section 4).

It is stated in the South African Constitution that an individual should be included in a workplace, regardless of his or her type of disability. Therefore, every South African citizen should ensure that employment is accessible to people who are intellectually
disabled, provided that they are equipped with the correct skills to be able to perform the job successfully.

The White Paper 6 provides for the points mentioned above, stating that South Africa is a society for all, and that South Africa should build an inclusive education and training system to address the needs of all South Africans, regardless of their disability. This should provide a basis for South African special needs schools to establish training centres for learners with intellectual disabilities, thereby ensuring that learners who are intellectually disabled reach their full potential and are able to be employed after the completion of their schooling.

In order to transform a school, one first needs to find a curriculum that is best suited to the needs of the learners. In this study, two programmes that are based on skills rather than academic knowledge will be examined, due to the nature of learners’ abilities. Curriculum developers will need to take into consideration the fact that each child is different and unique, with different abilities and interests. Programmes and lesson plans will need to be adjusted to show the progression of learners in terms of developing their skills, in order to become sufficiently competent to access the workplace. "Children are provided with opportunities to approach the curriculum through their strengths while being supported by the classroom community for stretching their skills and developing new ways of approaching tasks" (Kugelmass, 1995: 547).

The training of learners with intellectual disabilities needs to involve the community, parents, teachers and other stakeholders, in order to provide complete and effective training for learners who are intellectually challenged. "Children's lives and experience in the world outside the classroom, including their communities and families, are actively and consciously integrated into academic work, as are the aesthetic considerations" (Kugelmass, 1995: 547).

2.5 CURRICULUM THEORIES
In this section, the researcher will discuss the theory and curriculum perspectives of Paolo Freire, with the aim of finding the most suitable links to guide the programme-to-work linkage and the SANASE programme.

The most important thing which research can tell us about this kind of knowledge is that what concerns people, and therefore what they can talk most fluently and informatively about, tends to depend heavily on the position which they occupy. The wisdom of curriculum developers, advisers, inspectors and teacher educators tends to be concentrated upon understandings of ‘good practice’. In contrast, the wisdom of practising teachers tends to be focused on issues of practicality, including organisational and resource constraints, and the problems of time and expertise necessary to cope with the demands upon them, especially with regard to suggested innovations. Practising teachers also very clearly depend upon and have large amounts of knowledge available about their specific contexts, including resources, organisational procedures, syllabuses and examination requirements, and especially the individual pupils whom they teach (McIntyre, 1991:121).

Therefore, in planning a teacher education curriculum, there are several kinds of knowledge about teaching which can be made available to beginning teachers, each of which has been developed with an emphasis on some criteria and concerns, and with a neglect of other important criteria and concerns. In order to decide what use to make of these different kinds of knowledge, it is wise to first examine the evidence regarding the knowledge which beginning teachers bring with them and the ways in which they develop that knowledge (McIntyre, 1991:121).

2.5.1 PAOLO FREIRE’S THEORY

This study focused on the critical perspective of Paolo Freire, as this perspective enabled the researcher to use the programme-to-work linkage and the SANASE programme for learners with special needs, especially those with intellectual impairments. This theory will therefore be studied in detail below.
2.5.2 CURRICULUM THEORY OF PAOLO FREIRE

A curriculum is based on a theory, which allows the curriculum to create methods, lessons, assessments etc. using a specific perspective or approach, in order to equip learners with the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills to enable them to reach their potential by the end of their schooling.

In this study, the researcher focused on Freire’s critical perspective appropriate for the “why care” or knowledge participation. The critical approach considers education to be a political act, one that should function in emancipatory ways (Pinar, 1978). The pioneer of this approach was Paolo Freire (1985:10), a Brazilian adult literacy educator who worked with labourers, peasants and fishermen, and who was greatly influenced by his experiences with these economically marginalised social classes.

The current South African national curriculum (CAPS) requires learners to acquire knowledge and achieve progress at a standard pace (reference in chapter 1), and learners who are intellectually disabled cannot maintain this, which means that they are oppressed with regard to education. Freire’s theory addresses the oppressed, which, firstly, agrees with the Constitution, with reference to section 29 (1) (a) of chapter 1. Secondly, this theory caters for the oppressed and finds ways to train learners who are intellectually disabled, by enabling them to develop differently from learners who are placed in a mainstream school environment.

Learners actively create knowledge as they participate in learning, by taking a “critical look” at who has power and what impact that power has on the lives of those without it, and by recognising the causal and circumstantial relationships that lead to social injustice, as well as focusing on the current curriculum serving learners with special needs (Tutorial letter MEDCR2V 102/1012:14). “Imagine...if from the time you were born you were told that you would never be able to ...where they would finally value your hidden talents and abilities because they had given you a chance to work” (Chesapeake Service Systems, css-online.org).

Gaining power with words translates into gaining personal power and making changes in the world, and it is believed that a curriculum design is never final - it is a
dynamic social construct made by people, for people, with a view to transforming the world in which they live. This provides us with the awareness of the fact that the programmes that are being studied with regard to special needs may be full of errors, but gives us room to continually change the content to that which best suits the specific needs of the learners.

Freire’s transformation model is based on the principles of the politics of education. Politics uses communicative action to bring people out of isolation and into the mainstream of the community. Freire believed that a design is a living organism, and he is known for the idea that it takes a whole village to educate a child. Teachers cannot, on their own, create miracles - parents, community leaders, business leaders, church leaders and experts from provincial and national government need to become involved. This sentiment was echoed by the late former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, when he promoted the notion of “each one teaches one” (Tutorial letter MEDCR2V 102/1012:15).

Special needs learners can be removed from isolation and become part of the community by teachers preparing learners with intellectual disabilities in a different manner in special needs schools, and by offering training to equip these learners with the skills, in order to allow them to reach their full potential, irrespective of their impairments.

Freire suggested four steps for planning a curriculum. These steps aim to help develop, in learners, a “critical consciousness”:

• engaging with a set of “generative themes”
• from which sub-themes are derived and used in “culture circles” (which will lead to praxis)
• reflection on theories and actions to
• transform reality.

Freire adopted the term "conscientisation" to describe the sociocultural learning process whereby people come to understand that their view of the world and their place in it (their consciousness) is constructed and shaped by social and historical
forces which work against their own interests. Conscientisation leads to a critical awareness of the self as a subject who can reflect and act upon the world in order to transform it. To them, the world is something which is fixed and to which they must adapt. Freire believed that the purpose of education is to question a situation or information, rather than accept it. According to Freire, education offers opportunities to change ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, and is action-oriented. In other words, education involves social and political action in order to move people to transform themselves in the world that they inhabit. Freire maintained that learning, the exploration of new ideas, skills and knowledge, does not take place in a vacuum, but in the context of learners' past and present experience, an experience that is shaped by class, race and other social categories. According to Freire, a curriculum can either liberate or domesticate some groups in society (Tutorial letter MEDCR2V 102/1012:15).

Intellectually disabled learners do not function according to their chronological age with respect to academic education, but it could be possible for these learners to develop in a sport or skill, given the correct education and opportunity to enhance their talents. Thus, the focus should be on the strong aspects of learners and on helping them to feel part of the world in which they live. “Children with severe intellectual disability, physical disability, autism, and blindness develop object permanence in a similar sequence though at a slower rate than children without disabilities (although there is some evidence that the sequence may be somewhat different in older children with severe intellectual disability)” (International Journal of Disability, 2009: 242).

Freire proposed that the curriculum must be planned and implemented through a dialogue in which teachers and students are co-investigators. The end product of Freire’s critical perspective is not a learning outcome, but rather a critical reflection and action upon reality. Freire identified two types of education (which lead to two types of learning):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Banking education</th>
<th>Problem-posing education</th>
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20
In banking education, learners are expected to remember and repeat what they are taught by an all-knowing teacher. Learners accept their situation and do not question the status quo. Banking education resists dialogue.

With regard to the current formal academic education in mainstream schools, special needs learners are unable to develop efficiently due to their cognitive ability, which means that educators in special needs schools are required to analyse the CAPS document and lower the standard. This hampers their development and results in the complete curriculum not being achieved. This limits the learners’ ability to successfully meet the grade twelve matric requirements and results in them being placed in adult protective workshops, becoming unemployed, and not being equipped with the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills that are essential to life after the completion of school. Students are oppressed and live in a "culture of silence". According to Freire (1970), banking education is the most common form of education throughout the world.

Problem-posing education, on the other hand, liberates learners. Learners are encouraged to question situations and learn from their questioning. They are encouraged to question the validity of their situation and to challenge the status quo. Freire believed that true education or learning is problem-posing education. Through dialogue, generative themes or concerns are highlighted by the learners themselves and negotiated in a culture circle with local community leaders. These societal issues, how they have developed and what can be done to improve them become
the content, process and result of adult learning (Tutorial letter MEDCR2V 102/1012:16).

Problem-posing education is about giving learners the space, tools and support needed to develop their ideas and themselves against the background of their social, economic and political situation. Freire described problem-posing education as a way to develop critical consciousness. He saw this in political terms: only through problem-posing education can learners be empowered to recognise their positions, act in their own interests, and change their own situation and that of others (Tutorial letter MEDCR2V 102/1012:16).

