

MANAGING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AT SELECTED SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN
PIETERMARITZBURG WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE VOCATIONAL
TRAINING OF LEARNERS

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that MANAGING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AT SELECTED SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN PIETERMARITZBURG WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF LEARNERS is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

MRS R MANIRAM

DATE

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ABSTRACT

There has been a paucity of research concerning vocational training of learners with special education needs. The literature study focused on a vocational training and transition planning programme in the United States of America, which could provide as a useful guide to educators and school managers, when implementing vocational training and transitional planning in South Africa. Research was conducted using semi-structured interviews with educators and principals at special schools, observation of learners whilst performing skills training and documentary analysis, to explore whether learners with barriers to learning are receiving skills training that could position them for employment in the open labour market after they exit school. Findings revealed that principals and educators at special schools are faced with challenges in the learner's microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem, resulting in the inadequate preparation of learners with special education needs for employment in the open labour market. Based on the findings, recommendations in terms of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory were made, to increase the opportunity for learners who experience barriers to learning, to be engaged in meaningful employment.

Key words:

Learners with barriers to learning, learners with special education needs, inclusive education, transition planning, vocational training, skills, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, employment, open labour market, service providers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

American Association on Mental Retardation	AAMR
Augmentative and Alternative Communication	AAC
Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement	CAPS
Further Education and Training	FET
Individual Education Plan	IEP
Individualised Vocational Programme	IVP
Learners with Special education Needs	LSEN
Learning and Teaching Support Material	LTSM
National Curriculum Statement	NCS
National Commission on Special Needs and Training	NCSNET
National Committee for Education and Support Services	NCESS
National Skills Development Strategy	NSDS
National Skills Fund	NSF
National Qualifications Framework	NQF
Psychological and Guidance Special Education Services	PGSES
Revised National Curriculum Statement	RNCS
Sector Education and Training Authority	SETA
Severely Intellectually Disabled	SID
The Promotion of Equity and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act	PEPUDA

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH

Throughout the early history of humankind, from the primitive period to the middle ages, impaired children were ostracized, stigmatized and categorized. It was common practice in most societies to either exterminate persons with physical impairments or to consign them to their own destiny. Generally speaking, the education of these children has continued to be dismal over the years (Du Toit, Landsberg & Levitz 2000:54; Landsberg, Kruger & Swart 2011:6).

‘Learner diversity’ and ‘inclusive education’ will feature prominently in the classrooms of the 21st century. Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2005:8) view inclusive education as developing an inclusive community and education system which “must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their learners, accommodating all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic and other conditions”. The inclusion of learners with barriers to learning in mainstream schools has become a phenomenon that has gained increased prominence globally due to an increased accentuation of human rights. The *World Conference on Education for all* (Jomtien, Thailand 1990) proclaimed that “every person, child, youth and adult should be able to benefit from educational opportunities which would meet their basic learning needs and fulfill their responsibility to contribute to the development of society” and the *International Consultative Forum for All* (2000) was instituted to monitor and promote the progress and control of *Education for All* (Lynch 2000:6).

While various proclamations have been ambitious in promoting inclusion, international studies have concluded that persons with disabilities find themselves in the position of severely lacking equal representation in the labour force (McLean 2003:103). However, countries such as the United States of America, New Zealand and Ireland have made significant advances regarding the transition from school to work for learners with special education needs (LSEN). The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, a federal law of the United States of America, dictates the manner in which states and public agencies have to assist in addressing early challenges of learners with special education needs and providing special education in conjunction with related services to LSEN. The intended outcome for

special education is that LSEN should find themselves in a position that equips them to extend their education, find employment and live independently. One of the requirements of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and the *Rehabilitation Act* in the United States of America is that transition planning for LSEN begins at age fourteen (Blackbourn, Patton & Trainor 2004:277).

New Zealand has embarked on an employment support programme, which enables individuals with challenges, including people facing severe impairments, to find employment doing “real jobs in regular settings” which make provision for constant training and auxiliary support (Lynch: 2000:9). In February 1994, Ireland adopted a strategy similar to the one being used in New Zealand. Job coaches, who provide “on the job training” to LSEN, are employed to supervise learners in the actual work environment and facilitate auxiliary support.

Countries of Europe, recognise ‘inclusive education’ or ‘a School for all’, as it is called in the *Charter of Luxembourg* (1996), as a provider of significant bases of ensuring equality in terms of equal opportunities related to all facets of life, including those of an educational, vocational and social nature of people with special needs (Van Leeuwen, Thijs & Zandbergen 2009: online).

In South Africa, children used to be grouped into categories on the basis of their primary physiological impairment. Each category of learner with a physical or intellectual impairment was taught in separate schools, referred to as ‘training centres’. These training centres were located away from the mainstream schools. Consequently, these learners had limited opportunity to socialize with other learners and to be integrated into ‘normal’ society (Du Toit et al. 2000:63).

The turning point in South Africa occurred in 1994, once democracy was established. Amongst the many significant changes that took place, learners with special education needs were no longer overlooked. Since the democratic elections in April 1994, there has been a paradigm shift towards the planning for an integrated system of specialized education.

The right of every child is protected by the South African Constitution. The Bill of Rights (RSA 1996, section 29) stipulates that:

the child is entitled to receive education which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. The learner shall be given an education that will promote his/her general culture and enable him/her on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his/her ability, his/her individual judgment, his/her sense of moral and social responsibility and to become a useful member of society.

The *Constitution of South Africa* (RSA 1996, section 9) expressly protects people with disabilities, amongst others, against unfair discrimination. As this particular group of people is the impetus for this research, it is imperative to locate this research within these constitutional rights.

The right to education for all is further illustrated in *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education-Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (RSA 2001, section 2). This policy, regarding inclusion, calls on the system to make education accessible to all, by acknowledging that:

- *all children and youth can learn, and that all children and youth need support and;*
- *a change in attitude, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricular and the environment is needed to meet the needs of all learners*

The above directs that a variety of learning contexts should be established to serve learners with special education needs (LSEN). These contexts must ensure that teaching and learning meet the needs of the community, school and classroom. This has given rise to ‘special’ and ‘full-service’ schools. A special school is envisaged to provide specialised educational programmes for certain learners with special education needs requiring more intensive support, while a full-service school will prepare LSEN for inclusion into a mainstream learning environment (Du Toit et al. 2000:102).

In making education accessible to all, the RSA Department of Education introduced the *National Curriculum Statement* (a curriculum designed for both mainstream and special

schools) which is supported by principles of social justice, human rights, a healthy environment and inclusivity. The principle of inclusivity ensures the participation and value of all learners. Learning Outcome 5 of the Life Orientation Area from the *National Curriculum Statement* hinges on an “[o]rientation to the world of work” in which the focus is on the development of the ‘self-in-society’ since it guides and prepares learners for life and its eventualities (RSA Department of Education 2004:15).

The researcher focuses this study in a South African context. In South Africa, especially in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, there has been a paucity of research opportunities concerning the transition of LSEN from school to the workplace. The field of study regarding vocational training in Southern Africa has been severely disregarded. The education system has often been criticized for its deficiency in preparing learners for social integration and employment (Akoojee, Gewer & McGrath 2005:1). Akoojee et al. (2005:1) mention that the exit of high school for mainstream learners is a positive experience, marked by independence. However, Winn and Hay (2009:104) assert that most learners with special education needs will continue to be dependent on their parents and families, requiring assistance to perform basic essential activities such as living skills, self-care and mobility. Hence, learners with special education needs and their families are faced with an unknown future.

Being an educator in a special school where the learner’s primary challenge is intellectual impairment, this researcher has a personal interest in exploring how learners with special education needs can be assisted in developing to their full potential, obtaining gainful employment other than in protective workshops, training centres and sheltered employment. Sheltered employment refers to people with disabilities who work in a segregated environment in which all workers have disabilities (Kregel & Dean 2002:online).

The presupposition of this researcher is that we need to refrain from seeing people with disabilities as incapable of contributing to the development of society. In keeping with our constitution, people with disabilities have the same rights as any other citizen, but are not able to exercise these rights. This research will attempt to give a voice to young people with disabilities.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

According to South African statistics, research indicates that only 0.25% of people with disabilities are employed in the public service, which is nowhere near to the 2% that was the goal for 2005 (National Office on the Status of Disabled Persons (OSDP) 2003:4).

Through interaction with teachers at special schools, this researcher has identified the lack of vocational training as a major drawback in the education of LSEN. The premise of inclusive education implies assistance in training that would provide LSEN with opportunities to secure gainful employment and thereby contribute to society as productive citizens.

Principals and educators, especially in special schools play an integral role in the education and ultimately in the lives of their LSEN since they are tasked with implementing and facilitating inclusive education practices. While they steer the true implementation of inclusive education, to be able to predict their approach, it is important to understand their attitudes towards inclusion.

In light of the above, the purpose of this research study was to explore whether principals and educators at special schools, are preparing their learners adequately for employment in the open labour market.

The problem formulation can be formulated as follows:

- How do principals and selected educators in special schools in Pietermaritzburg understand and promote inclusive education in general and in terms of preparing learners with special education needs for employment?
- What factors have influenced the implementation of adequate inclusive education in special schools, in terms of vocational preparation of learners?
- What recommendations, in terms of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and the findings of this research study, would improve the readiness of learners with special education needs for employment in the open labour market?

1.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1.3.1 Introduction

A qualitative research design is used. The research is situated in the interpretivist paradigm, which focuses on how people perceive their reality and thereby enables one to gain an in-depth understanding of peoples' experiences. In this regard, Henning (2004:51) mentions that, "interpretivist research is a communal process informed by participating practitioners and scrutinized and or endorsed by others".

1.3.2 Research approach

This researcher is interested in the views expressed by principals and selected educators on inclusive education and vocational training of LSEN. This study is therefore framed by a qualitative research design. The features of qualitative research expressed by Eisner (in Leedy 1993:141) outline the principle aspects which will inform this study. Firstly, qualitative studies focus on phenomena that occur in natural settings, that is, in actuality. The research will be undertaken in three special schools. Two schools are situated in a suburb in Pietermaritzburg while the other school is situated in the city centre.

Secondly, qualitative studies are essentially concerned with looking at events, processes, values and actions from the perspective of those being studied. An important part of this research project was the perspectives of principals and selected educators concerning inclusive education and vocational training of LSEN. According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996:30) "[q]ualitative researchers generate verbal and pictorial data to represent the social environment". This is relevant to the research being undertaken as the researcher determined meaning and understanding through the use of interviews (words) and documentary analysis. "The qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author's conclusion makes sense" (Merriam 2002:19). Findings were supported by the actual quotes from people interviewed, events from field observations and references from relevant documents to ensure a "rich, thick description and interpretation" (Merriam 2002:21).

The researcher employed a case study design. A case study involves the intensive investigation of a particular individual, programme or event for a defined period of time (Leedy 1993:135). This implies that a case study focuses on a single case. However, for the purpose of this research, the researcher used a multiple or collective case study approach to

compare the findings of the principals and selected educators at the respective schools and to allow for peoples' experiences to be understood within context (Merriam 1998:165). This researcher acknowledges that the limitation of a case study is that one cannot generalize the findings to the broader population of special schools in the country. However, case studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of a multifaceted aspect such as inclusive education. It can also accentuate relationships between processes, people and contexts which other approaches, such as a survey, may not be able to fulfill (The Case Study as a Research Method. School of Information 2006: online).

1.3.3 Data collection methods

To present data to adequately support the findings of the study, the following data collection methods are discussed: interviews, observation and documentary analysis.

1.3.3.1 Interviews

In acknowledging the diverse array of personalities and perspectives of participants which result in the unique nature of schools, one on one semi-structured individual interviews were appropriate for this study. An interview schedule consisting of questions related to relevant topics which are geared towards answering the research questions were employed during the course of the interview. Additional questions may be required to explore the research question and objectives, given the nature of events within particular schools (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell 2005:166).

A semi-structured interview allows for flexibility and is guided and managed by the interviewer. During the interviews, the researcher attempted to investigate the beliefs, sentiments and actions of principals and educators concerning inclusive education, and to ascertain what vocational programmes the school has embarked on to adequately equip learners with skills for employment in the open labour market. Henning (2004:51) states that "the main aim of an interview is to bring to our attention what individuals think, feel and do and what they have to say about [matters] in a "formatted" discussion, which is guided and managed by an interviewer".

1.3.3.2 Observation

This entailed observing learners while carrying out school jobs/tasks assigned to them as part of the vocational training and transition planning programme, as well as accompanying learners to their places of work. Observation allows for a range of workplace behaviours to be examined. Observation makes it possible to observe an individual's physical actions, non-verbal behaviours (such as tone and body language) and the time taken to perform tasks (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell 2005:170).

Given the sensitive nature of LSEN research where the presence of the observer, who is unfamiliar to the learner, may influence the behaviour to be observed, this researcher used participant observation. The researcher will interact with learners to allow the learners to become comfortable with the researcher's presence, whilst also maintaining a somewhat detached position to enable the researcher to watch the activities and experiences of the learner carefully with a view to making field notes (Welman et al. 2005:170).

1.3.3.3 Documentary analysis

Documents such as school's mission statements and documents from non-governmental organisations served to corroborate the evidence from other sources. Documentary analysis was used to allow for triangulation between the other research instruments-interviews and observation (McMillan & Schumacher 2006:374).

1.4 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

The use of simple and understandable language, not asking leading questions (compelling the respondent to provide a required answer) and time management techniques are important points to adhere to during interviews (Welman et al. 2005:169). The interviews were tape recorded (with the consent of the participants). The recordings were transcribed and analyzed. All relevant transcriptions were read to attain an overview of the contextual data. The raw data were organized into conceptual categories which created themes or concepts. Specific codes were then assigned to these themes or concepts. These different codes were grouped or categorized according to different segments or units of meaning. Neuman (2000:420) postulates that "qualitative coding is an integral part of data analysis. It is guided by the research question and leads to new questions." A disadvantage of tape recordings is that it

does not capture body language and physical expressions. Further, it could be intimidating to the participants. However, this researcher has overcome such limitations by recording her observations of the interview as unobtrusively as possible.

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.5.1 Transition

Transition refers to the “movement from school to post school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation”. (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities 2013: online).

Transition refers to a change from one place, or state, or subject or stage to another. (Free Dictionary nd: online). With regards to this particular study, transition includes the shift in society’s perception of LSEN as objects of charity and pity, to capable individuals who, if given the opportunity, can contribute immensely to the development of society.

1.5.2 Vocational Training

Vocational training is related to applied educational courses concerned with skills needed for an occupation, trade or profession (Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus nd: online).

1.5.3 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is defined as “one that fosters the full personal, academic and professional development of all students, free of harassment and all forms of discrimination” (Benick & Saloojee 1996) in Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht 2001:48).

1.5.4 Learners with special education needs (LSEN)

Learners with special education needs are defined as “children who need special resources, and/or adaptations to the curriculum and/or different assessment strategies, to aid them with their learning” (Learners with special education needs nd: online). With regards to this particular study, LSEN refers to learners who are intellectually impaired, blind and deaf.

According to the *Education White Paper 6* (RSA Department of Education 2001:7) learners with special education needs are learners who are most vulnerable to barriers to learning and exclusion.

1.5.5 Full-service schools

Full-service schools are “mainstream education institutions which aim to provide quality education to all learners through flexibly meeting the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner. These are institutions that endeavour to transform themselves, proactively addressing barriers to learning and increasing participation of their learners and educators. They strive to achieve access, equity, quality and social justice in education” (Conceptual And Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: Full-Service Schools 2005: online).

According to Dryfoos (1994:15) a full-service school is “a school that has broadened its mission and vision to meet the needs of all its students”.

1.6 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter one serves as an introduction and motivation to the study. It presents the description of the problem and the problem formulation; introduces the research design and data collection methods to the reader; describes relevant terminology; and outlines the chapter division.

Chapter two presents the theoretical framework that underpins the study namely Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory.

Chapter three provides a review of the literature. It discusses the medical and social discourses of disability; provides an overview of the historical development of inclusive education in South Africa which includes relevant legislation and policies; explores barriers to learning from a socialist perspective; investigates vocational needs and employment opportunities for learners with barriers to learning in South Africa; and outlines a vocational training and transition planning programme in the United States of America.

Chapter four presents the research design; discusses the qualitative research approach;

describes the methods of data collection; discusses trustworthiness of the study; and explains the analysis of data.

The qualitative data are analysed in chapter five. In the analysis, reference is made to appropriate data relating to this research, which are presented in previous chapters.