Using Freire’s critical perspective, which aims at educators becoming networkers, the researcher will take a skill (e.g. sport) and address aspects related to how to assist learners in the job search process. The focus is therefore on their abilities, interests and talents, in order to determine which occupation will best suit the intellectually disabled individual.

2.6 PROGRAMMES THAT COULD IMPROVE THE CURRICULUM OF SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

The two programmes that cater for learners with severe intellectual disabilities are discussed in this section, the first being the programme-to-work linkage and the second the SANASE programme.

2.6.1 PROGRAMME-TO-WORK LINKAGE

The Programme-to-Work Linkage is a lesson plan that is individually based for each special needs learner. It was designed by the Department of Education, as prescribed by the National Curriculum Statement (2002). Its aim is to help each learner to reach his or her full potential, despite the unique challenges that he or she faces. It also emphasises the fact that children are individuals who develop at different rates. Each child is unique, and grows and develops skills and competencies at his/her own pace. Children with developmental delays or disabilities may require adults to adapt learning opportunities, so that all children can successfully demonstrate achievements (New Hampshire Early Learning Curriculum

2.6.1.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRICULUM (PROGRAMME-TO-WORK LINKAGES)
As stated in the White Paper 6 (par 2.2.6.3), inadequate Programme-to-Work Linkages to meet the needs of learners must by no means compromise the standard of the curriculum, as prescribed by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grade R-9 (2002). Special needs schools and full service schools need to take their learner profile into consideration when designing learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans. The level and type of resources and activities must be true to the profile of the majority of the learners in those schools, and learners who are intellectually disabled will require a curriculum which has implications for planning learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans.

"It is an approach to teaching that involves students in the development of the curriculum and allows for their strengths and talents to be included in academic instruction, while providing experiences that will develop new and emerging skills" (Kugelmass, 1995: 547). Learning, teaching and assessment strategies must be differentiated or adapted to meet the individual needs of all the learners. Straddling is when a learner or group of learners at a specific grade or level work towards attaining assessment standards from one or more grade within learning areas or learning programmes. Learning programmes for learners with intellectual disabilities will be designed to fit the individual needs of the learner, and straddling between grades and phases may occur. The learning programmes for learners must therefore accommodate diverse needs, strengths and interests when drawing up the learning outcomes and assessment standards for the learner on an individual basis (Department of Education, 2005).

2.6.1.2 FACTORS THAT DETERMINE PROGRAMME-TO-WORK LINKAGES
The weighting of the individual learning programmes is aimed at giving learners the best opportunity to show their competence in achieving the learning outcomes. These individual learning programmes provide groups of learners who need
intervention of a temporary nature with the opportunity to engage with certain aspects of the curriculum. The duration and complexity of the individual learning programme should depend on the level of support required and the number of years that the learner will remain in the educational system (Department of Education, 2005).

2.6.1.3 INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMME-TO-WORK LINKAGES AS PART OF THE CURRICULUM

The variety of the learning content that is presented to learners must ensure that all the learning content and assessment are effectively and comprehensively pursued. The learning content and assessment achieved within a range of learning programmes must be recorded against appropriate learning content, according to the grades that were achieved. This will highlight the content in which the individual learner excels. The abilities, interests and strengths of the learner can be determined through the practice of the learner.

The educator will record the development of the learner in relation to the specific content and then link it to a skill (e.g. playing with nails and nail-manicures). This skill must then be practiced and formal training should take place at school level, in order to educate the learner to become a nail technician, depending on the ability of the learner. (Department of Education, 2005). "Enriched learning environments that consider the cultures of the communities in students will function, and that have the flexibility to adapt the curriculum and the learning environment to the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, need to be developed" (Kugelmass, 1995: 553).

The school is required to place the learner in a nail parlour, where practical lessons can be conducted and the learner can familiarise him/herself with the environment. In such an environment, communication skills and ethical behaviour can be monitored and appropriate education and skills can be transmitted. Once the learner has reached the end of his or her formal schooling, the learner will then be able to obtain secure and familiar employment, in order to become independent and earn an
income. "When applied in classrooms that include students with learning disabilities, the core practices assist teachers in providing educational experiences that address subject area givens, while at the same time teaching academic, social, and functional skills in the contexts in which they need to be applied "(Kugelmass,1995:547).

2.6.1.4 REASONS FOR PROGRAMME-TO-WORK LINKAGES
This flexible learner-based and learner-paced approach to the curriculum for all learners will enable each learner to achieve his or her full potential, irrespective of whether or not the end result will be academic education (Department of Education, 2005). "The curriculum becomes learner centred, with students making decisions about how they will structure their learning, thereby enabling the inclusion of all learning styles, abilities, interests, intelligences, and cultures"(Kugelmass,1995:547). The learners will be able to develop in a specific learning content and master the required skills at school level. This will enable the learner to enter adulthood with sufficient education, in order to obtain and maintain successful employment. "All students will have been acknowledged for their talents and provided with opportunities to demonstrate and develop new skills in an integrated, authentic, and functional manner" (Kugelmass, 1995: 552).

The availability and appropriateness of learning and teaching support and support material will have a major impact on learning, teaching and assessment. "The belief that the content of the curriculum should be fixed and uniform-that there is a best way for children to learn and that all children need to be learning the same thing at the same time in the same way - has been central to the assumptions that historically have guided public education, thereby requiring the segregation of children who could not follow the set curriculum because of differences in the ways in which they processed and understood information" (Kugelmass, 1995:545).

2.6.1.5 ROLES OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS
Parents have an important role to play in the development of their child’s individual programme, because they have unique knowledge of their child's strengths and needs. Parents have the right to be involved in meetings that discuss the identification, evaluation, development and educational placement of their children. They also have the right to ask questions, dispute points, and request modifications to the plan. In order to fully participate in developing their child's programme, parents must be knowledgeable about their child's specific disabilities, their rights, and the policies and procedures of the local education agency.

The school must make a significant effort to ensure that one or both of the parents are present at each meeting. If parents are unable to attend, the school must be able to show that due diligence was taken to enable the parents to attend, including notifying the parents early enough so that they have the opportunity to attend, scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place, and offering alternative means of participation, such as telephonically.

The school must also take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the parent understands the proceedings of the meetings, including arranging for an interpreter for parents who are deaf or whose home language is not the same as the teaching and learning medium of the school (Individualized Educational Programme, 2012).

This programme- to- work linkage promotes democracy, with all citizens invited to shape the community into a better place for themselves and others. A curriculum, according to Freire, should therefore be planned collaboratively by and for its actors (teachers and learners) and role-players (parents, etc.) The latter should also be actively engaged in implementing the curriculum, that is, in teaching and learning (e.g. work-integrated and community service learning), as well as in evaluating the quality and impact of education in uplifting the community that a school serves (Tutorial letter MEDCR2V 102/1012:16).

Freire was a critical figure in this field, and adopted an action research approach, which can be summarised as "learning to do it by doing it". Freire argued that we have the "freedom" to change social relations if we make a conscious decision to do
so. Freire’s theories and the curricula that spring from them promote critical thinking, dialogue, and decision-making activities, which support democratic ideals and move towards socially critical consciousness (Tutorial letter MEDCR2V/102/0/2012:16).

Learners need to be developed differently, in order to ensure that schools catering for special needs learners can be managed and developed for effective education. The curriculum needs to become systematic and developed in order to progressively enhance the skills of the learners. Learners in special needs schools should be taught in a manner that is most suited to their needs.

In the foundation phase, learners need to be exposed to as many skills provided by the school in order to determine their strengths, abilities and interests. The intermediate phase should focus on the specific skills in which the learner is interested. At the senior level, learners could be taken to the place of work, where they are trained by professionals to master their skills.

Lesson plans and teaching content should be based on the CAPS document and then adapted and presented by the teachers on an individual practical level, taking into consideration the individual learner's talents, abilities and interests, as well as his or her cognitive understanding and chronological age. Learners need to be placed onto different systems in the school according to their cognitive abilities, taking their chronological age into consideration.

2.6.2 PROPOSED SANASE EXTENDED CAPS/SKILLS PROGRAMME.

Learners with severe intellectual barriers to learning require an individualised teaching programme, which will depend on each learner's medical barriers; the CAPS subjects, which are language, mathematics and life skills; and the learner’s intellectual and chronological age. The General CAPS document consists of two parts, namely the junior skills programme and the vocational training skills programme (individualised lesson plans).
The suggested teaching programme structure in a school for learners with severe intellectual barriers to learning includes the basic skills programme; a scholastic programme, and a vocational skills programme, depending on the ability, age, strength and talent of the learner (Refer to Appendix J for the index of the SANASE document). The SANASE document caters specifically for learners with intellectual disabilities, and the content focuses on skills and then sifts out the assessments from the CAPS document, which is specifically designed to suit the needs of the learners (Special Schools' Conference, 2012:45).

2.6.2.1 SKILLS AS TOPICS/THEMES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS IN THE SANASE DOCUMENT

2.6.2.1.1 SPORT

The researcher chose the following sports for this study: soccer, cricket and athletics, and linked these skills to some of the aspects in the academic curriculum (CAPS), in order to show the integration of the academic curriculum and the skills/pre-vocational curriculum. The researcher’s intention is to base the special needs curriculum on skills education rather than on academic work, in order to enhance the abilities of the learners who are intellectually disabled. This curriculum, however, will focus on programmes that are skills development-related, but these will then be integrated with other learning areas such as languages, mathematics and life skills. The researcher will take a few skills to be used in this study, and then show how they can be integrated with other learning areas.

Soccer encourages skills such as communication, respect and trust, which are taught as part of the life skills learning area presented in the CAPS document, as well as in this sport. With regard to the CAPS document, cricket focuses on mathematics, counting runs, and concepts such as short ball, which right-hand batsmen are taught. Therefore, this links sport to the mathematical learning area in academic education.
Learners can be exposed to running activities such as running around the field, or running to a tree or wall. Running activities can be incorporated into languages or life skills, such as READY, SET, SPELL! Spelling can be magical. With a bit of order, letters turn into words. Then with some finesse, words turn into sentences, and through sentences you can tell a story, express an emotion, or plead your case (http://www.kidsrunning.com/krschoolgames.html). These activities can be designed according to the teachers’ lesson plan throughout the different grades/levels or learning areas of the educational system.

Sports allow learners to develop progressively according to their chronological age, thus ensuring successful education and that learners develop to their full potential. Learners should be exposed to sport activities often, in order to develop their skills and to allow educators to identify talent in learners at a young age.

2.6.2.1.2 WEAVING/KNITTING
Colours, length and patterning, as indicated in the CAPS document, can be taught through the skill of knitting. Products can be sold, thereby integrating money skills and educating learners to become self-sufficient, as well as exposing learners to the community. This could form part of the entrepreneurial skills in the CAPS curriculum. Learners can be placed in art and craft institutions, where they can be taught skills that will allow those with intellectual disabilities to gradually progress and eventually develop to their full potential, ultimately earning an income from the skills acquired (e.g. tapestry).

2.6.2.1.3 DANCE
This skill can assist in educating learners of any age, and dancing is a skill that is developed gradually and consists of various types and styles. Language skills such as listening and speaking, physical education, and performing arts, which fall within the life skills learning area, can be taught from the CAPS curriculum. Within the skills programmes, there is an integration of the different learning areas, such as languages, mathematics and life skills.
Therefore, this allows the current CAPS curriculum to be interwoven with the skills programmes, applying it practically so that the intellectually challenged learners can understand and practice these skills, thereby giving meaning to and making sense of the content that has been learned.

2.7 TIME-FRAME FOR SOUTH AFRICA TO IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ACCORDING TO THE EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 6 (SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION) GUIDELINES

Immediate to short-term steps (2001 to 2003): South Africa intended to implement a national advocacy and educational programme on inclusive education, planning and implementing a targeted outreach programme, completing the audit for special needs schools and implementing a programme to improve efficiency and quality, as well as designing, planning and implementing the conversion of 30 special needs schools to special school/resource centres in 30 designated school districts.

Medium-term steps (2004 to 2008): These major steps will include transforming further education and training and higher education institutions in order for them to recognise and address the diverse range of learning needs among learners, especially disabled learners, expanding the targeted outreach programme, and extending the number of special needs/resource centres.

Long-term steps (2009 to 2021): Expanding provisions to reach the target of 380 special schools/resource centres, 500 full service schools and colleges, and district support teams, as well as the out-of-school children and youth in South Africa (White paper 6, 2001).

The researcher acknowledges that the South African Department of Education has made efforts and progress with regard to inclusive education at departmental, as well as institutional, level. However, the current special needs schools are still left in the dark in terms of how to educate learners who are intellectually disabled.

2.8 NEGATIVE ASPECTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED
While conducting this study, the researcher found an article about special needs individuals who had obtained employment via a special needs recruiting agency, and they found that (a) assistance with the job search process, (b) on-site job coaching, (c) facilitation of social interactions, and (d) mentoring services were the negative aspects experienced by most of the individuals within the special needs category.

Using Freire’s learning approach theory, as well as the programme-to-work-linkage or the SANASE document, teachers should become networkers within the community and place learners in the environment, in order to enhance their skills and knowledge. In this way, teachers will be providing a community service to the place of work and assisting with the job search process, on-site job coaching, facilitation of social interactions within the field of work, as well as providing mentoring services, before a full-time job can be granted to the learner after the completion of his or her schooling.

Thus, with regard to the negative aspects mentioned above, "The development of integrated and supported employment options during the training and employment services have four foci: (1) social integration in employment environments; (2) demonstrates that employment training can be a cost effective alternative to sheltered employment; (3) the development and refinement of job satisfaction, development, placement, training, and support strategies; and (4) the provision of a database that substantiates the benefits of integrated employment" (Calvin, 1994:10).

2.9 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

The researcher focused, in this study, on the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA), as well as UNESCO’S Salamanca Statement, amongst other international development documentation relating to inclusive education. In this regard, she compared these documents to the South African legal documentation, as well as to the programmes discussed above.
2.9.1 INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITY EDUCATION ACT (2004) (IDEA)

This is a United States federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to children with disabilities.

- Special education and related services should be designed to meet the unique learning needs of children with disabilities from preschool through to the age of 21;
- Students with disabilities should be prepared for further education, employment and independent living; and
- Every child deserves access to a challenging, motivating and rigorous curriculum.

The South African Constitution and White Paper 6 are in line with the principles of the IDEA, as the latter focuses on educating learners with special needs to become successful adults after the completion of school, thereby encouraging them to be part of the community. The IDEA also focuses on educating the special needs learner on an individual basis, taking into consideration the learner’s abilities, strengths and talents, in order to educate the learner to his or her full potential.

Both the programme-to-work linkage and the SANASE document include aspects of IDEA, as both documents focus on designing a curriculum to suit the needs of the intellectually disabled, and concentrate on the future of the learners with regard to employment and independent living. The IDEA focuses on each learner having access to a curriculum that is challenging, motivating and rigorous. The programme-to-work linkage focuses on the individual’s abilities, strengths and talents, and progressing as the learner develops, thereby allowing the learner to have access to a challenging and motivating curriculum.

2.9.2 UNESCO’S SALAMANCA STATEMENT (1994) OF SPAIN

- Inclusive education is a basic human right;
- In designing educational programmes for students with disabilities, the focus must shift from the individual’s impairments to the social context;
• The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth;
• The development by persons with disabilities of their personal talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential; and
• Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.

UNESCO’S Salamanca Statement agrees with the Constitution of South Africa, as it states that inclusive education is a basic human right. Spain agrees with the South African Programme-to-Work Linkage, as it addresses the designing of educational programmes to meet the needs of learners with special needs, in order to develop learners with regard to their personal talents and creativity, thus enabling such learners to participate in a free society.

2.10 SUMMARY
The special needs education curriculum should be looked at differently, treating the learner as a special individual and preparing him/her for a successful future, in order to uphold his or her constitutional rights as a South African child. In this regard, the Constitution states that every child should have a right to compulsory, free and effective education, human dignity, and the right to life (South Africa Constitution, sections 29(1), 10, 11).

2.11 CONCLUSION
The researcher is very emotionally touched by the fact that South Africa has developed a suitable curriculum for learners with intellectual disabilities. According to the Constitution of South Africa, every learner, regardless of his or her disability, has a right to education. South Africa is therefore fulfilling the right of the intellectually disabled learner to education. The Programme-to-Work Linkage and the SANASE document provide an opportunity for educators to develop learners, in order to enable them to achieve success after the completion of school.
“Imagine...if from the time you were born you were told that you would never be able to anything meaningful or productive. Imagine...if because you were different your whole life, you were isolated and segregated away from a normal community life.

Imagine...if from the time you were born you were dependent on others and consequently were void of confidence and self-worth.

Imagine...if someone came along to see your worth as an individual and fight for your right to be integrated into your community, where they would finally value your hidden talents and abilities because they had given you a chance to work” (Chesapeake Service Systems, css-online.org).
CHAPTER 3- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will review the techniques used for sampling and data collection, and will provide a motivation for the selection of approaches used in this study. The researcher presents information in this chapter regarding how she collected her data. "Qualitative research attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied". (Maree, 2012:50). In this study, the researcher chose a qualitative methodology to collect the data. The selected participants consisted of a principal, HOD, occupational therapist, two teachers and an administrative staff member, and the study adopted a case study design. "A case study refers to a systematic inquiry into an event or set of events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest" (Maree, 2012:75).

The researcher chose to conduct this study because teachers are constantly trying to understand educational decisions regarding a curriculum for learners who are intellectually disabled. These decisions have a long-term effect on such learners, as well as the parents of such learners, the educators, and the school staff of the institution that they attend. In terms of the current curriculum (CAPS) that is implemented in special needs schools for learners with intellectual disabilities, the researcher found, through personal experience and observations, that this curriculum does not allow learners to develop to their full potential, and in fact hampers them from progressing to a higher grade and eventually completing school on a level that enables them to find employment, in order for them to become independent in adulthood.