Chapter six presents a summary of the study; discusses the conclusions based on the theoretical framework presented in chapter two and the literature study presented in chapter three; makes recommendations to improve the transition of LSEN to the world of work; and stimulate further research which would facilitate this important repositioning of LSEN.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to explain the theoretical framework that underpins this study on the transition of LSEN to the world of employment. The theoretical framework, which is the keystone of this research study, encompasses Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as the theory elaborates on the various social contexts that surround the learner with barriers to learning and proposes that various factors within these contexts influence the learner in his/her development. This analogy focuses on an understanding of human development. It provides a useful theoretical framework for this study on aspects pertaining to inclusive education since it is useful in helping school managers understand hindrances that prevent optimal development of LSEN in terms of the social contexts that surround these learners. (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2006:41).

According to Bronfenbrenner, the child is central in the ecosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1979:2). As such, the child does not live in solitude but within an immediate social environment and society that embraces him/her. The theoretical framework is useful in classifying the hindrances associated with the transition of LSEN to the world of work and provides recommendations which could reduce them.

2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

The researcher adopts Bronfenbrenner's argument that the child is embedded in three layers of contexts that influence his/her development (Bronfenbrenner 1979:3). For Bronfenbrenner (1986:43), the school context is a major factor that affects a child's development. The researcher concurs with this statement as the school environment exposes the learner with barriers to learning to educators, peers and other significant people who possess the same and different views, attitudes and values that would impact on the learner's development. In this regard, Keenan (2002:30) states that the environment encompasses more than just the child's immediate location (for example his/her home or neighbourhood) but includes his/her school community, and the social and cultural institutions that impact on his/her life.

This research builds upon Bronfenbrenner's proposal that various factors, which are present in the different levels of the ecological structure, exert reciprocal influences on one another and these impact on human development (Bronfenbrenner 1979:17). Bronfenbrenner placed these contexts within three overlapping systems, namely, the microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem. Interactions within these three interdependent systems considerably affect each person.

To briefly summarize Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the child develops within the three ecosystems; namely the microsystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem:

- 1) The microsystem consists of the child, parents, day care centre/school and the neighbourhood (The mesosystem refers to the relationships between the components of the microsystem). In this study, the microsystem comprises of the child, parents and educators at special schools.
- 2) The exosystem consists of the community, the parent's workplace, the parent's network of friends and organizational structures (educational system and local health care system). In this study, the exosystem relates to the provincial Department of Education.
- 3) The macrosystem refers to cultural beliefs and ideologies, the laws and policies of the organizational structures, the political system as well as the child's socio-economic level. In this study, the macrosystem consists of the service providers (society), the South African government, the national Department of Education, and the socio-economic and socio-cultural levels of the learner with special education needs.

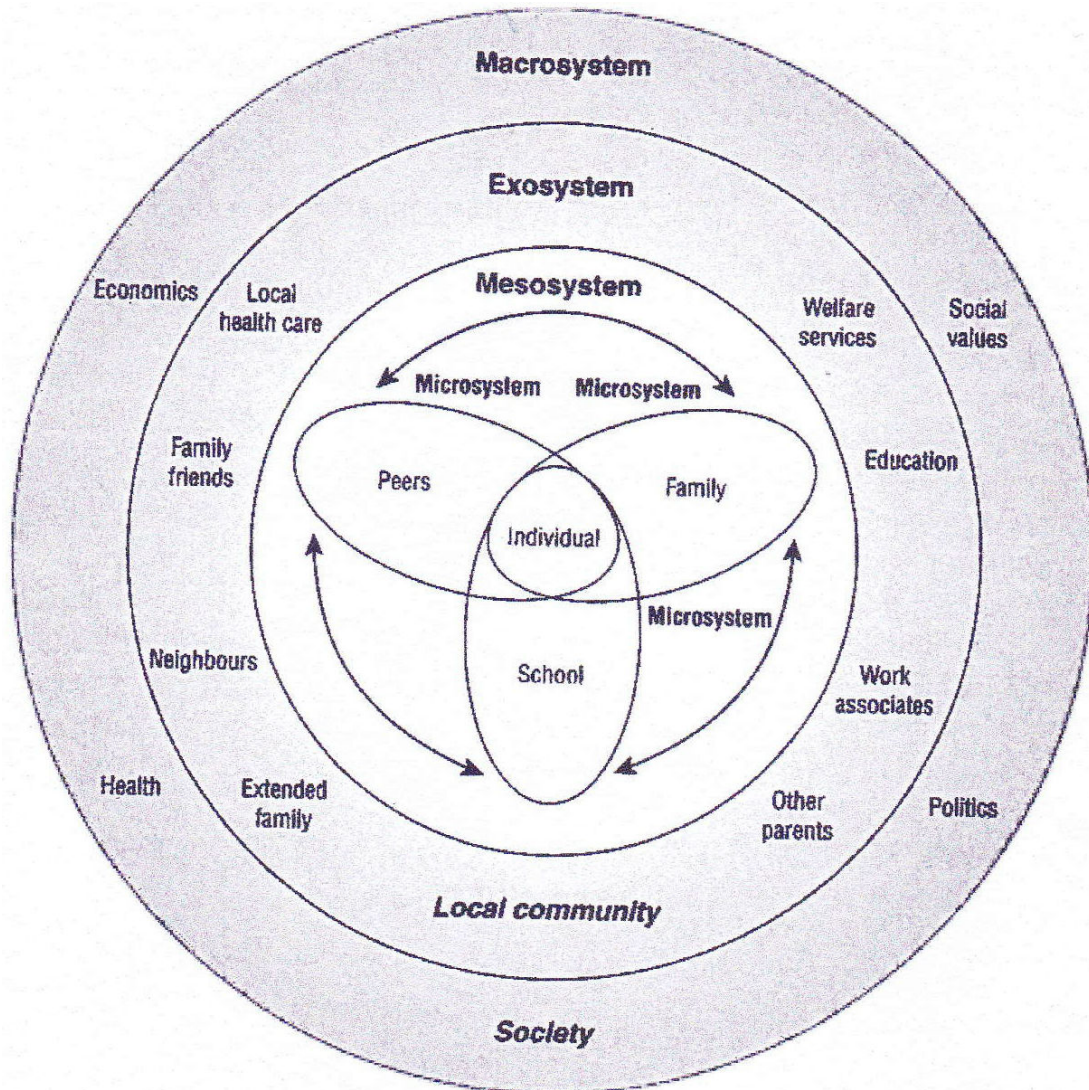


FIGURE 2.1 Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory

(Source: Landsberg, Kruger and Nel 2005:11)

2.2.1 The Microsystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979:22) the microsystem is “a set of patterns of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics”. The child’s immediate family such as his/her parents and siblings constitute the microsystem but it also consists of other significant individuals who may have an impact on the development of the child such as educators and peers. A crucial aspect of this study relates to how the interaction between the child and the people in the child’s life affect the development of the child. For example, relationships that are positive and nurturing will result in better growth and development of the child. This also

indicates that the behaviour of a child towards these people in the microsystem will determine how they treat him/her in return.

2.2.2 The Mesosystem

The mesosystem, which comprises interconnections, interactions and relationships between the child and the individuals that constitute the microsystem, elaborates on the connections between different contexts in the microsystem in which a child develops (Bronfenbrenner 1979:25). For example, learning activities at school must be carried over to the home environment (Keenan 2002:30). Similarly, a caring and motivated educator will influence the child positively in his/her growth and development.

Bronfenbrenner (1979:22) uses the term ‘bi-directional’ to explain that the influence of the behaviour of adults and children are from both directions. For example, an overall assiduous child is likely to be responded to positively, whereas a distractible child is more likely to evoke a negative response from adults such as restriction and punishment (Berk 2000:27). According to Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana (2006:41) the mesosystem constitutes roles, relationships and daily living activities that affect the holistic development of the child within his/her cognitive, social, emotional, moral and spiritual spheres.

2.2.3 The Exosystem

The exosystem refers to factors that impact on the child’s microsystem. These factors ultimately filter through to the microsystem and cause a ripple effect on the child. The exosystem consists of settings “that do not involve the developing person as an active participant but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by what is happening in the setting containing the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner 1979:25). Examples of an exosystem provided by Bronfenbrenner (1979:25) include the parents’ place of work, a school attended by a sibling, the parents’ network of friends as well as the activities of the local school board. A dysfunctional exosystem has a negative impact on the development of the child. For example, families who are the victims of unemployment show a significant prevalence of child abuse and neglect (Keenan 2002:31).

2.2.4 The Macrosystem

Surrounding the microsystem and exosystem of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is the macrosystem which embeds the context of the child's society and subculture, for example, the legislative and cultural contexts in which the other three systems operate. These contexts include the general economic status of a country and relates to whether the child lives in a rural or urban setting (Lerner, Lowenthal & Egan 2003:51). The South African legacy of apartheid had a profound effect on learners who attended schools in the rural areas where learners were grossly disadvantaged in terms of resources and facilities.

This study builds upon Bronfenbrenner's definition of the macrosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979:26) defined the macrosystem as "consistencies in the form and content of lower-order systems ... that exist at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief system or ideology underlying such consistencies". The macrosystem therefore includes belief systems and ideologies which assist in shaping microsystems. For example, how parents view their child who has a special need is shaped by their respective cultural beliefs and ideologies. This in turn has a positive or negative influence on the child's development of his/her self-concept.

Although the factors in the macrosystem may seem to be removed from the child, they could affect the child in his/her microsystem. This is in keeping with Bronfenbrenner's description of the various systems being interlinked and having a reciprocal effect on each other.

2.3 AN ELUCIDATION OF BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY AND ITS RELATION TO LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

The purpose of this section is to further explain Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory in relation to this study. The researcher intends to relate this theory to the child with barriers to learning in terms of the microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem.

2.3.1 The microsystem and the child with barriers to learning

As mentioned above in section 2.2.1, the microsystem is the structure that is closest to the child, example the child's family. In addition to the conventional family unit that consists of parents and siblings, the family, nowadays, includes guardians and care-givers (Bauer & Shea

2003:48). It serves as the most important subsystem for the child within which, parents play a vital role as primary educators.

The family is regarded as a system. In order for a system to function effectively, all members that make up that system, have to work together towards achieving a common goal. Even the role of siblings needs to be acknowledged for as Bauer and Shea (2003:66) suggest, siblings play a crucial role. They model appropriate behaviour and are “coaches” in daily activities, playmates, and aid in socialization with other children.

Families act as a safe haven such that they provide secure, supportive and guided development for their children. (Donald et al. 2006:213). Du Toit, Landsberg and Levitz (2000:34) agree that parents are the most important and influential figures in their children’s lives. The family instills acceptable social skills, community values and cultural awareness in their children.

The child with barriers to learning causes an immense impact on the family, as the arrival of such a child has been accepted as a stressful event (Bauer & Shea 2003:54). In this regard, Kubler-Ross (2005:7) mentions seven sequential stages of grief that parents undergo before accepting the child’s disability. Initially the parents are in a state of “shock”, followed by “disbelief”, “denial”, “anger”, “bargaining”, “depression” and ultimately “acceptance”. Kubler-Ross (2005:7) further mentions that the family can only begin to appreciate the child with barriers to learning and start to make adjustments in their lives to accommodate the child’s needs once they have reached the “acceptance” stage.

The manner in which parents of children with or without special needs, interact with their children is dependent on their specific beliefs and unique personalities. This in turn has an influence on the child’s personality and social development. Baumrind (1991:57) reports that children who have parents that are authoritative, are more “socially and instrumentally competent” than other children. He further states that children displayed poor performance in certain areas due to an absence of parental involvement. He goes on to say that whilst children from privileged homes are more likely to have problematic behaviour, their behaviour is less than average at school even though they have a higher self-esteem, better social skills and lower levels of depression than their peers.

The researcher intends to investigate the belief that a child with barriers to learning in a family, results in a series of adjustments, not only in the lives of parents and the family as a whole, but also in the respective education system. Kastenbaum (1986:113) adds that “resources, pressures and characteristics of the immediate environment can also make a tremendous difference”. For example, exposing learners with barriers to learning to well planned activities at home will stimulate learning experiences and improve development. Therefore, interaction between educators and parents is essential to create a supportive environment in which families would feel safe and comfortable enough to participate.

Educators play an integral role in the educational aspects and in the lives of their learners. They are central to the success of inclusion. Educators are the ones who ultimately translate policy into practice within a classroom setting. This study adopts the argument presented by Mercer & Mercer (2005:128) that the educator’s perceptions of inclusive education are significant as they can determine the degree to which learners with barriers to learning are accepted and accommodated within mainstream schools. According to Chen, Turner and Cheng (n.d: online) “research supports the fact that teacher expectations influence student achievements, behaviour, and self-esteem”. They further state that an educator’s perception of learners with barriers to learning will determine whether including such learners in a mainstream school, will benefit the learner. It is also important to acknowledge the challenges that confront educators. For example, educators are struggling to adapt a mainstream curriculum to suit the needs of learners with barriers to learning.

Inclusive education assumes that there is adequate support to learners with barriers to learning (Donald et al. 2006:25). However, most educators feel that they lack adequate training to provide such support (Engelbrecht et al. 2004:70). These inadequacies can be attributed to educators having differences in their training backgrounds, level of education and levels of experience and understanding of disabilities (Cook, Klein, Tessier & Daley 2004:372). Cook et al. (2004:372) further states that this might lead to educators “feeling uncomfortable with their lack of knowledge and experience with disabilities, thus experiencing additional stress in an already stressful job”.

According to Hay and Malindi (2005:n.p.) educators and managers in the South African education system are faced with a number of challenges. These challenges are as follows:

- *Under qualified educators that do not have the capacity to implement inclusive education well;*
- *Capacity of education managers to implement inclusive education in a coordinated, focused way. It appears as if many provincial managers do not have adequate background to manage this complex process;*
- *Change overload that educators are experiencing. The stream of new policies seems never-ending, and is affecting educator morale.*

How well educators implement inclusive education programmes depends on their attitude toward inclusive education. Educators must accept that learners with barriers to learning can be educated within a mainstream setting.

2.3.2 The mesosystem and the child with barriers to learning

As shown in section 2.2.2, the mesosystem constitutes the interaction between the child and the components of the microsystem. It implies the relationships between them such as the relationships between the family and peer group (Donald et al. 2006:42). Mirroring Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, this section examines the role of different relationships which support the child's learning and development with special emphasis on school and family partnerships.

From the early 19th century, the rights of the disabled and their families have been severely repressed as clearly documented in many reports dating from the 1800's. Families had to trust the decision of professionals regarding the education of their child (Lindsay 2004:16). However, policy documents in South Africa such as the *White Paper on Education and Training* (RSA 1995, section 23 (9)) and the *South African Schools Act 84* (RSA 1996, section 16) encourage the involvement of parents in the education of their children.

Policy documents accentuate the crucial role of parents in identifying barriers to learning and development in their children as well as actively participating in the process of developing plans of action to address these barriers. This statement resonates in Morton-Young (1995:77) when he says that parents remain the primary caregivers of their children and have a right to fully participate in their children's educational programme. The education of a child with barriers to learning therefore cannot solely be the responsibility of the school.

Unfortunately, many families remain ignorant of the learning areas stipulated in the *National Curriculum Statement* (Literacy, Numeracy and Life-Skills); prevocational programmes (practical skills involving gardening, cookery, sewing); and therapies (speech, hearing, physiotherapy and occupational therapy) offered at the school, and are therefore dependent on the knowledge and skills of teachers and related specialists to ensure the holistic development of their children with special education needs (Nojaja 2002:27).

Although parents may not be knowledgeable in the learning areas, parents can offer vital information regarding their child's development. (Wolfendale 1992:155). Therefore, this interaction between the parent and the school is important. It is evident from Nojaja's study (2002:21) that the school is reliant on the input of families. Furthermore families are very important in developing appropriate attitudes towards work in young people as they provide role models as mentioned in section 2.3.1. In working with families, educators broaden their knowledge of various vocations that the learner might have an interest in, collaborate with prospective employers to expose learners with barriers to learning to contextual learning activities during vocational training and set achievable goals (Bauer & Shea 2003:18). It is interesting to note that whilst placement in sheltered employment resulted when school and agency efforts were employed, personal or parental efforts resulted, more often, in self-employment and on-going education (Bauer & Shea 2003:186).

Epstein (in Bauer and Shea 2003:5) mentions the following advantages of family-school partnerships that are substantial to this study:

- *schools can help families become informed and skillful at understanding their children and supporting learning at home;*
- *parents assist educators or other school personnel;*
- *educators request and guide parents who monitor and assist their children at home;*
- *schools help parents become leaders through training, involving them in meaningful decision-making and providing information to advocacy groups.*

2.3.3 The exosystem and the child with barriers to learning

As mentioned in section 2.2.3, the exosystem refers to various factors that impact on the child's microsystem. This study elaborates on the ripple effects that these factors have on the development of the child with barriers to learning. Although the exosystem does not have a direct influence on the child, circumstances in the lives of people closest to the child can cause an impact on the development of the child. The child may not even know anything about these influences and their effects on him/her. As an example, a parent's stressful situation at work could have a negative impact on the relationship between the parent and the child. The child in turn, could present with problems at school.