Research is the systematic process of collecting and logically analysing data for a purpose. The researcher chose to conduct this study in order to gain insight into the current situation of special needs education regarding intellectually disabled learners using the (CAPS) curriculum, with the aim of determining whether this educational curriculum caters for the needs of these learners or hampers their participation in an "Inclusive South Africa".
3.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

3.2.1 Data Collection Technique: Questionnaires

According to Denscombe (1998:84), it is acceptable to use different data collection techniques or procedures to collect data about the same phenomenon as more data becomes available. By doing this, the researcher can gain multiple perspectives on the research topic. Creswell (1994:148) maintains that data collection also involves aspects such as setting boundaries for the study, collecting information through interviews, documents and visual material.

The principal, HOD, occupational therapist, two teachers and one administrative staff member were asked to provide answers to the questionnaire that was handed out to each of them individually. The researcher explained the process prior to the distribution of the questionnaire. This questionnaire focused on the current curriculum which is implemented in the special needs school selected for this study.

3.3 VALIDITY OF QUALITATIVE DESIGNS

To ensure the validity of the data that is collected, the researcher will use the questionnaire technique, whereby she will distribute the same questionnaire to different members of staff who hold different positions in and around the school, ranging from the principal to an administrative staff member. "The goal of a sound research design is to provide results that are credible; this is partly achieved by reducing the sources of error and variability that may occur" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:135).

3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

3.4.1 The researcher's role

The researcher chose school X for this study because this school has implemented the current educational national curriculum (CAPS). The researcher maintained professionalism by ensuring that she was unbiased, open-minded and objective. Objectivity refers to situations where a reasonable interpretation can be made. The
language used in this study should be of such a standard that the audience, in this case teachers and curriculum developers, can understand and implement it.

The researcher explained herself throughout the study, making her voice heard, as well as explaining her logic and transforming complex realities into simple explanations. A positive attitude and approach had to be maintained by the researcher throughout the study, and she had to be emotionally strong when frustrations were encountered. Logical reasoning and thinking were essential, and suitable deductions were made at the end of the study.

3.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The natural setting refers to research in which the behaviour that is observed occurs naturally. In this study, the natural setting was a school environment that caters for learners who are intellectually disabled. These are learners who have cognitive difficulties in various forms and thus have a lower IQ level than that of their chronological age. The category of intellectually disabled is broken down into mild, moderate, severe and profound levels. The decision regarding which level a learner is at depends on the individual's ability (Wikipedia, 2011).

In this study, data was collected directly through the use of questionnaires, which were distributed to the principal, HOD, two teachers and one administrative staff member, all of whom completed the questionnaire. The researcher approached this study carefully, by recording every detail and noting every aspect, and no data was regarded as unimportant. The questionnaire asked specific questions that related to the curriculum of special needs learners, particular in terms of how it affects learners after the completion of school.

With regard to the process orientation of the study, the researcher asked the research questions throughout the study. She embarked on this study because she wanted to determine if the CAPS is the best educational curriculum, or if there is an alternative curriculum that is better suited to learners who are intellectually disabled. The researcher collected data to determine if formal education (CAPS), together with the learning programmes, will enhance the development of the learners with
intellectual impairments or hamper them from becoming successful adults and community members after the completion of school.

This study started from the ground, which means that the researcher studied formal education (CAPS) in schools catering for learners with intellectual disabilities. The CAPS curriculum was implemented as primary education and integrated with the learning programmes from the CAPS document. With regard to this study, the learners who are intellectually disabled did not participate formally in the structured data collection. The researcher's main aim was to determine if learners who are intellectually disabled will be more successful if they are taught practical skills instead of knowledge content, which requires a significant amount of intellectual ability to progress to the next grade.

Due to the researcher being a teacher at the school that was investigated, by the end of this study she had a better understanding of the current curriculum offered in special needs schools. Once the researcher had collected the data, she then explained the information to the audience in a way that is easy to understand and interpret. The researcher presented and analysed the data in a language that was easy to understand, thereby enabling the audience to use this study effectively, in order to gain knowledge for further studies.

3.6 SAMPLING STRATEGIES

3.6.1 Site Selection

In this study, School X, based in a suburb of Laudium in Pretoria, in the Gauteng Province of South Africa, was used as the selected site to conduct the research. This school is a special needs school that caters for learners who are intellectually disabled. It is a government school that adheres to the policies and documents of the Department of Education.

This study is a unique case study, which can be categorised as sampling by case type, whereby a curriculum (CAPS) for learners who are intellectually disabled was investigated with regard to its implementation of formal academic education.
3.6.2 Sample Size

The purpose of the study is to explore an alternative way of educating learners who are intellectually disabled, in order to determine whether these learners will benefit and progress by training them and then linking them to a workplace, in order for them to seek employment, thereby enhancing their opportunity to become independent adults.

The focus of the study is on determining if the current (CAPS) curriculum being taught to selected learners who have cognitive difficulties in various forms, and thus have a lower IQ level than that of their chronological age, will benefit them.

The researcher herself has cerebral palsy, which was diagnosed at 11 months. However, she has overcome her challenges by educating herself, and her desire is to assist in overcoming educational challenges faced by learners who are intellectually disabled.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PHASES

With planning being the first phase of research, the researcher gained ethical clearance approval from UNISA, and thus gained permission to conduct her research (see Appendix A). She also asked for permission from the school to complete her research there. In addition, she agreed to adhere to the school’s requests and requirements regarding her investigation (see Appendix B).

The second phase is when the researcher began with the data collection. During this phase, the researcher explained the consent letters to the participants, in order to gain permission from them to collect data for the study (see Appendix C).

The actual data was collected in the third phase, where the researcher distributed questionnaires to the participants, namely the principal, HOD, occupational therapist, teachers and administrative staff member.

Once the researcher had completed the collection of data, she left the field as a researcher. However, due to the researcher’s employment, she remained in the
school environment, thereby having access to additional information needed to complete the study.

The researcher then analysed the data, arranging it in a logical order and in such a way that it was understandable to teachers and others who are involved in determining if the CAPS curriculum is the best one for learners who are intellectually disabled.

3.8 RESEARCH ETHICS IN FIELDWORK

The researcher needed to be ethical and respect the participants who were used in the study. She requested their informed consent, thereby obtaining their permission to participate in the study. The researcher considered the rights of the participants, especially confidentiality and anonymity. Therefore, the principal, HOD, teachers, therapist and administrative staff member were not identified by name. The researcher treated all participants fairly and adopted a caring approach, thus ensuring that there was trust and openness between her and all of the participants throughout this study.

3.9 SUMMARY

The researcher used a case study design in this study, which focused on a curriculum perspective for learners with intellectual disabilities. The researcher chose a qualitative research approach, and distributed a questionnaire to the participants mentioned above.

3.10 CONCLUSION

The researcher's aim in this study was to determine how the school equips learners who are intellectually disabled to continue with their lives after the completion of school. The purpose of going to school is to develop learners in any mainstream school, in order to enable them to become successful adults. The researcher's
personal view is that learners with special needs should be able to develop at special needs schools, so that they are accepted into the community in their adulthood.
CHAPTER 4 – DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The research approach adopted in this study was a qualitative approach, which is a strategy used by the researcher in collecting and analysing data, in order to answer the research questions. The researcher used a case study research design. According to Schumacher (2006), this refers to an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon, and in this study, the current South African national curriculum (CAPS) in special needs schools will be examined.

In this chapter, the researcher first gives a background to the school, and discusses the research methodology used, after which a profile of the respondents is provided. The participants were drawn from the population of the institution (school) selected for the study, which consists of one hundred and forty-nine learners in the school, one principal, nine teachers, two occupational therapists, three administrative staff and three general assistants. The researcher sent out questionnaires to the principal, HOD, two teachers, one occupational therapist, and one administrative staff member.

4.2 BACKGROUND

The CAPS document was implemented at a government school in a suburb of Laudium in Pretoria, in the Gauteng Province of South Africa, which is the school chosen for this study. This school caters for learners who have mainly intellectual disabilities, which includes intellectual, physical, emotional and behavioural disabilities. This school caters for learners from 7 to 19 years of age. The learners’ cognitive abilities range from mild to profound, and this includes learners who are classified as severely intellectually disabled (SID), a term that is commonly used in inclusive education.

The learners in this school have a set time-table, which includes academic work as well as skills such as domestic skills and skills related to arts and crafts, leather work, dancing and sports. Learners with cognitive disabilities develop at a much slower rate and are delayed in their milestones. Therefore, although their chronological age
is eighteen, their functional level is much lower than eighteen, and their development is reached at a later stage. Once the learners graduate at the age of 19, those who are profoundly and severely intellectually disabled are placed in an adult workshop in which they have a life skills programme - this includes basic self-care, leisure time, music and sports. The work skills programme includes contract work, life skills and community survival programmes. The skills development programme includes hairdressing, beading, sports, etc.

The researcher is an employee at the school that was chosen for this study. In her opinion, learners with special needs are at a disadvantage when it comes to using the current curriculum, as it is adapted to suit special needs learners, but at the same time does not give the learners any kind of future after the completion of school.