The researcher agrees that the development of effective school-community relations is an important aspect of building an inclusive school. Growing evidence exists to support this view (Swart & Phasha 2005:213; Engelbrecht et al. 2004:4). Community involvement should include all the human resources such as educators, parents, school counselors, educational psychologists, the school nurse, therapists, community organizations, school governing bodies, social workers, service providers (prospective employers) and other members of the community.

2.3.4 The macrosystem and the child with barriers to learning

As mentioned above in section 2.2.4, the macrosystem refers to the child's socio-economic context and the larger socio-cultural context in which the child lives. This includes cultural ideologies, values, customs and beliefs. These values differ from culture to culture (and across subcultures and social classes) and can greatly influence the child's personality development and self-concept. It is therefore imperative for school managers to acknowledge the challenges of providing education to learners with barriers to learning with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Barrera (in Lerner et al. 2003:13) states that linguistic and cultural diversity relates to children and families who have a home language excluding English and "children and families who have values, beliefs, understandings and practices that differ from those in the general population". In other words, "families from diverse cultures differ in childrearing practices, parent-child interactions, values, perceptions of a family unit, perceptions of problems, acceptable solutions to problems and attitudes towards seeking help".

Van Heerden (2002:11) defines the researcher's view that the cultural background of a family has an influence on how families view their children with barriers to learning. Similarly, Schwartz 1994 (in Bauer & Shea 2003:27) supports the statement that there seems to be a cultural perception that Asian parents view educators as the sole authority over their child's schooling and therefore parents are not to interfere. Further, Asian families view learning disabilities as an indication of an organic disorder which is shameful to the family.

As mentioned previously (see section 2.2.4), the macrosystem includes a country's prevalent economic status. This could have an influence on finances in a child's microsystem. A child requiring specialized education due to a physical or physiological impairment places additional financial strains on the family. For example, parents may not be able to afford to send their child to a school for children with special needs, owing to transport cost and school fees. These tensions resulting from financial problems may adversely affect the education of a child with barriers to learning.

Poverty is a factor that is associated with inadequate, overcrowded housing, poor water supply, poor sanitation and poor hygiene facilities. Donald et al. (2006:169) illustrates the vicious circle of poverty. Poverty makes people more susceptible to disability and disability increases poverty. Poor educational conditions (overcrowded, under-resourced classrooms) further reinforces this negative cycle as learners with barriers to learning cannot have their individual learning needs met adequately. This leads to the frustration, demoralization and de-motivation of educators causing a negative impact on teaching and learning. (Donald et al. 2006:169).

In terms of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory which views the child as developing within interlinking systems that exert reciprocal influences on one another, poverty can be seen as being closely related to school dropout, substance abuse and family violence (Donald et al. 2006:185).

The macrosystem further constitutes a country's political and legal system. Whilst documents have advocated parental involvement (see section 2.3.2), state education authorities in the previous political regime of South Africa, limited the involvement of parents in the disadvantaged populace. The message of the state education authorities to parents was to "give us your child to educate, let us do it as we see fit and don't interfere" (Engelbrecht,

Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht 2004:173). This could influence the lack of parental involvement in the education of the child with special education needs. This limited involvement of parents have led educators to complain of the difficulty they experience trying to initiate parental involvement in their child's formal education either at home or at school.

2.4 THE IMPLICATION OF BRONFENBRENNER'S THEORY TO EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL MANAGERS

The researcher supports Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as it has grave implications for school managers. It helps school managers understand learners with barriers to learning from an ecosystemic perspective. This allows for a more effective management of both inclusive education and vocational training. This coincides with the view that learning difficulties originate from within a learner as well as from within a system (Engelbrecht et al. 2004:47). Thus, the focal point has been transferred from the learner to the education system. This directs that the education system must provide for all learners with diverse needs. This includes addressing the inflexibility in the curriculum, adaptations to the schooling environment, provision of adequate support to schools and acknowledging the vital role of parents (Donald et al. 2006:22). Viewing the obstacles that have prevented the adequate vocational preparation of learners with special education needs in terms of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, helps all managers and researchers who have an interest in overcoming the obstacles that hinder optimum vocational preparation of learners with special education needs, to obtain a holistic understanding of the problem and become part of the solution.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Adopting Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to improving the management of the vocational preparation of learners with special education needs, requires an investigation which takes cognizance of the microsystem level of children, family and schools; the mesosystem level of interaction and relationships between parents, educators and related specialists; the exosystem level of society's attitude towards LSEN; and the macrosystem level of curriculum policies by the national Department of Education, the socio-economic status, cultural beliefs, and the country's political and legal system. It is in the interaction between any of the above levels that supports may exist or barriers may occur.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Whilst Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is significant for this study in terms of helping school managers understand learners with barriers to learning in relation to their social context, the literature study enables one to have a comprehensive understanding of key aspects concerning inclusive education and vocational training of learners with barriers to learning. The literature review commences with a discussion of the medical and social discourse of disability. The two opposing systems, in terms of how disability is viewed, are discussed. Further, in an attempt to understand the challenges to inclusive education experienced in South Africa, the chapter provides an insight into the history of formal education that led to inclusive education in South Africa.

The chapter subsequently follows a discussion of salient aspects of inclusive education, namely the exploration of barriers to learning from a socialist perspective, which requires school managers and educators to look for barriers to learning not only within the learner but also in terms of the surroundings of the learner; an investigation of vocational needs and employment opportunities for learners with barriers to learning in South Africa to exemplify the dire need for vocational training and transition planning in South African schools; and a discussion on policy and legislation in South Africa to illustrate the South African government's obligation to the 'equalisation of opportunities' for learners with barriers to learning, thereby facilitating the inclusion of learners with special education needs in the community and society. This latter discussion is vital for this study, as it is imperative for school managers to be aware of the opportunities that the government has created for learners with barriers to learning, so that educators can equip learners adequately with the necessary skills needed for employment in the open labour market.

Bearing in mind that the United States of America has made significant advances regarding vocational training for learners with barriers to learning (Blackbourn, Patton & Trainor 2004:276), the chapter is concluded with the outline of a vocational training and transition planning programme in the United States of America which could relate to recommendations to school managers when implementing vocational and transition planning in South Africa.

3.2 THE MEDICAL AND SOCIAL DISCOURSE CONCERNING DISABILITY IN CHILDREN

There are two opposing views of disability namely, the medical and social discourse of disability.

3.2.1 The medical discourse

According to Engelbrecht (2003:3) “the first half of the twentieth century was the ‘heyday’ of the so-called ‘medical model’, which conceptualised those with disabilities as ‘abnormal’ and in need of the attention of specialists”. The primary focus was the learners’ impairment, rather than the needs of the learner (Engelbrecht 2003:17). The life of the disabled person lay in the hands of the medical and associated professionals. They had the power to decide on schooling; support given in terms of educational and social aid (by for example, psychologists, therapists, learning support teachers, social workers and curriculum specialists); living arrangements; benefits; employment; procreation; and even life itself (Priestly 2003:13).

The medical discourse of disability assumes that the reason for learning difficulties lies within the learner, and therefore advocates adaptation of the learner whilst minimal accountability in this regard is placed on institutions. This view of disability had grave implications for the disabled person. Barnes (in Priestly 2003:12) mentions that people with impairments were affected in terms of the type of education they received, employment opportunities, and family life. They were also excluded from political participation and cultural representation.

Essentially, the medical discourse of disability relegates the problem of disability to a defect within the individual, and the role of the environment is completely disregarded.

3.2.2 The social discourse

Unlike the medical discourse of disability, a social interpretation of disability considers the environment. Schneider (in Watermeyer, Swartz, Lorenzo, Schneider & Priestly 2006:9) defines environment as that which includes all influences affecting the person. This would

include the physical restrictions, community perceptions or misconceptions and social or government assistance offered. Hence, Oliver (1996:33) states:

disability, according to the social discourse, is all the things that impose restrictions on disabled people, ranging from individual prejudice to institutional discrimination, from inaccessible buildings to unusable transport systems, from segregated education to excluding work arrangements.

In addition, contextual disadvantages, such as poverty, poor teaching, inadequate resources and inappropriate educational policies and social problems (alcohol, drug abuse, violence, sexuality issues including HIV and aids, race and gender prejudices) are some of the social factors that influence a child's development (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2006:23). Nind, Sheehy and Simons (2003:13) are of the opinion that learners with special education needs are deprived of a normal social life and this deprivation compounds their disabilities. In addition, LSEN are denied the opportunity for suitable vocational training and employment.

According to the *Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: Special Schools as Resource Centres* (RSA Department of Education 1997:11) the social discourse believes that "the circumstances of people with disabilities and the discrimination they face are socially created phenomena and have little to do with the impairments of disabled people". This view suggests that everyone has the ability to learn if the appropriate support is provided. Moodley (2002:3) supports the view that society has an obligation to cater for people with disabilities. The presumption is that the removal of all barriers will equalise all the playing fields for the disabled in all areas (Moodley 2002:3). Therefore, it is incumbent on school managers and educators to create an environment and classroom context that position learners with barriers to learning as being capable of achieving success.

As discussed in section 2.2, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory of human development serves as "the most influential contribution to understanding how the development of children is shaped by their social contexts" (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2002:51).

3.3 A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The apartheid regime in South Africa reflected the disparities in the provision of education and related services for learners with special education needs. These disparities were most evident among the black population. Black learners with special education needs did not receive education services on an equitable basis as their white counterparts (Nind et al. 2003:53).

A lack of interest and funding by the State saw the emergence of church run schools for learners with special needs (RSA *National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training* (NCSNET) 1997:23). Church run special needs schools highlighted the necessity for similar public schools, and in 1900 the government passed legislation that allowed the creation of special schools, but only for white children with special needs. Black children with special needs continued to be disadvantaged. “Special needs education thus reflected the broader racialised fragmentation and inequality of South African society” (Nind et al. 2003:53).

The year 1994 saw the end of apartheid and heralded the start of a democratic South Africa and with it, the introduction of the *Constitution of South Africa*. This was the single most important policy document for all previously disadvantaged people. It highlighted three basic human rights, namely the right to equality, the right to human dignity and the right to education. The right to equality (RSA 1996, section 9:1-5) stipulates that “the state may not unfairly discriminate against anyone directly or indirectly on the basis of race, gender, colour, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth” (see section 3.6.4.1).

The *Constitution of South Africa* (RSA 1996, section 29) specifies that education must reflect the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism inherent in the constitution (RSA Department of Education 2001:4). It directs a basic education for all built on the provision that everybody is entitled to receive education and therefore made the provision for basic adult education (Department of Education 2001:4). Priestly (2003:99) advocates the *Constitution of South Africa* to be the most “progressive constitution in the world”.

An important intervention by the government in the area of 'special needs education' was the setting up of the *National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training* (NCSNET) and the *National Committee for Education Support Services* (NCESS) in October 1996. The respective commissions were instructed to propose ways in which the area of special needs education could be improved to ensure quality education and service delivery (Engelbrecht et al. 2004:16).

One of the recommendations provided by the NCSNET was in the area of classifying learners with special education needs. The commissions suggested a shift in the terminology. 'Special needs' had to be referred to as 'barriers to learning and development' (NCSNET 1997:4). This shift in terminology was significant as it adopted a socialist perspective in classifying learners with special needs. This perspective implied that factors surrounding the learner could serve as a source of barriers to learning. Furthermore, it focused on the cause and solution rather than just the learners themselves. More specifically, the school context was identified as a source of barriers to learning (RSA Department of Education 2001:7). However, *Department of Basic Education* circulars continued to refer to 'learners with barriers to learning' as 'learners with special education needs' such as the KZN Circular No 07 of 2012: *School Governing Body Elections in Public Schools* (Manganye 2012: online).

The NCESS and the NCSNET were appointed in 1996 to meet as one group to work together in order to investigate the current situation in education concerning learners with special education needs, and to recommend policy in this regard. One of the recommendations of the NCESS and NCSNET recommended the integration of the separate systems of education to provide one system of education which would address the varied needs of the learner population in South Africa (RSA Department of Education 1997:55). They further recommended a more integrated approach to the provision of support to educators at special schools in terms of recognizing and removing, where possible, some barriers to learning. This included support at institutional, district and national levels (Nind et al. 2003:55).

The process of identifying the situation of special education resulted in the *Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (RSA Department of Education 26 July 2001). The aspiration of the *Education White Paper 6* was to "restructure the education system and create special needs education as a non-racial and integrated component of the education system" (RSA Department of Education 2002:4). The previous

educational system advocated exclusivity and inequality based on language, colour and ability. On the other hand, principles of the current educational policy, embraces diversity and inclusivity.

The *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* (UNESCO 1994:8) enforced the relationship between human rights and inclusive education. The belief that all learners should be educated in the mainstream education system formed the basis of its principles:

- *It is believed that every child has a fundamental right to education,*
- *The unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs of every learner must be recognized in the practice of education,*
- *Learners experiencing barriers to learning and development must have access to regular schools that should be made to accommodate them in a child-centered pedagogy that will meet their needs,*
- *Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.*

3.4 DEFINING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

According to Corbett (2001:10) “ [i]nclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricular, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities”. He further reiterates that there should be adequate support and services to match the required needs of individual schools.

The Education White Paper 6 (RSA Department of Education 2001:6) defined inclusive education as education that is characterized by the following:

- *acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support;*

- *acknowledging and respecting that all learners are different in some way, and have different learning needs which are equally valued and form an ordinary part of our human experience;*
- *enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners;*
- *a never ending process rather than a simple change of state, increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from cultures, curricular and communities of local centers of learning;*
- *acknowledging and respecting differences in learners whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status;*
- *changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricular and the environment to meet the need of all learners;*
- *maximizing the participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimizing barriers to learning;*
- *empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning;*
- *broader than formal schooling, and acknowledging that learning occurs at home, the community, and within formal and informal contexts;*
- *acknowledging that learning occurs in the home and community and within formal and informal modes and structures.*

According to Lawson (2005:1) inclusive education relates to the “placement of learners with special education needs in mainstream schools and the participation of all learners in learning which leads to the highest possible level of achievement”. Engelbrecht, Swart, Eloff and Forlin (2000: n.p.) states that:

inclusive education compels the development of a single inclusive system of education which has the capacity to provide for appropriate ways and means to facilitate learning and meet the needs of all learners. Inclusion therefore implies both societal and educational change.

Engelbrecht (2003:4) further states that *inclusive education* is the term used to “describe educational policies and practices that uphold the right of learners with disabilities to belong

and learn in mainstream education.” This view resonates with that of Miles (2000:3) who posits the view that *inclusive education* is concerned with removing all the barriers that confront all learners irrespective of whether they are disabled or not. He further states that “... it is a strategic approach designed to facilitate learning success for all children.”

Similarly Moodley (2002:3) maintains that *inclusive education* refers to providing equal education to both, learners with disabilities as well as all disadvantaged learners. Disadvantaged learners will include “street and working learners, learners from remote or nomadic populations, learners from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities, as well as learners from other disadvantaged or marginalized groups”.

Daniels (2000:10) reiterates that *inclusive education* is concerned with the well-being of all learners:

It is a human rights approach to social relations and conditions. It welcomes differences and recognises individual needs, involving the identification and minimising of barriers to learning.

According to the NCSNET and NCESS report, *inclusive education* is defined as “a learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language” (RSA Department of Education 1997:55). This directs that a single education system is needed to provide all learners, irrespective of their diverse range of needs, diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, with a holistic education (RSA Department of Education 1997:55).

The above views indicate that the definition of inclusive education is complex. However, there is some consensus that inclusion transcends disability. It concerns gender, ethnicity, poverty, sexuality and individuality. Furthermore, it requires coordinated intervention at all levels of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system (see section 2.2). The participation of all stakeholders (families, educators and government) is necessary for successful inclusion. This researcher holds a positive view of inclusive education, believing that every learner should have access to learn in a mainstream environment, as it is his/her right as a South African citizen.

3.5 BARRIERS TO LEARNING

This section examines the possible barriers that confront learners with special education needs.

The focus on barriers to learning is crucial as it supports the proposition that learning difficulties may emanate from both within the learner with special education needs as well as within an educational structure (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht 2004:47). Barriers arising from a disadvantaged educational environment include inadequate teaching, lack of resources and absence of appropriate educational policies which could hamper inclusive education, and meaningful employment opportunities for learners with barriers to learning (see section 3.2.2).

‘Barriers to learning and development’ is a term that was adopted by the *NSNET* and the *NCESS* in October 1996 “ to expand the range of needs from the disabled few, to include other learners whose special needs often arise as a result of impediments to learning and development such as physical, mental, sensory neurological and developmental impairments, psycho-social disturbances, differences in intellectual ability, particular life experiences or socio-economic deprivation” (RSA Department of Education 1997:3). Barriers to learning refer to difficulties that relate to the education system as well as the specific school (RSA Department of Education 2005:7). These barriers may manifest within the education system and the broader social context. They prevent the needs of both the system and the learner from being met (RSA Department of Education 2005:7). The term ‘barriers’ implies that in order to promote effective learning, the education system has to accommodate a diverse range of needs amongst the learner population to combat them.

According to the Report of the *NSNET* and the *NCESS* (RSA Department of Education 1997:11-19) the key barriers found in the system include:

- socio-economic conditions
- attitudes
- inflexible curriculum
- language skills and communication
- inaccessible and unsafe building environments

- inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services
- lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy
- non-recognition and non-involvement of parents
- disability and lack of human resource development strategies

A discussion on the above barriers pertinent to this study will ensue.

3.5.1 Socio-economic conditions

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory proposes that external factors found at the various levels of the learner's ecological structure, will determine how the learner develops (Bronfenbrenner 1992:227; see section 2.2). These different levels cause a mutual effect on one another. For example, a child's poor socio- economic status which forms part of his/her microsystem is closely related to school dropout, substance abuse and family violence (Donald et al. 2006:185). This, in turn, affects the child's mesosystem which, according to Bronfenbrenner (1992:227), refers to the interconnections between factors operating at different levels within the child's ecosystem. What happens in the home can therefore influence the child's performance at school.

A study conducted by Muthukrishna (2000:3) found that due to economic factors such as poverty, a significant number of learners with special education needs were denied access to a basic education. Donald et al. (2006:168) further illustrates that poverty is inevitably linked to barriers to learning and the generation of further barriers to learning. Children living in poverty are more prone to health and safety risks, for example diseases, infections and injuries. These risks cause physical, cognitive and neurological problems which, in turn, can cause difficulties and disabilities in learning. Equally, an economically disadvantaged educational environment can cause barriers that result from inadequate facilities and resources. The link between socio-economic environment and the achievement of learners with barriers to learning is iterated by Nieman and Monyai (2008:47). They stated that learners from deprived socio-economic contexts are to a lesser degree, successful both educationally and socially.

3.5.2 Attitudes

Negative attitudes in our society remain critical barriers to learning and development. Prejudices directed towards learners in the education system, constitute barriers to learning (RSA Department of Education 2009:13).

It is effortless to change terms such as ‘mentally retarded’ and ‘intellectually/physically handicapped’ into more acceptable terms such as ‘learners with special educational needs’ or ‘learners with barriers to learning’. However, the complexity lies in the ability to transform the mindset of society. Society continues to view these learners as objects of pity and in need of assistance (see section 1.1). These negative attitudes adopted by society, are a result of fear and ignorance concerning the needs of learners with barriers to learning and the possible barriers that confront these learners. (Barriers to learning and development nd: online). These assumptions and misconceptions of learners with special education needs create a negative impact on job placement for the learner. Prospective employers are keen to offer skills training, but remain fearful and hesitant to commit to permanent employment (Agoratus 1998: online).

3.5.3 Curriculum

Inflexibility in the curriculum presents itself as a major barrier to learning for all learners. Thus, barriers prevalent within the curriculum should be investigated and addressed to ensure that the curriculum benefits the learning needs of all learners. “Since pace, style, language and circumstances of learning will never be uniform for all, there should be room for diverse formal or less formal approaches, as long as they ensure sound learning and confer equivalent status” (Lynch 2000:11). This directs that the learning programmes must be designed to meet the specific needs of learners. (RSA Department of Education 2009:2).

3.5.4 Language and communication

According to the *Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS): Grades R-9* (RSA Department of Education 2000:9) language is a major barrier to learning. Firstly, the language of teaching and learning at schools may not necessarily be the language that learners use in their homes. Therefore, they are not adequately competent to learn effectively. Learners in the rural areas have little exposure to English (Gericke 1999:32). Measures are often not put in place to enable accelerated acquisition of the language of teaching and learning. Secondly, learners who use South African sign language do not have access to the

language or in some cases have inadequate access to South African sign language. Thirdly, there are generally insufficient augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategies to support learners who lack verbal communication.

An attempt to overcome these barriers to language and communication is reflected in the Department of Education's policy. According to the *Revised National Curriculum Statement: Grades R-9* (RSA Department of Education 2000:9), in South Africa, sign language is considered an official language. Furthermore, Braille may be used as a medium of communication and learning. School management and teachers have to supply support and supplementary learning to a learner whose language spoken at home is not the language of instruction at school, until the learner is able to learn effectively through the language of choice adopted by the school.

3.5.5 Inaccessible and unsafe building environments

Some schools remain inaccessible to learners who require special structural facilities (Torreno 2010: online). Therefore, according to the *Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: Special Schools as Resource Centres* (RSA Department of Education 2007:15) classrooms must be designed to accommodate learners' special requirements such as assistive technology devices. Classrooms must also have appropriate furniture to cater for individual needs.

3.5.6 Non-recognition and non-involvement of parents

Parents are instrumental in the education of their children with special education needs (Daniels 2000:225; Engelbrecht 2003:206; Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasiow 1993:28). They can make an effective contribution towards school governance, planning and local policy making, building a supportive environment, as well as building the self-concept and competence of their child (Engelbrecht 2003:206).

Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasiow (1993:30) identify three primary functions of parents as team members. Firstly, their observations can be used meaningfully in the evaluation of the child's educational programme. Secondly, parents teach important specific skills (such as life skills, pre-academic, mobility and communication skills). Thirdly, they are in a position to ensure that a transfer of school activities to the home takes place.

The non-recognition and non-involvement of parents is one of the barriers expressed by Muthukrishna (in Engelbrecht 2001:162), which prevent maximum participation of learners with special education needs in inclusive development.

3.5.7 Inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services to learners with barriers to learning and educators at special schools

The provision of support services refers to support provided to learners as well as educators in special schools. According to the *National Strategy On Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support* (RSA Department of Education 2007:9) schools should provide specialized support programmes geared towards staffing (including psycho-social and health professionals), the curriculum, physical infra-structure, availability of assistive technology, and the training and qualifications of staff. Furthermore, learning and teaching support material must be available in a format that is tailored towards learners' specific needs such as Braille and large print (RSA Department of Education 2007:13).

The current emphasis on placing the child and his/her environment in the centre of education of learners with special needs has created a need for a greater level of support to ensure that all learners have their needs adequately met (Donald et al. 2006:20). Therefore, support needs to be provided from microsystemic through exosystemic to macrosystemic levels. In this regard, Donald et al. (2006:25) mentions provision of support services by school support teams (the principal, a small group of educators, parents, students, and other professional and community leaders) and district support teams (psychologists, therapists, learning support educators, social workers and health workers, curriculum specialists and administrative experts). The inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services thus poses a barrier to learning to learners with special education needs.

3.5.8 Physical factors

The facilities or lack thereof that is available to learners with special education needs such as proper transport facilities, accessible buildings as well as specialist rooms can hamper or support effective learning (Barriers to learning and development n.d: online). A school that

has specialist rooms facilitates the prevocational preparation of their learners with special education needs for the world of work.

3.6 VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNERS WITH BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The most crucial goal of educators of learners with barriers to learning is to equip learners with the skills necessary to attain gainful employment other than in protective workshops, training centres and sheltered employment. This challenge is made easier if educators are aware of legislative mandates and policies that directly impact on the learner's access to vocational education and transition planning options. Hence, this section illustrates the South African government's commitment to provide opportunities for persons with disabilities by discussing legislative mandates and policies pertinent to people with disabilities. Furthermore, educators must familiarise themselves with appropriate job opportunities that currently exist in the world of work for learners with barriers to learning in South Africa.

Interestingly, great advancements and achievements in vocational training and transition planning of learners with special education needs from school to the workplace that are applied in the United States of America, are not prevalent in vocational education and training for learners with barriers to learning in Southern Africa. Since this is an area that has largely been neglected (Akoojee, Gewer & McGrath 2005:1; see section 1.1), a general model of transition planning in the United States of America is presented in section 3.7. The model is not implied to be prescriptive. However, it could serve as a useful guide in assisting school managers to effectively prepare their learners with barriers to learning for the world of work.

3.6.1 The National Curriculum Statement

As mentioned in section 1.1, the *National Curriculum Statement* (NCS) is underlined by principles of social justice, human rights, a healthy environment and inclusivity. The principle of inclusivity ensures the participation and value of all learners. Learning outcome 5 of the 'Life Orientation Area' is pivoted on an "[o]rientation to the world of work" which emphasizes social development and assimilation within the community (RSA Department of Education 2004:15). The learner has to be prepared for all future opportunities. With the

dynamic rate of development in society, learners must be equipped to adapt to all changes. “Orientation to the world of work” ensures that learners are able to deal with all the complexities of day to day living, using all their prior learning such as skills, knowledge, values and attitudes (RSA Department of Education 2004:4-6;15).

3.6.2 Strategies for the promotion of equitable vocational pre-employment and on-the-job training for people with disabilities

The majority of people with disabilities in South Africa continue to be affected by unemployment. There have been many legislative changes geared towards ensuring employment equity for people with disabilities. One such initiative is the ‘*Strategies for the promotion of equitable vocational pre-employment and on-the-job training for people with disabilities*’ provided in the *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:47). These strategies that promote equitable vocational, pre-employment and on-the-job training for people with disabilities in all sectors of the economy include:

- skills development
- inclusive training (‘mainstreaming’)
- training standards
- positive action
- inter-sectoral collaboration

3.6.2.1 Skills development

According to the *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:47) skills development is closely linked to socio-economic development and increased employment opportunities. It has also been related to the HIV/AIDS pandemic since the soaring death rate caused by HIV/AIDS impacts on skills training as it results in a severe drain of skilled human resources in the country (Akoojee, Gewer & McGrath 2005:4). According to the *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:47) the aim of skills development should be to encourage incessant learning to suit a constantly changing environment.

The Department of Labour presented a *National Skills Development Strategy* (NSDS) on 1 April 2005. The *Sector Education and Training Authority* (SETA) and the *National Skills Fund* (NSF) focus on skills development in South Africa. SETA is directed towards transformation and training in all industries. On 3 June 2007, SETA pledged its commitment to develop “sustainable, non-discriminatory and accessible training opportunities for people living with disabilities” after which it formed partnerships with organisations which represent people with disabilities. The challenges facing SETA mentioned in *The Skillsportal- Exploring the New World of Work* (2007: online) are:

- The inability to identify learners living with disabilities,
- The incapacity to implement programmes that will be attractive to learners with disabilities,
- Inadequate research on training needs of learners with disabilities.

3.6.2.2 Inclusive Training (‘mainstreaming’)

The *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:47) states that, the aim of pre-employment training strategies and programmes should be to promote easy access to mainstream vocational training institutions and related programmes to people with disabilities. Furthermore, people with disabilities must be provided with the necessary support services in this regard.

3.6.2.3 Training standards

According to the *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:47) deviations from the “standards of training modules, course content, trade tests and certification” of the general vocational training system are required in order to cater for particular needs of trainees with disabilities. These deviations should be incorporated into the *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF).

3.6.2.4 Positive Action

The *White Paper on an Integrated Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:47) promulgates that employees with disabilities should be given the right to participate in upgrading courses and training programmes.

3.6.2.5 Inter-sectoral collaboration

The *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:42) asserts that government departments, non-governmental institutions and the private sector must work as a team to facilitate employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

3.6.3 Employment possibilities for learners with barriers to learning in South Africa

Presently there are four employment opportunities for learners with barriers to learning to consider: protective and sheltered employment, supported employment, employment obtained with the assistance of an employment agency and, to a lesser degree, competitive employment. The choice of employment will depend on the ability of the learner (Akoojee et al. 2005:32). As will be shown, employment agencies make a meaningful contribution with regard to the employment of people with disabilities.

3.6.3.1 Protective and sheltered employment

Crouch and Alers (2005:222) refer to sheltered employment as employment that is provided for people who are unable to perform job tasks in an ordinary competitive employment environment due to their disability. The main disadvantages of sheltered employment are low salaries, limited opportunities for integration and limited job training experiences (Hallahan & Kauffman 2006:161).

Within the South African context, the *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:44) indicates that “protective sheltered employment includes sheltered workshops and protective work environments within ordinary places of work and that employment opportunities within a sheltered environment should be available to people who, because of their disability, are unable to attain an ordinary job, whether they are financially supported by the government or not”.

3.6.3.2 Supported employment

Supported employment assists people with disabilities who are unable to function independently in the competitive open employment sector. It is a method of ensuring that people with disabilities are able to work in integrated work settings alongside people without

disabilities. Supported employment requires the assistance of a job coach. A job coach places the individual in a job or business and provides on-site training that is gradually reduced as the worker is able to function more independently on the job (Hallahan & Kauffman 2006:71). Supported employment allows individuals with significant intellectual disabilities to maintain their integrity and pride by working in an environment that allows them to function in a protected work situation whilst still undergoing continuous development. (Lynch 2002:2).

3.6.3.3 Competitive employment

Competitive employment is usually defined as working approximately twenty hours per week at a type of job usually filled by a person without disabilities. In competitive employment, workers receive minimum wages and work alongside most workers who are not disabled. (Hallahan & Kauffman 2006:162).

3.6.3.4 Employment agencies

The purpose of an employment agency is to offer training, followed by support and raising awareness of the need of employment for persons with disabilities among employers, thereby improving the employment possibilities for persons with disabilities (Disability Employment Services n.d: online).

Bradshaw LeRoux Consulting and Disabled Placements is a South African company that “specialises in competency and skills based assessment processes for people with disabilities in terms of the workplace. The agency is involved in recruitment and selection, the identification of training needs, career development and succession planning, and selection for leadership development programmes and learnerships” (Bradshaw LeRoux Consulting n.d:online).

Abacus Recruitment and *Skyward* employment services review the key performance areas of vacancies within a company to determine the suitability of the position for a person with a disability (Abacus Recruitment and Skyward employment services n.d: online).

EmployAbility-Vulindlela (“Opening the way”) is a Section 21 Company (non-profit organisation) which was established in 2003 by a group of parents of children with

intellectual disabilities. The company focuses on supported employment for persons with disabilities. They focus on integrating people with intellectual disabilities into the mainstream labour market (Employability-Vulindlela n.d: online).

3.6.4 Policy and legislation in South Africa

Many barriers such as societal ignorance, stigmatisation and unfair discrimination of learners with barriers to learning have caused a despondent and inept attitude amongst educators and school managers. It is therefore vital that school managers are aware of the government's commitment to provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities. The onus is on school managers, in collaboration with educators, to provide the necessary skills to equip learners with barriers to learning to attain sustainable employment.

The South African government has shown its commitment to the 'equalization of opportunities' for people with disabilities through legislative means which are discussed below.

3.6.4.1 The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996)

The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) reigns supreme in the Republic of South Africa. The Constitution provides legal protection to every individual from any form of unfair discrimination on any grounds as per section 9 (3) of the *Bill of Rights*. The *Bill of Rights* includes the equality clause and the right to freedom from discrimination based on a number of social criteria (RSA 1996, section 9 (3)). Discrimination regarding disabilities is specifically cited and disabled people are assured of their right of equality equal to that of all other citizens.

The South African Constitution (RSA 1996, section 28 (2)) deals exclusively with Children's rights and is based on the *Convention of the Rights of the Child* (1989) of the United Nations. With regard to employment (RSA 1996, section 28) it states that the child should not be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that:

- *are inappropriate for a person of that child's age or;*
- *place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health, spiritual, moral or social development.*

3.6.4.2 The *South African Labour Relations Act* 66 of 1995 and the *Amendment Labour Relations Act* 12 of 2002

The *South African Labour Relations Act* (RSA 1995, schedule 8 (11)) addresses the issue of unfair dismissal of any employee on account of disability. It requires that prior to dismissing an employee with a disability, an investigation into possible means of adapting the employee's work conditions to accommodate the disability, needs to be considered (RSA Department of Education 1995:online).

As shown in the *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:41) the *Code of Good Practice* forms part of the *Labour Relations Act*. The *Code of Good Practice* serves as a guide to employers and employees on promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment for people with disabilities in accordance with the *Employment Equity Act* 55 of 1998.