The school is divided into nine classes, four of which are junior classes and five senior classes. Each class has between fourteen and eighteen learners. The learners are divided according to their cognitive ability and physical size, in order to try and assist the teacher in preparing lessons more effectively. However, due to the various disabilities of each individual learner, accommodating each learner in each lesson is not always possible. Currently, the teachers use an individual lesson plan for the learners, which make assessment more manageable.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The researcher used a qualitative research approach to gather data from the participants, and this approach was used throughout the study. The rationale for using a predominantly qualitative approach was to gain first-hand insight into how the staff of school X feels about the current curriculum that is being implemented at the school.

4.3.2 RESEARCH DESIGNS AND PROCEDURES
The researcher used a questionnaire to gather data from the participants. She obtained permission to conduct the study from the ethics committee, which regulates all research-related activities within the school (see Appendix A). Permission was also sought from the principal; teachers, occupational therapists and administrative staff member (see Appendix B and C).

Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, the researcher once again discussed the consent form with the participants, in order to ensure their understanding of all procedures. The questionnaire was then given to the participants and they were asked to complete the questions as honestly as possible.

4.4 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The data obtained from respondents through the questionnaire was broken down into questions. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the principal, HOD, two teachers, an occupational therapist, and an administrative staff member. The questionnaire consisted of five questions. Four of the questions were open-ended, while the remaining question was a closed question.

The first participant from whom the researcher collected data was the principal (see Appendix D).

Question 1: Does the school follow a departmental curriculum?
Response: Yes.

Question 2: Does the curriculum that the school is using currently equip the learners with special needs with appropriate skills?
Response: Yes. The curriculum is modified to meet the individual needs of learners. Life skills, pre-vocational skills, leather work and arts and crafts.

Question 3: What do you think is the future of the learners once they leave the school environment?
Response: The future looks very bleak. There is no place for them to go and as a result, they cannot enter any workplace in the public sector.

Question 4: In what way is the curriculum that you follow preparing the learners for the world of work?
Response: The CAPS document is being modified, and in 2015 it will include functional language and mathematics, with more emphasis on skills development.

Question 5: What suggestions do you have to improve the curriculum of learners with special needs, so that they will be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?
Response: A separate curriculum should be developed for special needs schools.

The second participant from which the researcher collected data was the HOD (see Appendix E)

Question 1: Does the school follow a departmental curriculum?
Response: CAPS

Question 2: Does the curriculum that the school is using currently equip the learners with special needs with appropriate skills?
Response: CAPS does not necessarily equip learners with appropriate skills. It only equips them with basic life skills such as taking care of their body. Life skills (L.O based). No work-orientated type of skills.

Question 3: What do you think is the future of the learners once they leave the school environment?
Response: Most of our severely intellectually disabled proceed to the workshop. However, the mildly intellectually disabled learners most probably end up on the street if they are not accepted by colleges and technikons.

Question 4: In what way is the curriculum that you follow preparing the learners for the world of work?
Response: No.

Question 5: What suggestions do you have to improve the curriculum of learners with special needs, so that will be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?
Response: Skills-based programme should be implemented, school-to-work programmes, and more training centres for the borderline cases.

The third participant from whom the researcher collected data from was the occupational therapist (See Appendix F)

Question 1: Does the school follow a departmental curriculum?
Response: Adapted CAPS document.

Question 2: Does the curriculum that the school is using currently equip the learners with special needs with appropriate skills?
Response: Basic language, mathematics and life skills.

Question 3: What do you think is the future of the learners once they leave the school environment?
Response: Currently the parents are responsible for providing further training or finding a job for them. Most learners either go to the adult workshop or stay at home.

Question 4: In what way is the curriculum that you follow preparing the learners for the world of work?
Response: Not specifically.

Question 5: What suggestions do you have to improve the curriculum of learners with special needs, so that they will able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?
Response:
- The curriculum should provide more time for specific skills training
- Special needs learners should be trained in a work situation.
- The community should be included and educated regarding working with special need learners.
- Work placement should be part of the curriculum.

The fourth participant that research collected data from was teacher X (see Appendix G).

Question 1: Does the school follow a departmental curriculum or not?
Response: Yes, working at a special needs school and following the CAPS Document (Curriculum), and prepare lessons from CAPS Document.

Question 2: Does the curriculum that the school is using currently equip learners with special needs with appropriate skills?
Response: Yes and No.

Yes-It teaches them some skills (arts and crafts) that can be of benefit to them now, but does not carry the appropriate weight for future reference and development.
Question 3: What do you think is the future of the learners once they leave the school environment?
Response: Most learners are dependent on their families and are not capable of taking care of them independently. Some learners are more capable of doing and reasoning to some extent and standard, and will be able to do some kind of job and not only be dependent on their families, but also have some income of their own.

Question 4: In what way is the curriculum that you follow preparing the learners for the world of work?
Response: In some ways it does prepare them (concerning arts and crafts and teaching or trying to teach the basics of reasoning and basic skills), but overall it does not equip them with the necessary skills to prepare them for the outside world of work when leaving school.

Question 5: What suggestions do you have to improve the curriculum of learners with special needs, so that they will be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?
Response: In my honest opinion, there should be a separate curriculum with a broader spectrum to choose from for special needs schools, with the necessary skills and activities for learners with special needs, in order to develop each learner’s strengths and capabilities, regardless of what type of disability the learner has.

There should be more workshops for learners to attend after school, as well as training by professionals, and not only workshops to keep them busy, but workshops where they are trained, work and establish a career.

There should also be workshops for parents, in order to educate them on how to deal with their child with special needs and how they can help them to acquire certain skills.

The fifth participant from whom the researcher collected data was teacher Y (see Appendix H)

Question 1: Does the school follow a departmental curriculum or not?
Response: CAPS.

Question 2: Does the curriculum that the school is using currently equip the learners with special needs with appropriate skills?
Response: CAPS does not equip most of the learners who are intellectually disabled. The skills provided are not effective for our LSEN learners. The CAPS programme needs to cater for an adapted curriculum for our learners, in order to equip them with skills that will be productive, skills that they will be able to carry forward, even if they leave the school (e.g. hairdressing, recycling, handiwork).

Question 3: What do you think is the future of the learners once they leave the school environment?

Response: Some of the learners will enter workshops. The stronger learners will try to seek jobs as packers and cleaners, while others will be on the streets or just stay at home doing nothing. The future for the learners is very negative.

Question 4: In what way is the curriculum that you follow preparing the learners for the world of work?

Response: No. It provides very little opportunity for the world of work. Many people will not employ our learners because of lack of skills. The programme provides for basic skills, but productive skills are essential.

Question 5: What suggestions do you have to improve the curriculum of learners with special needs, so that will be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?

Response:

- A separate curriculum should be developed for only intellectually disabled learners.
- Teachers should be work shopped and further educated on how to handle learners with special needs effectively.
- Special needs schools should be linked to other companies that can assist in training learners after the completion of school. Special needs schools should be provided with equipment that will cater for the necessary skills, such as handicraft, sewing, hairdressing, cooking, catering, choir room, beadwork, etc.

The sixth participant from whom the researcher collected data was the administrative staff member (See Appendix I)

Question 1: Does the school follow a departmental curriculum or not?

Response: Yes, however we modify it to suit the needs of our learners.
Question 2: Does the curriculum that the school is using currently equip the learners with special needs with appropriate skills?
Response: Yes, the occupational therapists work closely with the teachers and teach skills such as leather work, beading, soap- and candle-making, baking and cooking.

Question 3: What do you think is the future of the learners once they leave the school environment?
Response: That is a very sore point, government does not have any school-to-work programme, the private sector fees are for this programme, which is costly and the parents cannot afford it.

Question 4: In what way is the curriculum that you follow preparing the learners for the world of work?
Response: The occupational therapist continuously changes the programme in order to allow the learners to give of their best. By doing this, learners become confident in the work that they are doing. Challenges are sorted out as soon as possible, so as to help learners to acquire the ability to work accurately.

Question 5: What suggestions do you have to improve the curriculum of learners with special needs, so that they will be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?
Response:
- Learners must spend most of the contact time on life skills
- The life skill lessons should suit the learners' abilities and challenges
- Basics must be done daily. A school-to-work programme must be in place, whereby learners must be able to be placed to be trained, mentored and work, until the recommended companies are willing to employ them.

4.5 SUMMARY
The researcher collected data in a form of a questionnaire, which was distributed to the principal, Head of Department (HOD), an occupational therapist, two teachers and an administrative staff member. The questions from all the participants were information-rich; in order to help the researcher gain an understanding of how the current CAPS curriculum has impacted on the special needs school that was selected for this study.
The researcher found that many of the answers that were provided by the different participants were in agreement with each other, and that these answers agreed with her opinion as well. All of the participants had negative reports about the current CAPS document, and felt that a completely new curriculum should be implemented for learners who are intellectually disabled. Suggestions such as more training for special needs teachers and parents are lacking in the Department of Education, and this training is essential.

4.6 CONCLUSION
The researcher enjoyed putting this chapter together, as she felt that she is contributing to research on a school level that is based on the national curriculum (CAPS document), which has recently been implemented in South Africa. The Department of Education will need to fill the gap with regard to special needs schools that cater for learners who are intellectually disabled. This will be further discussed in chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5- FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the findings of the study, after which she will provide a conclusion and make recommendations based on these findings.