According to the Government Gazette 23718 (RSA Department of Labour 2002: online) unfair discrimination against people with disabilities is propagated in the following ways:

- *unfounded assumptions about the abilities and performance of job applicants and employees with disabilities;*
- *advertising and interviewing arrangements which either exclude people with disabilities or limit their opportunities to prove themselves;*
- *using selection tests which discriminate unfairly;*
- *inaccessible workplaces;*
- *inappropriate training for people with disabilities.*

3.6.4.3 The *South African Employment Equity Act* 55 of 1998

The *Employment Equity Act* 55 of 1998 defines people with disabilities as “people who have a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment which substantially limits their prospects from taking part in daily life on an equal level with others in the community, such as entry into or advancement in employment”. “Specific emphasis is placed on ensuring equity, the right to equal protection and benefit of the law for people with disabilities”.

According to the *Government Gazette*, 23718 (RSA 2002: online) the aims of the *South African Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998* are to:

- *protect people with disabilities against unfair discrimination in the workplace and direct employers to implement affirmative action measures to redress discrimination;*
- *serve as a guide for employers and employees on promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment for people with disabilities as required by the act;*
- *help employers and employees understand their rights and obligations, promote certainty and reduce disputes to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy and exercise their rights at work;*
- *help create awareness of the contributions people with disabilities can make and to encourage employers to fully use the skills of such persons.*

3.6.4.4 *The Skills Development Act 97 of 1998*

According to the *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:2-3) inadequate education resulting in low skills among people with disabilities is a contributory factor to the almost 99 percent of disabled people excluded from employment in the open labour market. *The Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998* is geared towards providing employment to people who were previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination. This can be achieved through education and training. In this regard, the target population will be people with disabilities, more especially people with disabilities from disadvantaged ethnic groups. The targets state that the beneficiaries of the strategy should be 85% black, 54% female and 4% people with disabilities (Dube 2005: online).

3.6.4.5 *The South African Reconstruction and Development Programme*

The *Reconstruction and Development Programme* in the *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:17) states:

The Government will design, in consultation with disabled people, a comprehensive programme for the disabled which will enhance their mobility in society and remove discriminatory practices against them, especially in the

workplace. Government will also discuss means to reintegrate disabled people into their communities, especially those who are mentally disabled.

The above statement is indicative of the South African government's commitment to ensure the development and integration of people with disabilities into all sectors of life.

3.6.4.6 The Promotion of Equity and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000

The act is committed to ensuring equality and non-discrimination of all people with disabilities. It further supports the needs and rights of disabled people by addressing aspects around environmental accessibility and assistance in the workplace. Therefore, the *Promotion of Equity and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 2000* expressly prohibits any unfair discrimination on the basis of disability.

3.6.4.7 The Disability Rights Charter of South Africa (1992)

The *Disability Rights Charter* (RSA 1992, section 7) states that there will be no discrimination against disabled people and that they shall enjoy equal opportunities in all spheres of life, such as education, employment in the open labour market, sport and access to recreational activities. In addition to equal opportunities, disabled people shall also have the right to accessible and affordable housing and transport; the right to safe and accessible environments; the right to communicate freely and participate in social life activities; and the right to be treated with respect and dignity. It is also stated that legislation shall be developed and enforced to provide all disabled people with opportunities geared towards their full enjoyment of their rights to enable them to reach their full potential in life. The *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA 1997: online).

Despite a strong moral and political commitment by the state to take action for the equalisation of opportunities for people with disabilities, the *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA Department of Education 1997:41) has indicated that only a small number of people with disabilities were employed in the open labour market (see section 1.2) It is therefore imperative that a curriculum suitable for learners with barriers to

learning is formulated with special emphasis on pre-vocational skills training to ensure that learners become contributing and valued citizens in a diverse and changing society.

3.7 VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND TRANSITION PLANNING FOR LEARNERS WITH BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

According to Greene and Kocchar-Bryant (2003:14) a transition may be defined as “a continuing process of movement toward independent adulthood. This may occur in two directions, horizontally where a learner transits from one level of education to another, or vertically transiting from the school environment to the place of work”. The latter has relevance to this particular study.

In South Africa, there has been a dearth of research opportunities regarding the transition of learners with barriers to learning from school to the workplace. Furthermore, the field of vocational training for learners with barriers to learning at special schools has been disregarded. A gap exists between what is learned at school and what is required in the workplace. This is one of the reasons why the researcher has opted to undertake this study (see section 1.2).

Although the United Kingdom has made strides in transition planning and vocational training for their learners with barriers to learning, Joseph Rowntree (in Beyer & Kaehne 2008: online) states that “there remains much to be done to successfully develop and implement transition pathways that meet the aspirations of young people with disabilities.”

The extensive educational programmes in the United States of America, however, have shown a tremendous surge in activity and achievement in vocational training and transition planning including those for learners with barriers to learning. Literature on vocational and transitional training programmes for learners with barriers to learning in the United States of America is easily accessible and their vocational training and transition programmes have been proven successful (Pierangelo & Guiliani 2006:140). Pierangelo and Guiliani (2006:355) further resonate that career education and transition education for LSEN in the United States of America came about as the result of its introduction by Federal Law. The

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 instructs that a free and appropriate public education system must be available to children with special education needs. Further, the education system must emphasize special education and related services to meet individual needs geared towards preparing learners for employment and independent living.

Below, a general model of a vocational training and transition planning programme adopted by the United States of America, is provided. It is discussed in detail as this model is also used to formulate a curriculum for vocational and transitional education for learners with barriers to learning in the United States of America.

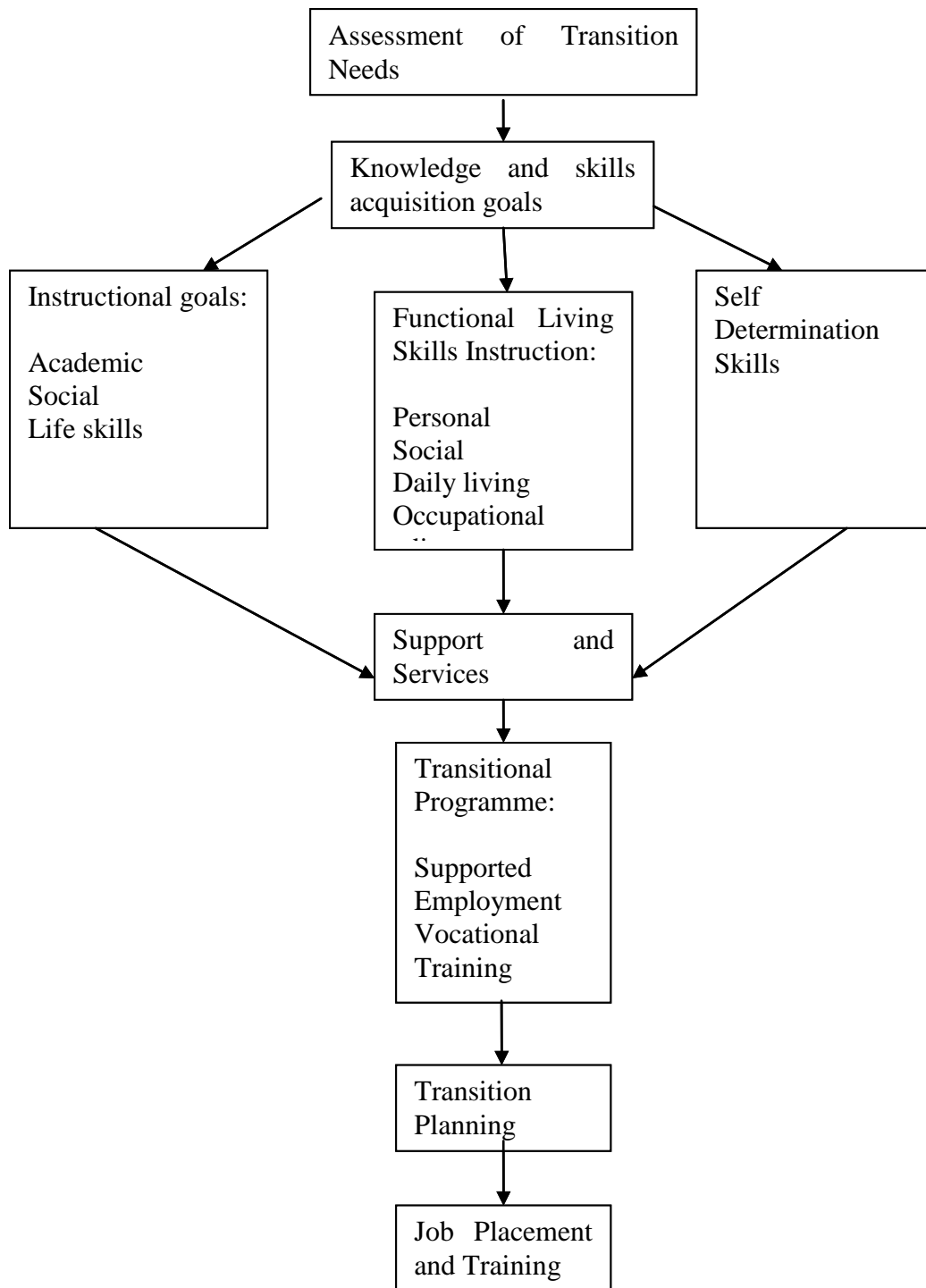


FIGURE 3.1 The Transition Planning Process

(Source: Polloway, Patton & Serna 2001:524)

3.7.1 The transition planning process

In this section the aspects pertaining to the transition planning process for learners with barriers to learning are discussed: the assessment of transition needs, knowledge and skills acquisition goals, supports and services, transitional programmes, transition planning, and job placement and training.

3.7.1.1 Assessment of transition needs

The first task is the assessment of transition needs which focuses on a ‘person centred’ planning approach. Person centred planning constitutes a large part of the vocational training and transition planning for students with barriers to learning. Swartz, Jacobson and Holburn (2000) (in Hallahan & Kauffman 2006:43) suggest that person centred planning involves planning the person’s activities, services and supports based on his/her dreams, interests, preferences, strengths and capacities. This ideally involves obtaining information from school-based sources, the student and the family (Polloway et al. 2001:523). Interviews with significant people in the learner’s life such as the learner’s family members, teachers, friends and councilors are in the position to reveal information on the learner’s future aspirations as an adult. Learners’ siblings are more pragmatic than their parents in providing information with regards to the learner’s future goals, as well as their abilities. Information provided by family and friends (in the microsystem) can assist the school support team in making decisions regarding preparing the learner with skills required for a specific job (Sitlington, Clark & Kolstoe 2000:112). Having mentioned this, the following step in the transition planning process is the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

3.7.1.2 Knowledge and skills acquisition goals

Knowledge and skills goals are related to the academic, social and life skills areas that are reflected in the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP). According to Pierangelo and Guiliani (2006:136) the IEP is “a key document developed by the parents, teachers and related services personnel that sets out how the child receives a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment”.

Knowledge and skills goals are referred to as instructional goals (Polloway et al. 2001:528). Skill oriented instruction is important because it teaches students skills that relate to academic areas that they may find difficult. Skills are broken down and taught to the students over time

(Mercer 2001:577). Zigmond (in Mercer 2001:577) mentions that instruction in basic academic skills is essential for helping students succeed in employment and in independent living situations. The experiences, attitudes, knowledge and skills that the individual with barriers to learning obtains are applied in the workplace and could result in better performance and motivation of the individual. Improvement in performance and motivation could create a cycle of positive events for the employee. This is in keeping with Bronfenbrenner's concept of the child's ecosystem operating in a cyclical way where the interconnections between the school and the community exert reciprocal influences on one another (see section 2.2).

Functional Living Skills Instruction, a component of the knowledge and skills acquisition goals, is designed for students whose academic skills are very low. Functional skills refer to those an adult needs to perform successfully in a variety of community settings (Mercer 2001:579). This is included in the *Functional Curriculum* which Clark 1991 (in Mercer 2001:579) defines as "instructional content that focuses on the concepts and skills needed by students in the areas of personal, social, daily living, and occupational adjustment". Within the framework of a 'life-centered curriculum', the following competencies in daily living skills are provided by Brolin 1993 (in Mercer 2001:579):

- Selecting and managing a household
- Caring for personal needs
- Raising children and meeting marriage responsibilities
- Buying, preparing and consuming food
- Exhibiting responsible citizenship
- Utilising recreational facilities and engaging in leisure activities
- Getting in and around the community

Teaching social skills also form part of the *Functional Living Skills Instruction* since they are necessary for the student to be able to take part and be accepted in community activities. Social skills are also taught within the 'traditional curriculum' in all grades. Each school must decide for itself what should be taught, to whom, and in what way. Ideally, the school should lay out a scope and sequence curriculum for all students and ensure that all students have access to it (Sitlington et al. 2000:144).

Teaching self-determination skills constitutes an important aspect of the vocational training and transition planning programme for students with barriers to learning. Westling and Fox 2000 (in Hallahan & Kauffman 2006:150) mention that “self-determination involves the ability to make personal choices to regulate one’s life and to be a self-advocate”. In this regard it should be mentioned that the professional organization, the *American Association on Mental Retardation* (AAMR), has adopted position statements supporting the idea of self-determination (Hallahan & Kauffman 2006:152).

As reflected in Hallahan and Kauffman (2006:152), the following are excerpts from the AAMR’S self-determination policy:

- *The AAMR will uphold the right to self-determination as the right to act as the primary causal agent in one’s life, to pursue self-defined goals and to participate fully in society. Self-determining individuals control their lives; make choices and decisions based on their interests, abilities and preferences and take responsibility for their lives.*
- *People with mental retardation must have the opportunity to advocate for themselves, without fear of punishment, and with the knowledge that their demands and suggestions will be heard and given fair consideration.*
- *AAMR recognizes and supports the right of individuals with mental retardation to self-determination in every aspect of decision making that affects them as individuals, including living arrangements, work, religious participation, personal relationships and control of their private funds designated for the purchase of services for them as individuals.*

Westling and Fox 2000 (in Hallahan & Kauffman 2006:150) state that a person who is self-determined exhibits four characteristics:

- Autonomy
- Self-regulation
- Psychological empowerment
- Self-realization

Self-determination skills cannot be taught optimally without successfully mastering the specific foundation knowledge and skills such as reading, writing, creative thinking and responsibility. However, this does not mean that learners with barriers to learning cannot proceed along the path to job placement and training as depicted in Figure 3.1.

As a result of a comprehensive transition needs assessment, instructional goals as mentioned in section 3.7.1.2 are generated. Linkage goals, however, are required in order to achieve the instructional goals. Linkage goals refers to connections with needed supports and services (Polloway et al. 2001:528).

3.7.1.3 Supports and services

Where teachers in general traditionally planned lessons on their own, inclusive education requires that they now collaborate reciprocally with other people including experts in certain fields. Mercer (2001:576) mentions supports and services and their roles in the transition programme for students with barriers to learning as follows:

- Special educators: Serve as transition case managers; teach job-related academic skills as well as social skills; assist in finding and maintaining a job by working with the transition team.
- Guidance Counselors: Provide career, individual and small-group counseling.
- Vocational evaluator or school psychologist: Carries out assessments related to a specific vocation.
- Employers: Provide information related to jobs, e.g. job needs, requirements, job training sites and permanent jobs; evaluate students before and after graduation.
- Vocational educators: Provide vocational training both in and out of school; make changes when appropriate; obtain information regarding job needs and job requirements.
- Parents: Provide assistance to adolescents in terms of career options and career goals. Also assist with promoting independence.
- Students: Attain the necessary skills required to be successful in postsecondary educational settings including their jobs; attain skills to be functionally independent.

- Vocational rehabilitation counselors: Obtain financial support for job-related services; provide vocational evaluation information; assist with placing the student in a suitable job; and provide support services.

3.7.1.4 Transitional programmes

Effective transitional programmes are geared towards preparing learners, including learners with disabilities, to function optimally in many adult roles to attain an acceptable quality of life (Mercer & Mercer 2001:576). The *Vocational and Rehabilitation Department* of the United States of America has developed a variety of programmes on national and local levels to assist all youngsters, including youngsters with disabilities, in making a successful transition from school to work. One such programme is *Supported Employment*. *Supported Employment* entails placing an individual in an actual work setting with a supervisor to assist in the mastery of the tasks involved (Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasiow 1993:255). Kirk et al. (1993:255) further state that coaching is diminished and that the supervisor is gradually removed although they remain available for counseling and emotional support. The goal of this programme is to enable the person with learning disabilities to live an independent and self-sufficient life.

Transitional programmes imply supported employment and vocational training. Vocational training specifically focuses on developing vocational skills essential to entering the world of work (Mercer & Mercer 2001:585).

3.7.1.5 Transition planning

The development of a formal transition plan as part of each learner's *Individualised Vocational Programme (IVP)*, starts at the age of fourteen (The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* in Pierangelo and Guiliani 2006:355). This plan is important for several reasons. The plan sets out what should be taught (knowledge and skills), the level of present performance of the learner, the steps needed to be taught to accomplish the goal, the proposed date of completion and the person(s) responsible for implementation of the goal (Polloway et al. 2001:529). The major transition planning areas include career and economic self sufficiency, community integration and participation, personal competence and, student career preference.

3.7.1.6 Job placement and training

Job placement, training and supervision for learners with special education needs may be assumed by a professional who does this as a full time job or by a classroom teacher who teaches for a portion of the day and serves as placement coordinator for the remainder of the day (Sitlington, Clark & Kolstoe 2000:171).

The benefits of ‘on the job’ training are immeasurable because a relevant learning environment allows learners with barriers to learning to be exposed to real work experiences; tools required to perform the job/task; interpersonal relationships with both employers and fellow colleagues; basic academic and technical skills; as well as developing an understanding of the link between school and work (Bender 2008:378).

Mercer and Mercer (2001:573) states that many individuals with learning disabilities regrettably have jobs that accentuate their weakness. A job that requires extensive organisation is not advisable for a learner with organizational skills deficits. The placement coordinator will need to take cognisance of this when considering individual placements, prior to the job coach or coordinator providing vocational training. According to Hallahan et al. (2006:462) a job coach is defined as “a person who assists adult workers with disabilities (especially those with mental retardation), providing vocational assessment, instruction, overall planning, interaction and assistance with employers, family and related government and service agencies”.

The business community presents an important linkage to job placement and training. Polloway et al. (2001:528) states that the business community is a source of training sites. Furthermore, the business community contains a large number of potential employers.

Additional important linkages are the vocational rehabilitation agencies, whose primary function is to provide services to persons at, or near, employment age. The state vocational rehabilitation agencies provide testing and evaluation to determine job potential and skills training, placement in temporary or permanent jobs, follow up and adjustment counseling, and evaluation (Polloway et al. 2001:528).

The United States of America have the following community organisations that serve in the development of comprehensive transitional networks (Polloway et al. 2001:533):

- institutions of higher education (community colleges, four year colleges, universities)
- trade and technical schools
- private/non-profit organisations that provide services/assistance
- rehabilitation centres
- mental health centres
- military services
- recreational programmes
- government agencies that provide services to persons with disabilities

After job placement, careful consideration must be given to the best way to teach the learner the necessary skills needed in completing the job.

3.7.2 Employment models

Employment for people with disabilities supports the opportunity to be independent and contribute to the country's economy. The primary models of employment for people with disabilities in the United States of America includes sheltered workshops and supported competitive employment.

3.7.2.1 Sheltered Workshops

According to Hallahan and Kauffman (2006:161) sheltered workshops offer structured training with other workers with disabilities on jobs requiring relatively low skills. The criticisms relating to this type of employment include the following (see section 3.6.3.1):

- Workers earn a low salary
- All workers are disabled; limited opportunity for integration exists
- Work is repetitive; job training experiences are therefore limited

3.7.2.2 Supported Competitive Employment

In contrast to sheltered employment, supported competitive employment involves receiving at least the minimum wage in integrated work settings, accompanied by ongoing assistance provided by a job coach. Research indicates that supported competitive employment leads to better employment outcomes (McDonnell in Hallahan & Kauffman 2006:162).

3.8 CONCLUSION

This literature study describes the medical and social discourse of disability. Reliance on the medical model served to disempower and isolate people with disabilities from mainstream society, limiting them in the social, political and economic spheres of life. The study showed that the environment itself can cause barriers, hampering inclusive education and consequently meaningful employment opportunities for learners with barriers to learning.

Having considered the vocational and transitional planning for learners with barriers to learning in America, it is apparent that this process is complex. It certainly has potential for implementation in South Africa where very few learners with barriers to learning transcend to a place of work after they have left school.

In the following chapter, the researcher presents the research design.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews and outlines the research design. It discusses the interpretivist paradigm, the qualitative approach and the case study approach which is relevant to this study. The researcher explores the methodology used to collect data. The chapter also focuses on reasons for the choice of such methods. Sampling method and techniques are outlined. The chapter further explains data gathering procedures. The researcher takes careful consideration of ethical relations within the research study, including issues of trustworthiness. The chapter concludes with data analysis and techniques as well as the limitation of the research study.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is crucial as it guides the manner in which the research will be conducted. Further, the research design serves as a link between the research questions and the actual execution of the research. Essentially, it provides a strategy that details the way in which the research is implemented so that it answers the research questions (Blanche & Durrheim 1999:29).

Punch (2009:112) describes a research design as “all issues involved in planning and executing a research project - from first identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing the results”.

The researcher employed a qualitative research design in the study of the three special schools. This research design was used to interpret how principals and educators understand and promote inclusive education in general, and especially in terms of preparing learners for employment in the open labour market.

The research design is framed by the interpretivist paradigm, the qualitative approach, and the case study approach. The rationale supporting this statement is that the interpretivist paradigm is linked to the qualitative approach as both imply information that is subjective,

arising from the experience of participants. This linkage would also apply to the case study approach, since case studies is a collection of single units consisting of participants with beliefs that are linked to personal experiences. A detailed discussion on the above will ensue.

4.2.1 Interpretivist paradigm

Mertens (2010:7) defines a paradigm as “a way of looking at the world.” This is resonated in Lynch’s (2003:2) statement that “a paradigm can be thought of as a lens through which we view the world”. Lynch (2003:2) further states that “different lenses entail different assumptions about the nature of the world and the ways in which we should attempt to understand it”.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:108) describe a paradigm as:

...a set of beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of ‘the world’, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts...

All of the above researchers view the paradigm as referring to the way in which one views the world and how this perception affects one’s understanding thereof.

The researcher elaborates on three paradigms, such as the positivist paradigm, the interpretivist paradigm and the critical paradigm. The researcher attempts to compare the respective paradigms as well as to validate the interpretivist paradigm as the method of choice for this study. Prior to discussing the interpretivist paradigm chosen for this study, the researcher will briefly delineate the positivist and critical paradigms.

According to Punch (2009:18) the positivists operate under the assumption of objectivity. Similarly, Check and Schutt (2012:15) state positivists believe that there is an objective reality separate from knowledge acquired from sheer observation, and that research is an investigation aimed at clearly understanding this. The implication is that the truth and the individual researcher are quite distinct from each other and that this enables research to be objective and free from value judgments.

The critical paradigm, on the other hand, holds that by virtue of the researchers having values, they are subjective in a positive manner. A critical research paradigm will thus concentrate on the improvement of human conditions whilst focusing on the influence of power and conflict on human behavior. Research in the critical paradigm is primarily geared towards education and societal justice (Lynch 2003:3).

In contrast to the positivist and critical paradigm, Check and Schutt (2012:15) state that interpretivists believe that educational reality is developed by people and that the task of the researcher is to interpret perceptions that people give to reality and not the reality detached from these perceptions. Similarly, Henning (2004:51) is of the opinion that “interpretivist research is a communal process informed by participating practitioners and endorsed by others”.

An advantageous explanation of the interpretivist paradigm is offered by Lynch (2003:2) when he says that “[rather] than seeking a true match between our research observations and reality, the interpretivist paradigm understands reality as being constructed in, and through, our observations and pursuit of knowledge”.

A further clarification of the interpretivist paradigm is offered by Blanche and Durrheim (1999:123) when they state that people’s experiences are real, and understanding them can only happen through sincere communication and interactions with people.

The choice of the interpretivist paradigm is appropriate, since it offered an in-depth understanding of how the selected principals and educators perceived and implemented inclusive education and vocational training.

4.2.2 Qualitative Approach

According to Mertens (2010:225) “qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of them or to interpret these phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. This approach serves as an advantage to the study as it enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of participants in terms of their own perceptions of inclusive education and vocational training within their specific school

contexts. It further allowed the researcher to understand the participant's personal experience.

The qualitative research approach uses data that consists of words in the form of verbal explanations (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:30). This is relevant to the research being undertaken as the researcher determined meaning and understanding through the use of interviews with principals and educators.

The researcher used two characteristics of qualitative research, as defined by Mertens (2010:331) to employ a qualitative research method. Firstly, qualitative research basically looks at events, processes, values and actions from the perspective of those being studied. Similarly, in this research project, an important aspect is the perspectives of principals and educators in the selected schools with regard to inclusive education and vocational training. Secondly, qualitative research supports a relatively open-ended and less structured research strategy which allows for adjustments as the research field demands. This is ideal for the study of diverse schools (see section 2.3.4) as schools differ linguistically, culturally as well as in their levels of resources. Further, the researcher used the qualitative research approach to allow for new developments such as new thoughts and underlying issues that became apparent during the study. This was necessary in the context of this study where the inclusion policy, which is still somewhat relatively recent, was studied (see section 3.3). It is a possibility that new developments relating to the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning may occur during the process of this research.

A qualitative approach allows adequate detail to support the researcher's conclusion (Merriam & Associates 2002:19). Findings in this study are supported by quotations from people interviewed, observation in the form of field notes and references from supporting documents. This ensures a "rich, thick description and interpretation" (Merriam & Associates 2002:21) (see section 1.3.2).

To reiterate, this study is framed by a qualitative research design and enclosed within the interpretivist paradigm using a case study approach.

4.2.3 Case Study

Hitchcock and Hughes (in Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000:182) ascribe the following characteristics to case studies which hallmark it:

- Rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case;
- Chronological narrative of events relevant to the case;
- Description of events with the analysis of them;
- Focuses on individual actors or groups of actors and seeks to understand their perceptions of events;
- Highlights specific events that are relevant to the case;
- Portraying the richness of the case in writing up the report.

McDuffie and Scruggs (2008:92) describe a single case study as an approach that involves a detailed investigation of a single case. Similarly, Merriam (in Henning 2004:41) clarifies that “a case study is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation and its meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation”. The issue of understanding persons in their context, and from their perspectives, is also emphasized by Cohen and Manion (in Bassey 1999:24).

Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011:444) refer to a case study as a qualitative approach where researchers focus on a unit of study known as a bounded system, for example, individual teachers, a classroom or a school. In this study, the units were the principals, selected educators and learners involved in pre-vocational skills training in the selected special schools.

The researcher attempted to discover how principals and selected educators in special schools understand inclusive education, especially vocational training, and how this understanding has facilitated the preparation of learners with special education needs for the world of work. Furthermore, this case study design was used to formulate recommendations regarding the management of vocational preparation of learners based on present evidence. This coincides with Yin’s thought that a case study is the preferred strategy when “how” questions are being asked (Yin 2003:1). The question of “how” principals and educators prepare learners for the world of work was paramount in this research study.

Mendaglio (2003:163) mentions that the use of a case study enables researchers to let others hear their participants' voices. Hence, a qualitative case study served to deepen the understanding of inclusive education and vocational training as perceived by the participants.

Similarly, Leedy and Omrod (2005:135) and (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell 2005:25) state that a case study involves the in-depth investigation of an individual, a programme or an event for a specific period of time. They also emphasize that the objective is generally to study the dynamics of some single bounded system. For example, a family, a group of participants in a project, institution or practice. This implies that a case study focuses on a single case. However, Punch (2009:120) states that a further characteristic of a case study involves using various sources of data and various methods to collect data. Similarly, for the purpose of this research, the researcher used multiple case studies, that is, a case study from each selected school which formed one collective case study, to collect extensive data on the management of inclusive education in general and specifically in terms of preparing learners for employment.

As this is a qualitative research project, a wide range of data collection methods were utilized. This included interviews with principals and educators, observation of learners at places of work in their natural settings (within and outside school) as well as documentary analysis to ensure a better understanding of the research study.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.3.1 Methods of data collection

Generally, qualitative researchers use three main methods for collecting data, namely observation, interviews and records review (Mertens 2010:241). Therefore, in an attempt to present adequate data to support the findings of the study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews, observation and documentary analysis. This would further allow for triangulation (see chapter 1.3.6) where the use of more than one method of collecting data is used. Triangulation facilitated the trustworthiness of data as well as it assisted in understanding human behaviour by studying it from more than one perspective.

4.3.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

Koshy (2010:85) states that a researcher should conduct interviews to gather responses which are more in-depth and informative than questionnaire data. The advantages of interviews are delineated by Koshy (2010:88):

- *Interview transcripts provide powerful evidence when presenting data and making conclusions.*
- *Interviews can provide a relaxed context for exploration.*
- *Information from interviews can supplement what has been gathered from other methods of data collection, for example observation and documentary analysis.*
- *The interviewer can steer the discussion through a fruitful route.*
- *Interviews can often provide unexpected but useful perspectives.*

The researcher had selected semi-structured individual interviews as one of the methods of data collection. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher prepares a set of questions in addition to a set of sub-questions. This is used to further elicit ideas in order to gather more information (Koshy 2010:87). A semi-structured interview allowed for further clarification and elaboration. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview ensured coverage of the important issues, yet allowed for flexibility in the participant's response.

A one-on-one interview will reveal information about the worldview of a single individual in terms of the phenomenon that is researched (James, Milenkiewicz & Bucknam 2008:69). For the purpose of this study, one-on-one in-depth semi-structured individual interviews with three principals and the educator in each school that is responsible for pre-vocational skills training revealed information about the respondent's perception on inclusive education and their understanding and promotion of vocational training.

The main disadvantages of interviews expressed by Koshy (2010:88) are that interviews are time consuming. Further, the presence of the interviewer may make interviewees nervous and uncomfortable and this may bias their responses. However, the researcher overcame this limitation by attempting to be completely objective.

During the interviews, the researcher used the following guidelines as expressed by Mertens

(2010:242-243):

- Establish rapport by providing assurances of confidentiality.
- Focus attention on what the person is saying.
- Sequence questions from general to specific.
- Use a constructive framework to structure questions of a critical nature;
- Place answers in perspective and ask for clarification.

In order to establish full potential of the interviews, the interviews were tape-recorded (with the consent of the respondents). The researcher is aware that a disadvantage of tape recording is that it does not capture non-verbal communication such as mannerisms, posture and facial expressions. A further disadvantage is that this recording can be intimidating to the participants. However, the researcher recorded the observations of the interview as unobtrusively as possible. The researcher also attempted to keep interviewees as comfortable as possible.

During the interviews, participants were assured of anonymity so that they felt comfortable in articulating their views and expressing their opinions.

4.3.1.2 Observation

Welman et al. (2005:194) mention two types of observation, namely participant observation and non-participant observation. In participant observation, the researcher assumes an active role by participating in the group or event that is being studied. The researcher decides on the degree of participation, bearing in mind that it remains the task of the researcher to watch the activities and experiences of the group closely with a view to writing them down.

According to Blanche and Durrheim (1999:134) the interpretive approach to research emphasizes studying events as they naturally unfold. Therefore, observation generally takes the form of participant observation where the researcher becomes fully involved in the setting being studied.

Non-participant observation refers to observing actions and interactions by being a “fly on the wall in the classroom or sitting at the edge and taking field notes” (Rose & Grosvenor

2001:31). A further clarification of non-participant observation is articulated by Creswell (2012:214). He states that non-participant observation involves an observer recording observations without becoming involved in the activities of the participants.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted in-depth observations of a participatory as well as a non-participatory nature of three learners with special education needs in each school, carrying out their school jobs/tasks assigned to them as part of the vocational training and transition planning programme. Since the presence of the observer who is unfamiliar to the learner, may have an effect on the behaviour to be observed, the researcher interacted with learners to allow the learners to become familiar with the researcher's presence. However, a somewhat detached position was also maintained to allow the researcher to observe the actions and experiences of the learner in addition to writing field notes (Welman et al. 2005:170) (see section 1.3.5).

Observation can be very useful when examining workplace behaviour since it is possible to observe an individual's physical actions, non-verbal behaviour (such as tone and body language) and the time taken to perform tasks (Welman et al. 2005:170). Therefore, in addition to observing learners involved in prevocational activities within school, the researcher also accompanied learners to their specific places of work out of school. In this regard, permission to observe learners was sought from the respective service providers.

4.3.1.3 Documentary analysis

Scott (in Rose and Grosvenor 2001:50) defines a document as a written text. For the purpose of this study, documents such as schools' mission statements and documents from non-governmental organisations pertinent to the investigation, served to corroborate the evidence obtained from other sources, namely interviews and observation.

Koshy (2010:90) mentions the following advantages of gathering documentary evidence:

- Documentary evidence can provide insights into a situation where research takes place.
- Documentary evidence provides information without too much effort.
- A record of objectives and policies which are not easily communicated can be

accessed through documents.

- Documents can support other forms of evidence collected.

An advantage of documentary evidence as an important component to this study is articulated as follows by Koshy (2010:89) "... [D]ocumentary evidence can be very illuminating, especially when you are comparing what is claimed and what has happened in practice". In this study, documentary analysis served to corroborate responses from interviewees.