5.1 FINDINGS

With regard to the first question, in which the researcher asked if the special needs school is following a departmental curriculum, all of the participants agreed that the school does follow a departmental curriculum, which is the CAPS Document.

- The occupational therapist and the administrative staff member added that the school adapts the curriculum to suit the needs of the learners with special needs. The emerging theme is that all schools use the mainstream curriculum. It is this type of inclusive curriculum that worried the researcher in terms of its suitability for empowering disabled learners.

The second question that was asked was whether or not the curriculum that the school is using currently equips the learners with special needs with appropriate skills.

- The principal stated that the school uses the CAPS, which is modified to meet the individual needs of the learners. It is life skills-based, with pre-vocational skills such as leather work and arts and crafts.
- The HOD said that the CAPS curriculum does not equip learners with appropriate skills. It only equips the learners with special needs with basic life skills. It is life orientation-based, and does not include work-orientated skills.
- The occupational therapist said that the school teaches basic literacy, mathematics and life skills.
- Teacher X answered Yes and No. She further explained that, yes, the curriculum does teach some skills (arts and crafts) which can be beneficial to the learners now, but does not carry the appropriate weight for future reference and development.
- Teacher Y responded that the school uses the CAPS, which does not equip most of the learners who are intellectually disabled. The skills provided are not
effective for LSEN learners. The CAPS document needs to cater for an adapted curriculum for the learners. They need to acquire skills that will be productive and which can be carried forward, even if they leave the school (e.g. hairdressing, recycling, handiwork).

- The administrative staff member added that the occupational therapist works closely with the teacher to teach art and craft activities such as beading, soap- and candle-making, and domestic skills such as cooking and baking. The emerging theme is that this curriculum does not equip disabled learners with appropriate skills for future careers.

The third question related to the future of the learners with special needs once they leave the school environment.

- The principal mentioned that the future of the learners with special needs looks very bleak. There is no place for them to go and they find it difficult to enter the public sector.
- The HOD commented that most of the severely intellectually disabled learners proceed to the supervised workshop. However, the mildly intellectually disabled learners most probably end up on the street, as they are not accepted by colleges and technikons.
- The occupational therapist said that currently, the parents are responsible for providing further training or placing learners into a job situation. Most of the learners with special needs either go to the adult workshop or stay at home.
- Teacher X answered that most learners are dependent on their families and are not capable of taking care of themselves. Some of the learners who are capable of doing and reasoning to some extent will be able to get a job and not only be dependent on their families, but will have an income of their own.
- Teacher Y responded by stating that some of the learners will enter workshops. The stronger learners will try to seek jobs as packers or cleaners, while others will be on the streets or just stay at home and do nothing. The future for these learners is very negative.
- The administrative staff member said that this a very sore point, and the government does not have any school-to-work programme. The private sector fees are very costly, which means that parents cannot afford them.
The emerging theme is that the school does not currently prepare the learners for any occupation.

The fourth question asked the participants if the curriculum that the school uses prepares the learners for the world of work.

- The principal said that the curriculum has been modified, and the intention for 2015 will be to introduce functional language and mathematics. More emphasis should be placed on skills development.
- The HOD and the occupational therapist commented that the curriculum does not prepare the learners with special needs for the world of work.
- Teacher X answered by stating that some activities do prepare the learners to some extent (arts and crafts, basic skills), but that overall, the curriculum does not equip learners with the necessary skills to prepare them for the outside world of work that awaits them when leaving school.
- Teacher Y added that it provides very little opportunity for the learners at work. Many people will not employ these learners because of lack of skills. The CAPS document provides for basic skills that the learners will be able to use, but productive skills are essential.
- The administrative staff member stated that the occupational therapist continuously changes the programme in order to allow the learners to give their best. The school tries to help the learners become more confident in the activities that they do in school. Challenges that occur are dealt with as soon as possible, in order to help learners work more effectively.

The emerging theme is that the present curriculum has to be modified to suit the needs of disabled learners. This is important because the current curriculum is not relevant to the needs of the disabled learners.

The final question asked for suggestions from the participants to improve the curriculum for special needs learners, so that they will be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school.
• The principal simply stated that a separate curriculum for special needs schools should be developed.

• The HOD commented that a skills-based programme should be implemented, as well as a school-to-work programme and more training for the borderline cases.

• The occupational therapist suggested the following:
  ➢ The curriculum should provide more time for specific skills training
  ➢ Special needs learners should be trained in a work situation.
  ➢ The community should be included and educated regarding working with special need learners.
  ➢ Work placement should be part of the curriculum.

• Teacher X honestly stated that:
  ➢ There should be a separate curriculum for special needs schools with a broader spectrum to choose from. Special needs schools should be able to provide learners with the necessary skills and activities to develop each learner's strengths and abilities, regardless of what disability each learner has.
  ➢ There should be more workshops for learners to attend after school, as well as training by professionals, in order to help special needs learners to develop their full potential and ultimately establish a career.
  ➢ Workshops for parents with special needs children should also be offered, in order to educate the parents on how to deal with these children and how they can assist them in acquiring relevant skills.

• Teacher Y explained that she would improve the curriculum by implementing the following:
  ➢ A separate curriculum should be developed for only intellectually disabled learners.
  ➢ Teachers should be works hopped and further educated on how to handle learners with special needs effectively.
  ➢ Special needs schools should be linked to companies that can assist in training learners after the completion of school.
  ➢ Special needs schools should be provided with equipment that will cater for the necessary skills, such as handicrafts, sewing, hairdressing, cooking, catering, choir practice, beadwork, etc.
• The administrative staff member suggested the following:
  ➢ Learners must spend most of the contact time on life skills
  ➢ The life skill lessons should suit the learners’ abilities and challenges
  ➢ Basics must be done daily
  ➢ A school-to-work programme must be in place, whereby learners will be able to be placed to be trained, mentored and work, until the recommended companies are willing to employ them.

The emerging theme is that of a better suited curriculum, with training and information on how to ensure successful teaching and learning outcomes for teachers who are involved in special needs education, particularly with regard to intellectually disabled learners.

5.2 Conclusion
This study was an amazing academic journey for the researcher. The current situation for learners who are intellectually disabled needs to be attended to as a matter of urgency. Every learner has a right to education, as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), chapter 2, section 28 (f) (ii), which states that “Every child has the right not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development.”

The current CAPS document is not suitable for learners who are intellectually disabled. The curriculum needs to be improved and the Department of Education needs to become aware that the South African education system, with regard to inclusive education, needs to assist special needs schools to become more effective.

We, as educational employees, should regard the learner with special needs as an individual, rather than forcing him or her to learn from a curriculum that will not be beneficial to him or her. We need to determine the talents, abilities and strengths of each learner, and then develop them so that these learners can become active members of the community.
During the course of this study, while determining the current situation of the special needs school that was selected for the research, the researcher realised that we need to voice our needs and demand change with regard to learners with intellectual disabilities, and try to do our best for each learner.

We need to allow our learners into the community as workers, in order to make the community aware of learners who have special needs. This will give the learner with special needs a sense of belonging, a feeling of accomplishment, and a feeling of being accepted into the community, as these learners will be exposed to an open labour market or a closed small business, depending on the nature and abilities of the learner. It is the researcher’s personal opinion that by schools placing special needs learners in the community, people can become more aware of those with special needs, and in this way combat the various stereotypes, at the same time educating the public within the community and South Africa at large.

Learners with special needs also need to be taught day-to-day skills such as self-care and good manners, and the programme-to-work linkage and SANASE documents have room for basic themes where these skills can be addressed, role-played, thereby equipping learners with the necessary skills for maintaining a job. Special needs learners and people in general are created by God, and these people face rejection on a daily basis by family, friends and the community. The idea of these programmes is to create a feeling of security for these learners and to help them feel part of this world.

Special needs learners have so much love to give, but are viewed as inferior, often being disrespected, abused, neglected, shunned and bullied. We as special needs teachers need to speak up for these people and allow their abilities to shine through, thereby enabling South Africa to prepare learners in special needs schools for their adulthood.
5.3 Recommendations

A study of the programme-to-work linkage and the SANASE document can be effective and successful if it is implemented correctly. The programme-to-work linkage is developed by the Department of Education, while the SANASE document is currently not an official document. However, both documents can still be implemented. The Department of Education should implement these programmes in all the special needs schools, as this will help to develop all learners who are intellectually challenged, and provide effective education for learners with special needs, thus preparing such learners for adulthood.

When the researcher was conducting her fieldwork and trying to find a suitable school in which to conduct the study, she noticed that most of the government schools that she contacted did not have the programme-to-work linkage or the SANASE document as a curriculum programme in their schools, but were task-analysing the CAPS document to suit the needs of the learners. This curriculum is broken down to such an extent that it withdraws a matric or any relevant legal document that is needed for these learners’ future, thereby even further impairing special needs learners.

With the programme-to-work linkage, it is the school as well as the parents’ responsibility to find a placement for the learner, and this is already forming a strong support group for the special needs learner. It allows the learner to receive training already during his or her schooling career, and provides the opportunity for the learner to get access to a job situation, where he/she could eventually find employment. Once the learner turns 18, or as soon as he/she is independent enough to maintain the job through the school, the support is slowly withdrawn, until it ultimately becomes the job of the special needs adult.

The researcher’s recommendation for a suitable curriculum for learners with special needs would be to combine both the programme-to-work linkage and the SANASE document, which is based on the CAPS document, and to ensure that the CAPS is taught from a practical perspective, sifting out the assessments from the learning
areas of languages, mathematics and life skills that would be most appropriate for the theme selected, such as gardening or working at a filling station. These specific assessments should be developed from the foundation phase level to the senior phase level, until the learner with special needs reaches his/her full potential. The assessments should be done on a practical level e.g. patterning in knitting, and be assessed in the form of a report, in order to show the progress of the special needs learner. This skill should also begin from an easy activity and gradually progress along with the assessment, thereby showing the progress of the learner with special needs. The Department of Education needs to assist our special needs schools to become more efficient and effective. More information and training, with a set content, need to be provided, in order to ensure successful teaching and learning.

Depending on the nature of the abilities of the special needs learner, the programme-to-work linkage and the SANASE document should be used to determine his or her talents, abilities and interests, and then the CAPS document becomes integrated, forming an individual lesson plan for each learner. Therefore, it is important to expose learners to formal education, but on a practical rather than an abstract level.

The programme-to-work linkage and the SANASE document will use the CAPS document for the contents, which can be used as evidence for the community member when drawing up the special needs learner’s profile or curriculum vitae (CV). This can then be used when trying to find a suitable placement for the learner to begin his job sampling at the place of work. The learner’s skills will be developed and through the job sampling phase, experience will be gained. This will give the learner a positive CV, while maintaining his or her respect and dignity, as well as complying with the Constitution of South Africa, which states that “The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth” (Section 9(3) of the Bill of Rights).

The researcher’s recommendations for further study would be to determine the acceptance levels of parents and families of children with special needs, and to
conduct a detailed study focusing on how parents experience having a special needs child. In this regard, the researcher found that parents did not contribute effectively to the study.
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Appendix A

From: Madaleen Claassens [mailto:mcdtc@netactive.co.za]
Sent: Monday, Jul 21, 2014 2:42 PM
To: Mathipa, Elias
Cc: Nieman, Marietha
Subject: Feedback CEDU REC App Z Moosa

Dear Prof/Dr

Thank you for resubmitting the application of Z Moosa for ethics clearance. It was enabled at the REC meeting on 16 July 2014. The committee’s feedback and decision was the following:

Approved

The study has been changed (learners are now removed from the research, reducing the risk considerably) but there are still many aspects which need to be corrected. The responsibility remains with the supervisor to ensure that the concerns indicated are addressed.
Appendix B

10 Jeanette Close
Eldoraigne
0157

3 March 2014

Dear: Principal

Re: Letter to request permission to conduct a study at the school

I, Miss Zuliakha Moosa, a master’s student, am conducting a case study focusing on a curriculum perspective for special needs learners. I am registered with the University of South Africa (UNISA), under the supervision of Professor E. Matipha.

The purpose of the study is to determine the current curriculum that is implemented in special needs schools for learners who are intellectually disabled, thereby addressing the interests and abilities of all learners in special needs schools.

I would appreciate it if you would permit me to distribute a questionnaire to the participants. I would also like to ask for permission to view the policies and documentation of the school that relate to the curriculum.

This study will be conducted over a period of a month, during which time you, as the principal, as well as the HOD, two teachers, an occupational therapist and an administrative staff member, will participate in the study. There will be no benefits such as compensation etc., and through your participation, I hope to understand more about this topic. I promise to maintain the following ethical standards: any information that you provide will be treated confidentially, your privacy and anonymity will be guaranteed, and there will be no chance of your data being linked to your name. You will also be given the right to withdraw from the research at any stage without penalties, and no harm will be done, since the research has nothing to do with the handling of dangerous materials. In addition, you will be informed of the rationale behind the study, as well as the recording and safe-keeping of the audio-taped interviews. The data provided by you will be kept safely in a file and no-one except me will have access to it. You are more than welcome to ask any questions relating to my study at any time.

Your assistance will be appreciated.
Zuliakha Moosa
0826278603
zuliakha786@gmail.com
APPENDIX C

10 Jeanette Close
Eldoraigne
0157

3 March 2014

Dear participant

Re: Letter to request permission for participation in my study

I, Miss Zuliakha Moosa, a master’s student, am conducting a case study focusing on a curriculum perspective for special needs learners. I am registered with the University of South Africa (UNISA), under the supervision of Professor E. Matipha.

The purpose of the study is to determine the current curriculum that is implemented in special needs schools for learners who are intellectually disabled, thereby addressing the interests and abilities of all learners in special needs schools.

I would like to request your permission to give you a questionnaire relating to the current curriculum situation in the school.

This study will be conducted over a period of a month, during which time you will be a participant in the study. There will be no benefits such as compensation, etc., and through your participation, I hope to understand more about this topic. I promise to maintain the following ethical standards: any information that you provide will be treated confidentially, your privacy and anonymity will be guaranteed, and there will be no chance of your data being linked to your name. You will also be given the right to withdraw from the research at any stage without penalties, and no harm will be done, since the research has nothing to do with the handling of dangerous materials. In addition, you will be informed of the rationale behind the study, as well as the recording and safe-keeping of the audio-taped interviews. The data provided by you will be kept safely in a file and no-one except me will have access to it. You are more than welcome to ask any questions relating to my study at any time.

Your assistance will be appreciated
Zuliakha Moosa
0826278603/zuliakha786@gmail.com

- I, _______________ (participant) AGREE / DISAGREE to participate in the study.
Signature: (participant) ________________ Signature: (researcher) _______
Appendix D

Questionnaire addressed to management of special schools

1) Is your school following the Departmental Curriculum or not?
   Yes: ..............................................................................................................................

2) Does the Curriculum you are following equip the learners that are intellectually disabled with appropriate skills? If yes, what type of skills?
   Yes - Curriculum is modified to meet the individual needs of learners.
   Life skills: ..................................................................................................................
   Vocational skills: .....................................................................................................

3) What do you think is the future of the learners once they leave the school environment?
   Future looks very bleak. No place for them to go. They cannot enter the workforce in the public sector.

4) In what way is the Curriculum that you follow preparing the learners for the world of work?
   Modified: Next year 2015 - emphasis on skills development.

5) What suggestions do you have that could improve the Curriculum of learners with special needs so they can be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?
   Develop a separate curriculum for special schools.
1) What curriculum or programme does the school implement currently? 

C.A.P.S.

2) Does this programme equip the learners that are intellectually disabled with appropriate skills? If yes, what type of skills?

C.A.P.S does not necessarily equip learners with appropriate skill.

It only equips them with basic life skills such as taking care of their body. Life skills focussed on basic no work orientated type of skills.

3) What is the future for the learners once these learners leave the school environment?

Most of our severely intellectually challenged proceed to the supervised workshop. However, the mild intellectually challenged are most probably end up in the street if they are not accepted in colleges and technicals.

4) Does this programme prepare the learners for the world of work?

No.

5) In your opinion, what suggestions do you have to improve the learners of special needs to be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?

Skills based programme should be implemented school to work with programmes and more training centres for the border-line cases.
Appendix F

Questionnaire addressed to management of special schools

1) What curriculum or programme does the school implement currently?
   Adapted CAPS programme

2) Does this programme equip the learners that are intellectually disabled with appropriate skills? If yes, what type of skills?
   Basic literacy, numeracy and life skills

3) What is the future for the learners once these learners leave the school environment?
   Currently the parents are responsible for providing further training or to place them in a job. Most learners either go to the adult workshop or stay at home.

4) Does this programme prepare the learners for the world of work?
   Not specifically.

5) In your opinion, what suggestions do you have to improve the learners of special needs to be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?
   1. The programme should provide more time for specific skills training.
   2. Teachers should be trained in a work situation regarding our learners.
   3. The community should be included and educated regarding our learners.
   4. Work placement should be done.
Appendix G

Questionnaire addressed to management of special needs schools

1) Is your school following the departmental curriculum or not?
   - Yes, working at a special needs school and following the CAPS Document (Curriculum), and preparing lessons from the CAPS Document.

2) Does the curriculum that you are following equip the learners who are intellectually disabled with appropriate skills? If yes, what type of skills?
   - Yes and No.
   - Yes-It teaches them some skills (Arts and Crafts) that can be of benefit to the moment but does not carry the appropriate weight for future reference and development.

3) What do you think is the future of the learners once they leave the school environment?
   - Most learners are dependent on their families and is not capable of taking care of themselves independently. Some learners are more capable of doing and reasoning to some extent and standard and will be able to do some kind of job and not only be dependent on their families, but also be able to have some means of an income of their own.

4) In what way is the curriculum that you follow preparing the learners for the world of work?
   - In some means it does prepare them to some extent (concerning arts and crafts and teaching or trying to teach the basics of reasoning and basic skills), but overall it is not equipped and suitable with the necessary skills needed for these learners to prepare them for the outside world of work that awaits them all at some point when leaving school.

5) What suggestions do you have to improve the curriculum of learners with special needs, so that they will be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?
   - In my honest opinion there should be a separate curriculum with a broader spectrum to
choose from prepared for Special Needs Schools, to have the necessary skills,
activities and preparations intact for learners with special needs to develop
each learner’s strengths and capabilities, regardless of what type of disability/
special needs the learner is faced with.