McDonald and Tipton (in Punch 2009:199) emphasize that in addition to documentary evidence, triangulation is required to ensure the credibility of the study. In this regard, as mentioned in section 4.3.1 the researcher employed interviews and observation to ensure the credibility of the study.

4.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Salient aspects pertaining to the population and sampling and their relevance to this study are discussed in this section.

4.4.1 Population

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:52) state that a population is the study object. This comprises individuals, groups, organizations, human products and events. They also look at the conditions to which they are exposed. Therefore, a sample is taken from a full set of cases. Welman et al. (2005:55) and McMillan and Schumacher (2006:119) concur by stating that a "population is a group of potential participants to whom you want to generalize the results of a study". However, in qualitative research, the researcher's intent is not to select participants that are representative of a larger population. The researcher's primary goal is to select participants who can best add to the understanding of the topic under investigation (Gay et al. 2011:142).

Similarly, Johnson and Christensen (2004:220) state that the task of deciding on a population is based on specific characteristics that the people to be studied must possess. For the purpose of this study, principals in special schools, educators tasked with vocational training in special schools and the senior phase learners in special schools, constituted the population.

4.4.2 Sampling

Sampling is the procedure that is used to select a sample from a population (Johnson & Christensen 2004:216).

Leedy and Omrod (2005:144) state that the selection of particular entities which qualitative researchers make when comprising their sample, and the process of selecting them, is called sampling. They further state that identifying an appropriate sample from which to obtain data is an essential aspect in sampling.

As the aim of this study was to ascertain principals' and educators' understanding and promotion of inclusive education and vocational training in schools where it is being implemented, the sample comprised of the principal and one educator selected in each of the three schools. (For demographics on the participants, refer to appendix 11). The researcher chose three special schools in close proximity of each other in order to collect as much empirical information as possible, especially in terms of observation.

The researcher observed three learners in each special school with a view to making field notes. Field notes assisted the researcher to record observations which included non-verbal body language, facial expressions as well as time taken to perform assigned tasks. Therefore, the sample also included learners involved in pre-vocational skills training.

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants. Patton (in McMillan & Schumacher 2006:319) describe purposeful sampling as "selecting information-rich cases for an in-depth study when one wants to understand something about those cases without needing or desiring to generalize to all [similar] cases".

The above view is in keeping with the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivists reject generalization as a goal. Therefore, the sample chosen, were individuals who are knowledgeable about the issues under investigation (Creswell 2012:103-104). This issue of selection is resonated in Leedy and Omrod (2005:145) where it is stated that qualitative researchers select those individuals or objects that will provide crucial information regarding the research study. This is further supported by Merriam (2002:20) who states that in qualitative research, a sample is purposely selected to generate a significant amount of

information about the aspect that is investigated.

The researcher used purposive sampling as the participants were in a position to discuss issues concerning inclusive education and vocational training in their schools. Hence, the individuals which were likely to yield the most information about the topic under investigation were chosen.

4.5 DATA GATHERING PROCEDURES

The steps of gathering information as proposed by Hancock and Algozzine (2011:44-46) served as a guideline.

The first step was to identify participants that would provide valuable information regarding the research question. In this regard, the researcher selected principals and educators responsible for the prevocational skills training at their special schools (see section 4.4.2). Subsequent to the selection of participants, letters were sent to the respective principals and educators, obtaining their permission to participate in the research study (see appendix 4 and 5). At this stage, participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. In addition, they were given the opportunity to withdraw from the research study in the event of them experiencing discomfort.

The second step relates to the setting in which interviews were conducted. Principals preferred interviews to be conducted in their respective offices while educators opted to use their classrooms.

The third step refers to the recording of interviews. In this respect, interviews were audio taped (after permission had been granted). The recordings were then transcribed by the researcher.

With respect to observation, letters were sent to parents, seeking permission to observe their child while carrying out their prevocational skills training/school tasks (see appendix 6). Letters of assent explaining the observation process were duly acknowledged by learners (see appendix 7). Letters were written and read in a manner that could easily be understood by learners.

With regards to gathering information from documents, schools willingly offered a copy of their mission statement. Unfortunately, there was a significant lack of documents pertaining to prevocational skills training or prospective employment opportunities for LSEN from the Department of Education.

4.6 INSTRUMENTATION

The researcher developed an interview guide consisting of questions appropriate to the research study. Questions were designed to allow for elaboration of participants' responses. Interviews were conducted according to the availability of participants.

The researcher did not develop an observation protocol as the purpose of observing learners was to write field notes based on general observations of learners performing their set tasks.

4.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

This section mainly deals with credibility and dependability. These terms, amongst others, seemed to have respectively replaced validity and reliability which are now often considered as terms that relate to quantitative research study only (Golafshani 2003:601). According to Loh (2013: online), the term "trustworthiness", in qualitative research is an alternative term which replaces "validity, reliability and generalisability". In this discussion, the terms credibility and dependability are often used as replacements for validity and reliability. Generalisation does not fall within the ambit of this qualitative research since it relates to findings and conclusions in terms of a small number of settings and individuals (see section 4.4.1) which will ensure the trustworthiness of the study. However, educators, other than those from the schools selected for this research and the Department of Education would be able to determine the transferability of these findings once they have established the degree of similarity of their contextual settings to the contextual settings of this research (Trochim 2006: online).

Merriam (2002:18) states that all researchers, irrespective of whether they conduct qualitative or quantitative research, have to compile valid and reliable data. In terms of this discussion, it means that qualitative research has to be credible and dependable. Credible and dependable research can be defended when challenged (Bashir 2008: online) and would thus be

trustworthy. Of course, trustworthy research would imply that research is conducted within ethical boundaries and that it provides the assurance that the findings are authentic or trustworthy.

According to Creswell (2012:259) a research achieves credibility when its findings are dependent on triangulation. Triangulation refers to a multiple method of data collection applied correctly (see section 4.3.1). For this research, the researcher analysed documents, conducted interviews with principals and educators, and observed learners which allowed her to corroborate evidence obtained from different individual types. She therefore adhered to the principle of triangulation.

Reliability, in quantitative research, is defined as the extent to which research findings can be reproduced (Merriam 2002:27). With regard to qualitative research, this would raise the issue whether the researcher would arrive at the same results if the study was repeated, since human behaviour is never static. Replication of a qualitative study would not provide the same results. Qualitative research does not strive for replication. Rather, dependability, a term replacing reliability, would focus on consistency and accuracy during data collection as well as data analysis which have to be conducted according to specific, scientifically and acceptable steps. Detailed field notes of observations concentrating on specific aspects and new relevant data were made. The collection of data from different relevant types of individuals (principals and educators) also contributed to the dependability of the study (see section 1.3.2).

Accurate interpretation of data that contributes to dependability implies objective reporting. Bias presents a threat to qualitative research if personal views are not restrained during the collection and interpretation of data (Creswell 2012:258). Lynch (2003:2) holds the view that within the interpretivist paradigm, facts cannot be separated from values since researchers have different frames of references as a result of dissimilar experiences. According to him, peoples' subjectivity would inevitably infiltrate the study. Since this researcher knows that cultural backgrounds, personal experiences and professional involvement expertise could influence the dependability of this study, she did everything in her power to remain as objective as possible.

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:145) state that validity is related to the reliability of

research findings. In qualitative terms, credibility and dependability are not, therefore, two independent characteristics of research. In terms of this study it means, inter alia, that the use of different and relevant research methods, namely documentary analysis, interviews and observation, to ensure triangulation (a characteristic of credibility), should not be viewed in isolation from adherence to specific criteria during the gathering of information and interpretation of data which relates to dependability and to trustworthiness (see section 4.7).

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative research is concerned with numerical data. The results are analysed and interpreted according to the original research question and hypotheses (Leedy & Omrod 2005:150). However, in qualitative research, data analysis is more complex due to the nature of the data which consists of words (interviews).

In analyzing the data, the researcher will take cognizance of the following steps as proposed by Creswell (2012:237).

The following diagram served as a basis for the analysis of the interviews conducted for this study:

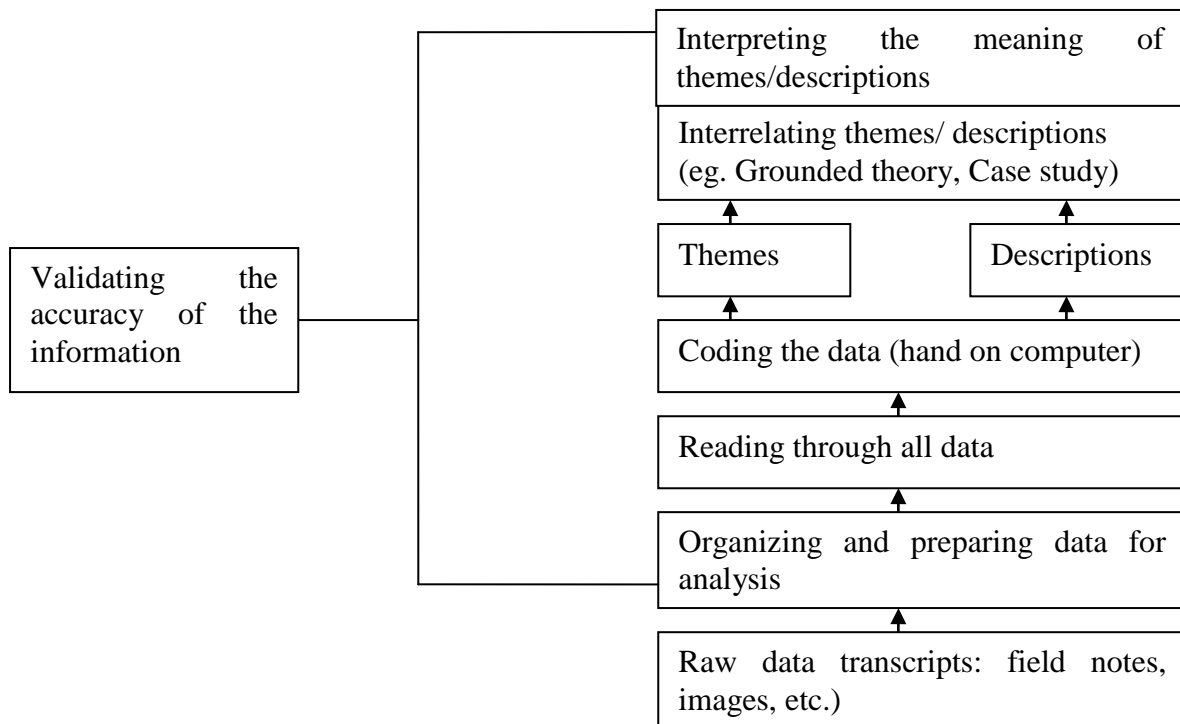


FIGURE 4.1 Data analysis in qualitative research

(Source: Creswell 2012:237)

The following specific steps were followed after data was collected from interviews, field notes and documents.

Step 1: Data is read through to obtain an overall meaning. This relates to step 3 in the above diagramme.

Step 2: Data is coded by exploring specific themes and descriptions (example describing the setting and the participants). This relates to step 5 in the above diagramme.

Step 3: Data is looked at more closely to identify trends and patterns that may reappear within interviews, field notes and documentary analysis. This relates to step 7 in the above diagramme.

Step 4: Data is interpreted with a view to reporting the data in a narrative. Questions about what lessons have been learnt from the research study are asked at this stage. This relates to step 7 in the above diagramme.

4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the qualitative research approach involves the collection of data from people and about people, ethical issues need to be considered when conducting research.

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from UNISA. The ethical clearance certificate is provided in appendix 9.

Creswell (2012:23) mentions that permission should be gained before entering a research site. In this regard, prior to embarking on the research study, the researcher obtained permission from the Kwazulu-Natal Department of Education (see appendix 3) and thereafter further permission was sought from principals and selected educators of the respective schools as well as the respective service providers.

In view of learners being minors, consent to observe learners carrying out assigned jobs/tasks as part of their pre-vocational skills training programme was obtained from the school and parents/guardians (see appendix 6). In addition to consent from parents/guardians, learners were required to sign a learner assent form explaining the nature of the research project (see appendix 7).

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:121) mention the issue of confidentiality which means that “no one has access to individual data or the names of the participants except the researcher”. In this regard, participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Pseudonyms for the names of schools as well as all participants are used in this study.

A further issue pertaining to ethical consideration that was adhered to is informed consent. This involved obtaining written permission from participants to participate in the study. In obtaining consent, participants were informed of the nature of the study to be conducted and were given the choice of either participating or not (Koshy 2010:81). Furthermore, they were given the choice to withdraw from participation at any time during the research study (Leedy & Omrod 2005:101).

4.10 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to time constraints associated with a Masters dissertation, the researcher was unable to conduct research at all special schools in the Pietermaritzburg area. The Department of Education could further this research by investigating other special schools to provide a more comprehensive study.

4.11 SUMMARY

This chapter discusses the interpretivist paradigm selected for this research study. It further highlights the methods used to gather data, which consists of interviews, observation and documentary analysis to ensure trustworthiness of the study, including reasons for the choice of these methods. The data gathering procedures, instrumentation and data analysis, is explained. Ethical consideration which ensured that the study was conducted with due ethical consideration is discussed.

In the following chapter the researcher will present the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5

DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings and analysis of data is discussed. The main aim of the study is to explore how principals and educators use inclusive education to assist learners with barriers to learning in preparing them for employment in the open labour market.

The analysis and findings presented in this chapter, are based on interviews conducted with principals and educators at three special schools (pseudonyms are used for names of schools as well as for participants); observation of learners involved in prevocational skills training; as well as documentary analysis (schools mission statements, correspondence between schools and the Provincial Department of Education and school policies related to the prevocational skills training programme). (For depiction of schools, participants and method of data collection, see appendix 10). Documentary analysis will be incorporated into various sections within this chapter. It will serve to provide further insight and information on the schools as well as to corroborate responses by interviewees.

As mentioned in section 1.2, the research questions are as follows:

- Do principals and educators in special schools in Pietermaritzburg understand the meaning of inclusive education in general and in terms of preparing learners for employment?
- What factors have influenced the implementation of inclusive education in special schools in terms of vocational preparation of learners?
- What recommendations in terms of Bronfenbrenner's microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem surrounding learners with special needs would improve the readiness of these learners for employment in the open labour market?

The latter question will be addressed in the final chapter of this dissertation. The chapter is thus organized around the above two questions.

5.2 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

In this research project, data analysis was obtained from semi-structured individual interviews, observation and documentary analysis. In this section, the interviews are analysed using the specific steps mentioned in section 4.8. General themes were identified and the reasons responsible for deficient vocational preparation of learners with special education needs were classified according to the key components of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, namely microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem, which served as main categories.

5.2.1 General themes that emerged from the interviews

Three main general themes emerged from the interviews. These provide the contexts within which the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education in terms of vocational preparation of learners can be placed. The first is 'the complicated nature of providing proper assistance to learners with special education needs that would prepare them adequately for the workplace'. The other two general themes are: 'principals and educators possess clear views on inclusive education and what it entails with regards to preparing learners with special education needs for the workplace' and 'commendable inclusive education practices with regard to vocational training do exist'. The first of these two themes are directly linked to the first research question.

5.2.1.1 The complicated nature of providing proper assistance to learners with special education needs that would prepare them adequately for the workplace

The complicated nature of providing proper assistance to learners with special education needs that would prepare them adequately for the workplace becomes evident if cognisance is taken of the fact that factors that hinder the optimal functioning of inclusive education which were revealed during the interviews, are found in all three levels of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (see section 2.2). In this regard the reader is referred to section 5.3 in which the reasons that prevent the optimal functioning of inclusive education are placed and discussed in terms of the particular sphere of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System to which they relate.

5.2.1.2 Principals and educators possess clear views on inclusive education and what it entails in terms of preparing learners with special education needs for the workplace

In order to support the deduction that principals and educators possess clear views on inclusive education and what it entails in terms of preparing learners with special education needs for the workplace, facts pertaining to the aspects are discussed.

a) Principals' and educators' understanding of inclusive education

The responses expressed by both principals and educator participants concerning their understanding of inclusive education and what it entails in terms of preparing learners with special needs for the workplace are considered.

One educator participant stated that she understood inclusive education as “*that which makes the child complete in his mental, moral, social and physical spheres*” and that the child will benefit from being placed in a special school rather than a mainstream school. Another educator participant included respect and value of all learners, allowing them to develop to their maximum ability to find their rightful place in society. These views are in keeping with Lawson’s (2005:1) definition of inclusive education which includes all learners participating in learning which leads to the highest possible level of achievement (see section 3.4).