There should be more workshops opened for learners to attend after school as
well with the equipped training from professionals and not only ‘workshops
to keep them busy, but workshops where they are trained, working and to dev
elop a career.

- Also workshops for parents to educate them on how to deal/ treat their child/
children with special needs and how they can help them to adapt certain skills
to be of help to them as well.
Appendix H

Questionnaire addressed to management of special schools

1) What curriculum or programme does the school implement currently?
   
   **CAPS**

2) Does this programme equip the learners that are intellectually disabled with appropriate skills? If yes, what type of skills?
   
   **CAPS** does not equip most of the learners that are intellectually disabled. The skills provided are not effective for our learners. The CAPS programme needs to cater for our adopted curriculum for our learners. The skills that will be productive for our learners that will be able to carry it forward even if they leave the school. e.g. horsemanship, recycling. Food preparation.

3) What is the future for the learners once these learners leave the school environment?
   
   Some of the learners will enter workshops. The more successful learners will try to seek for jobs as packers and cleaners. While others will be on the streets or just stay at home doing nothing. The future for these learners are very negative.

4) Does this programme prepare the learners for the world of work?
   
   No. It provides very little opportunity for the world of work. Many people will not employ our learners because of lack of skills. The programme provides for basic skills that they will be able to do. However productive skills are not developed.

5) In your opinion, what suggestions do you have to improve the learners of special needs to be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?
   
   A programme should be developed for only intellectually disabled learners. Educators should be workshoped on and further educated about these learners. The school should be linked with big companies that can help to train these learners. Stationary school should be provided with equipment that will cater for the necessary skills e.g. handicraft, sewing, hairdressing, cooking, catering, choir room, bread work and many more. Principals should also attend workshops about these learners so that they are able to provide more input assistance and compassion to the educators and these learners.
Appendix I

Questionnaire addressed to the management of special needs schools:

1) Is your school following the departmental curriculum?
Yes, however we modify it to suit the needs of our learners

2) Does the curriculum you are following equip the learners who are intellectually disabled with appropriate skills? If yes, what type of skills?
Yes, the occupational therapist works closely with the educators, leather work, and beading, soap- and candle-making, baking and cooking.

3) What do you think is the future of the learners once they leave the school environment?
That is a very sore point, government does not have any school to work programmes, the private sector fees for this programme is costly, and parents cannot afford it.

4) In what way is the curriculum that you follow preparing the learners for the world of work?
The occupational therapist continuously changes the programme they working with to allow the learners to give of their best. By doing this learners become confident in the work they are doing. Challenges are sorted out as soon as possible to again make learners gain the ability to work accurately.

5) What suggestions do you have to improve the curriculum of learners with special needs, so that they will be able to contribute more to the community after the completion of school?
Learners must spend most of the contact time on life skills. However the life skills lesson must be suited to the learner’s abilities and challenges. Basics must be done daily, a well networked Work to School programme must be in place and learners must be afforded to work there after school to mentor the new school leavers until such time companies on the School Work programme employ them.
Appendix J (example of part of the index of the SANASE Document)
# 1. LANGUAGE

## LANGUAGE

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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>LISTENING AND SPEAKING</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Listens and responds</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Makes eye contact</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B Hearing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C Recognition</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>D Listens</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E Listens and responds</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F Emotions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G Participation in class activities</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>H Instructions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I Greetings</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Understanding / Comprehension</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Personal Information</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B Mathematical Concepts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C Objects / People</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D Sounds</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E Vocabulary</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F Rhyming words</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G Sentences</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H Language Structures</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I Stories</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Questions and Answers</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>Songs and Action Rhymes</td>
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## LANGUAGE

### LANGUAGE (CONTD)

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<td>2.1</td>
<td>Pre-Reading Skills</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Books, photo's, pictures, posters, magazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Reading - Gr R</td>
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<td>Reading - Gr 1</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Reading - Gr 2</td>
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<td>Reading - Group</td>
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<td>Reading - Reads a passage aloud</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reading - Strategies</td>
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### WRITING

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<td>C</td>
<td>Tracing</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Writing Grade R</td>
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<td>Writing Grade 1</td>
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<td>G</td>
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<td>Language Structure</td>
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<td>Pictures, Picture Symbols, Signs</td>
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### MATHEMATICS

1. **NUMBERS, OPERATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS**
   
1.1 **Whole numbers**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Counting Rhymes</th>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Counting</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Counting forward and backwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Number Concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Number Names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Orders and compares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Odd and even numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Place values</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Estimates</td>
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<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Addition, Subtraction</td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Multiplication, Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mental calculations</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
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1.2 **Fractions/sharing**

1.3 **Money**

2. ** PATTERNS, FUNCTIONS AND ALGEBRA**

2.1 **Numeric and Geometric Patterns**

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<tr>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Movement Patterns</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Beads Patterns</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Patterns</td>
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3. **SPACE AND SHAPE (GEOMETRY)**

3.1 **Properties of 2-D shapes and 3-D objects**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Places shapes through openings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Knowledge of shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-H</td>
<td>Recognises, describes, sorts 3D and 2D objects in the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Recognises symmetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Objects in relation to one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Follows instructions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Follows directions to move/place (alone/member of group) him/her self within the classroom</td>
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## 2. MATHEMATICS

### MATHEMATICS (CONT'D)

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<td>4.2</td>
<td>Mass</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Capacity</td>
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<td>Time</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Describes the time of day in terms of:</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Describes the time of day using vocabulary such as:</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Reads and writes analogue and digital clock time in terms of:</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Compares events in terms of the length of time they take:</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>Names in order:</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Calculates elapsed time in:</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Solves problems involving calculations with and conversions between:</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>Daily routines, recurring events</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Sequences:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Sequences events using language such as:</td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Sequences events according to:</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>Identifies important dates on calendars including dates of:</td>
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<td>DATA HANDLING</td>
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<td>Sorting Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Sorts and compares physical 2D-shapes and 3D-objects: Size</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Sorts and compares physical 2D-shapes and 3D-objects: General</td>
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<td>Recording of data</td>
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<td>Draw graphs to display data</td>
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<td>Read and interpret graphs</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Pegboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Unifix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Formboard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. LIFE SKILLS

#### 1. BEGINNING KNOWLEDGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A The Solar System</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Energy</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Weather Conditions</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Water</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Plants</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Soil, Earthworms</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Animals</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.2 THE ENVIRONMENT - PLACES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A The Home</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B The School</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C The Classroom</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D The Community</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Famous Places</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Pollution</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Recycling</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.4 TRANSPORT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.5 HISTORICAL INFORMATION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A General</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Communication</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Cultural</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Family</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Homes</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Lifestyle</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G South Africa</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# THE CAPS/SKILL

TO BE USED BY LEARNERS WITH SEVERE INTELLECTUAL BARRIERS TO LEARNING

## 3. LIFE SKILLS

### 2. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE OF PEOPLE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>People - Knowledge Of</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>People - Relationships</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>People - Emotions</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>People - Behaviour</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>People - Friends</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>People - Roles</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>People - Role Models</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>People - Helping Others</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>People - Jobs, Careers</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>People - Sadness / Loss / Grief</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>People - Clothing</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>People - Customs, Special Events</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE OF THE BODY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>PERSONAL HYGIENE</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BASIC LIFE SKILLS ROUTINES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Toilet Routine</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Washes hands</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Washes face</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Brushes teeth</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Wipes nose</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Combs/brushes hair</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Washes Combs/brushes</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Washes Clothes (any item can be washed)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Takes care of personal belongings</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Hygiene/ cleanliness of the older learner</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Dressing / Undressing - General</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Dressing / Undressing - Younger Learner</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE CAPS/SKII
LEARNERS WITH SEVERE INTELLECTUAL BARRIERS TO LEARNING

3. LIFE SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. CREATIVE ARTS</th>
<th>59</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 MUSIC</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Music and Listening</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Music, Singing and Instruments</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 DANCE</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 DRAMA</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 VISUAL ART</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Programme Activities</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sensory Experience - Sensoplastic Play</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Construction</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Baking and cooking</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Fantasy play</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Basic Art Activities</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Clay and modelling</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Paper - Folding</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Paper - Cutting</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Cutting and Pasting</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Paper - Gluing</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Drawing</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Painting</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Lacing and threading</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 3. LIFE SKILLS

### 3. CREATIVE ARTS (CONTD)

#### 4.4 Art Activities

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Objectives of Arts Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Ideas for Art Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.5 Craft Items

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Beading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Book Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Decoupage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Greeting Card: Hand made paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Greeting Card: Variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Gel candles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Paper Craft Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Picture Frames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Pin cushion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Pet plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Tray cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Weaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Photos of Craft Items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### THE CAPS/SKILLS

LEARNERS WITH SEVERE INTELLECTUAL BARRIERS TO LEARNING

## 3. LIFE SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. PHYSICAL EDUCATION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 LOCOMOTION SKILLS</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 CLIMBING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 BALANCE</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 THROWING AND CATCHING</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 GAMES</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 STRENGTH AND AGILITY</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 SPORTS</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>