“*Do not divide or discriminate between the various disabilities and that all learners ought to be catered for in a mainstream environment*” was accentuated by a principal participant in her explanation of inclusive education. She further stated that “*although this ideology is an impressive one, it will not work. A child with mental and physical challenges should be catered for in a special school*”. Two educator participants expressed a similar view. They mentioned that their understanding of inclusive education referred to educating learners with different disabilities in a special school.

A further principal participant interviewee stated that inclusive education is built upon the creation of an inclusive environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of disability.

One principal participant drew on principles in policy documents that have emerged in South Africa. His response to the meaning of inclusive education was as follows:

...inclusive education is based on the social/human rights model which stresses that all learners, irrespective of their differences, must be included into one education system. It is based on the principle that all learners can learn and all learners need support.

Interview data revealed that the majority of interviewees were of the opinion that inclusive education should take place in a special school rather than in a mainstream school. It is interesting to note that this view of inclusive education differs markedly from the views expressed by other researchers such as Miles (2000:3); Engelbrecht, Swart, Eloff and Forlin (2000:n.p) (see section 3.4).

b) Principals' and educators' views regarding the preparation of learners with special education needs for the workplace

Principals' and educators' views regarding the preparation of learners with special education needs for the workplace included their realization of their important role in this regard and the necessity of initiating relationships between schools and the community.

- *Principals' and educators' realization of the important role that they fulfill in preparing learners with special education needs for the workplace*

In identifying their role in preparing learners for employment, most principals and educator participants stressed the importance of identifying the learners' strengths or talents and developing a school-based training programme that enhances these strengths without highlighting their weaknesses. This became evident in the response expressed by one of the principal participants when she stated:

I think I must ensure that our learners get good skilling in jobs that they are interested in so that ... um ... they would be employed in the open labour market because I believe our children have potential.

An educator participant also mentioned that her role in preparing learners with special education needs for the workplace is to develop learners' skills to fully equip them with talents to perform at their maximum potential. The importance of skills development forms part of the literature study of this research and is discussed in the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 (see section 3.6.2.1).

In addition to providing skills to learners, some educator participants mentioned that their learners have a very low self-concept. Therefore, the role of the educator is to build up their self esteem and make them feel worthy to develop their skills optimally. According to a principal interviewee, this could be achieved by exposing learners to opportunities to integrate with others. She stated that:

... by sending [learners] out in a 'normal' work field and allowing them to associate with the so called 'normal' people also makes a change in terms of how they see themselves. So I think they would learn eventually that they are also valuable and they also would be able to contribute to society.

Two educator participants stressed that children with special education needs have a part to play in society and that social inclusion in education is an important aspect for all learners, but more especially for learners with special education needs. This is evident in the following responses by educator participants:

... for LSEN learners, it is hoped that they are suitably equipped socially and skilled ... um ... to be fully integrated within their community and ... um ... society.

... they [learners] could develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society.

A principal participant stated: *"as our mission statement emphasizes the learners 'place in society'; our role is to ensure that society accepts our learners."*

It was accentuated that learners with special needs have an important role to play in society.

The importance of social inclusion of learners with special education needs cannot be overemphasized as the assumptions and misconceptions of society towards learners with special education needs affect their opportunity for job placement (see section 3.5.2).

- *Initiating relationships between schools and community in terms of preparing learners with special education needs for the workplace*

The advantage of fostering relationships between schools and community is iterated in section 2.3.3. This aspect also found expression during the interviews.

Participants of *Lotus Haven Special School* mentioned forging a relationship between school and the community by approaching big or small businesses in their areas to provide learners with basic skills such as woodwork skills, skills involved in car washing, or assisting educators in other mainstream schools.

An educator participant mentioned that she persuaded businessman in the vicinity of the school to consider her learners for skills training with the view of attaining permanent employment. Through continuous persuasion, two learners have subsequently been employed in a car wash outlet. This is considered as an achievement by the educator since prospective employers are keen to offer skills training but not permanent employment (see section 3.5.2).

It was further stated by a principal participant that:

the members of the community and business people must be invited to observe our learners as well as be invited to teach our learners various skills while they are at school.

5.2.1.3 Commendable inclusive education practices with regard to vocational training do exist

Despite many aspects that hinder the realization of proper inclusive education as revealed in the section that deals with the reasons why inclusive education is not optimally realized (see section 5.3), there are nevertheless commendable practices adopted by principals and educators at the three mentioned special schools. These practices will be discussed under

relevant headings. Information in this regard was obtained from principals and educators during interviews.

a) Relevant life changing skills training within schools do take place

Learners at *Lotus Haven Special School* receive skills training within the school. Emphasis is geared towards providing training in occupational/vocational skills. Learners are trained in arts/crafts, sewing, cooking, domestic chores, home maintenance and personal grooming. The training includes gardening as well as assisting in the kitchen and laundry. One of these training initiatives is the *Food Garden Project* which is funded by the *Public Servants Association* in conjunction with the *Food Gardens Foundation*. The *Food Gardens Foundation* is a non-governmental organization which provides training and support for a team of learners and staff on preparing and maintaining a vegetable garden.

Learners are provided with gardening skills with the intention of sustaining the school's nutrition programme. Furthermore, an income arising from this project is generated to create employment for learners by the School's Governing Body. Learners receive certificates on completion of the training and are given the opportunity of working in the school's garden once they have reached the school leaving age.

The Woodwork Programme was introduced with the intention of providing training and skills development for the younger intermediate phase learners, between the ages of 12-15 years. The learners receive training in basic woodwork skills with the intention of being able to create items/projects that could be sold to raise an income and thus result in self-sufficiency.

In ensuring that the objective of learners occupying a rightful place in society is realized, the school has embarked on a programme to equip learners with driving skills thus increasing their chances of employment in the open labour market.

Mountain View Special School has a skills classroom, which was initially a small cottage and has subsequently been converted into a skills room that currently accommodates approximately twelve learners. The skills room consists of a kitchen and an annex which is used as a room for practicing domestic skills such as ironing. To acquire domestic skills, learners receive training in handwork which involves sewing, jewellery making and

beadwork. Due to limited ground space, a mini garden is used to provide learners with basic gardening skills.

All Stars Special School is financially secure to source highly skilled personnel to provide training to learners in terms of prevocational skills. The school has out-sourced an educator, who is also a business person, to equip the learners in the Deaf/Blind Senior Special Unit with skills related to mosaic and decoupage work. However, this training takes place within the confines of the classroom.

b) Skills training out of school

Unlike *Mountain View Special School* and *All Stars Special School*, *Lotus Haven Special School* is the only school that has embarked on providing supervised on-the-job training for their learners. The school has developed relationships with many local businesses and schools in the community to facilitate practical training. Learners whose potential allow it, are offered skills training in woodwork, primary childcare, car wash, motor mechanics, placing of pamphlets in newspapers, and gardening. Learners are transported on a daily basis to the respective institutions. The aim of this practical training is to provide supervised on-the-job training for learners at no cost to the service provider. An appeal is made, where possible, for the service provider to consider either part-time or permanent employment once the learner reaches the school exit age.

Higher functioning learners at *Mountain View Special School* received practical skills training such as pattern making and dress designing at FET colleges which, unfortunately, did not increase their chances of attaining permanent employment, resulting in the discontinuation of training.

All Stars Special School does not make provision for skills training out of school.

c) Successes due to skills training

Lotus Haven Special School boasts many successes. Registration and permission for catering from the *Msunduzi Municipality Community Services* and *Social Equity Health* (non-

governmental organizations) have recently been secured. The learners, together with the educators, produce and distribute food items at a cost to local schools and businesses.

Learners from *Lotus Haven Special School* have been successful in obtaining permanent employment in various fields. A former learner of the school has recently been appointed as an educator assistant by the Kwazulu-Natal Department of Education. Further successes arose directly as a result of prevocational skills training received. An ex-learner is currently being employed at a local school as a care-giver and assistant to educators. The educators at this school jointly contribute financially toward a monthly salary for the learner. Two male ex-learners are being employed at local schools, one as a gate operator and the other as a grounds man. It is interesting to note that schools are more amenable to offering employment to learners with special education needs than are other business institutions.

Findings from the interview indicate that during the previous year, two learners at *Mountain View Special School* have been employed in a car wash outlet due to the specific skills training they have received at school (see section 5.2.1.2). Unfortunately, skills training out of school have been halted due to various factors.

5.3 REASONS WHY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DOES NOT TAKE PLACE OPTIMALLY

In this section the reasons preventing inclusive education and the preparation of learners with special needs for the workplace to take place optimally are presented in terms of Bronfenbrenner's microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem. Each of these systems served as a main category under which sub-categories of which each presents a reason which hampers inclusive education in terms of equipping learners with special needs for the workplace, are classified.

5.3.1 Reasons for unoptimised preparation for the workplace in the microsystem

The following reasons discussed in this section pertain to inadequacies at the homes of learners with special education needs that negatively influence their preparation for the workplace.

5.3.1.1 Inadequate parental role modeling affects the preparation of learners with special education needs for the workplace negatively

Some principal and educator participants mention the role of parents as a factor that influenced the implementation of inclusive education in general as well as preparing learners with special education needs for employment in the open labour market.

Due to parents' low literacy levels, parents are unable to provide the necessary educational support that is required by their child with a special education need. This is corroborated by the following statement by an educator participant. She states that: *... parents are simple themselves and don't act as good role models to their children*". The importance of parents providing as good role models to their children in terms of developing appropriate attitudes towards work is iterated in section 2.3.2.

With regard to the role of parents, an educator participant mentioned that:

... parents serve as teachers, they provide love and security to their children and when children don't have this, they are affected morally, socially and intellectually.

A further aspect mentioned by an educator participant involves the lack of effective stimulation by parents. She stated that: *"... perhaps they've never had a mother who has stimulated them"*. This view concurs with Bronfenbrenner when he mentions that a stimulating home environment in the child's microsystem, fosters growth (see section 2.2.1).

5.3.1.2 The negative effect of broken homes on preparing learners with special education needs for the workplace

One educator participant stated that her learners come from an unsupportive home environment. This is evident in the response expressed by the said participant, who said: "Agh shame man, many of them come from broken homes". As shown in section 3.5.1, Bronfenbrenner mentions that what happens in the home can influence the child's performance at school.

A principal participant poignantly iterated that many of his learners either have one or no parents. He states that learners are the ‘parents’ in their child-headed households. In addition, he mentioned that learners come from impoverished and indigent backgrounds. The principal further added that *“learners’ circumstances have impacted negatively on their preparation for employment”*.

A principal participant mentioned that children gain their independence through support from their parents. He further stated that:

since many of our learners come from dysfunctional homes, they don’t receive that training [support] from parents ... that praise that would foster their independence and self worth.

The crucial role that parents play in their child’s life is mentioned by Du Toit (2000:34) (see section 2.3.1).

5.3.1.3 The negative effect of parents’ beliefs and uncertainty in preparing learners with special education needs for the workplace

A principal interviewee mentioned that parents are in denial and that they are unsure of their child’s future. This became evident when she said that *“[i]n the home situation, we find that parents themselves do not accept the fact that their child is disabled”*. In this regard, an educator participant stated:

we need to educate parents in terms of the disability of their child and what may happen to them once they reach maturity or once they leave school and ask parents to encourage their children in that way.

Another educator interviewee elaborated on the views presented above. She mentioned that parents are generally embarrassed by their child with a special need and consequently does not expose him/her to society, hence limiting his/her opportunity for social integration and job possibilities.

5.3.1.4 The hampering effect of the learner's poor socio-economic status on preparing learners with special education needs adequately for the workplace

In response to the effect of the socio-economic environment on the learner with a special education need, most participants iterate the role the learner's impoverished background as a strong influence on the training and capacity of learners with special education needs, to be prepared for employment in the open labour market. This can be seen in the following response as expressed by one of the educator participants:

We started a garden to try and teach them gardening skills. I said to the learners 'go home and start a garden'. They tell me 'miss there's no place for a garden and there's no money'. You see they are so poor.

5.3.1.5 The large number of learners with special education needs in the classroom

Only one interviewee responded in terms of large numbers of learners in the classroom. The participant mentioned that mainstream educators are faced with large numbers of learners in their classrooms and will struggle to manage learners with special needs. This aspect was referred to in section 2.3.1 which formed part of the literature study.

5.3.2 Reasons for inadequate vocational preparation of learners with special education needs in the exosystem

In this section two reasons for inadequate vocational training of learners with special education needs in the exosystem are discussed.

5.3.2.1 Lack of training of mainstream educators by the provincial Department of Education and other institutions

A principal participant stated that principals and educators in mainstream schools are ill-equipped to adequately provide skills to learners with special education needs to prepare them for employment.

One educator participant concurred with the above statement. She was of the opinion that a learner with an intellectual impairment would not benefit from being placed in a mainstream

environment as mainstream educators are not skilled and equipped to manage learners with disabilities. This opinion was echoed by a further educator participant who stated:

...they (mainstream educators) say it's taxing on them because they have a syllabus to complete. They rather put the child in the corner. They don't have the patience to teach this child...

5.3.2.2 The negative impact of the business world on the preparation of learners with special education needs

With regard to the challenges related to the business world that affect the preparation of learners with special needs for the workplace negatively, a principal participant mentioned that:

Employers do not want to employ people with intellectual impairments. He further stated that "employers must look beyond a learner's disability and focus on his/her capabilities".

An educator participant mentioned that businesses' main concern is productivity rather than accommodating people with disabilities. This is evident in the following quotation when she stated:

... it's how much [products] you can send out and it's not about the child who is a person who wants to learn and make something of himself. They [employers] must be patient with our learners.

Similarly, an educator participant mentioned that employers must be tolerant of learners with special education needs.

A further educator participant mentioned a possible reason as to why businesses are reluctant to employ learners with special education needs. She stated that *"the presence of heavy machinery at working sites poses a danger to learners"*. In this regard a principal participant stated:

Employers need to be convinced that our learners are not a danger to anyone and that they are reliable, responsible and honest.

5.3.3 Reasons for inadequate vocational preparation of learners with special education needs in the macrosystem

In this section, reasons for the dissatisfaction with the vocational training of learners with special education needs are discussed.

5.3.3.1 Stigma attached to learners with special education needs

A principal participant mentioned the issue of stigma that is attached to impairment. This is evident in the following response expressed by an educator participant when she states:

...due to their intellectual impairment, many potential employers are reluctant to employ these learners.

When asked the question, “Why are employers so hesitant to employ disabled people?” The response of one of the educator participants was that “[p]erhaps the employers think that they are not capable. I think it’s also lack of knowledge...

With respect to the lack of knowledge of learners with barriers to learning by society, participants stated that the education of prospective employers as well as society in general, in terms of tolerance and acceptance of people with disabilities, is vital. Learners with barriers to learning internalize the negative view expressed by society and consequently believe that they are lesser individuals than their non-disabled peers. This affects their social interaction. This is seen in a principal participant’s response when she states:

... our learners especially the more advanced learners, they also very aware of the stigma of mental challenges and how I know this is that ... um ... um I know when speaking to some of our learners or when you watch them on the bus, they sit well below the windows so nobody can see that they are travelling in our bus. I know when talking to them ... um ... if they at the bus rank and they are associating with other people especially with females, they make as though they are attending a high school.

According to a principal participant, the role of the principal is:

to change society's way of thinking. Their perception that learners with special education needs are incapable of carrying out tasks and responsibilities is outdated and needs to be challenged.

5.3.3.2 Challenges related to the RSA Department of Education which affects the preparation of learners with special education needs negatively

a) The RSA Department of Education's challenge of removing the stigma attached to learners with special education needs

Both principal and educator participants mention that the onus is on the Education Department to provide education to the community regarding learners with special education needs. This education involves removing stigmas that exist in the community around learners with special education needs as well as creating support systems in dealing with these learners.

b) The RSA Department of Education's challenge of providing a suitable curriculum

Two educator participants mentioned the curriculum in the implementation of inclusive education as a barrier to vocational training of learners with special education needs. According to one educator interviewee, contrary to what has been expressed in the Education White Paper 6, the current curriculum that is designed for mainstream learners, does not make provisions for learners with barriers to learning (also see section 3.5.3).

Another educator participant mentioned the rigidity of the current curriculum which is not easily adaptable to learners with special education needs. She further stated that the learning programmes in the curriculum have to be differentiated to accommodate the needs of the learner since the curriculum seems to have been designed for mainstream learners.

The adaptation of the curriculum was reiterated by a further educator participant. She mentioned that since she is the educator of senior phase learners who are ready to leave

school, she ensures that the learners are equipped with functional literacy and numeracy skills, basic life skills, school based prevocational skills training as well as out of school prevocational skills training. Therefore, according to her, the curriculum needs to be less content-based and allocate more time for skills training to adequately prepare learners with barriers to learning for employment.

The above sentiment was also mentioned by two principal participants who stated that the curriculum needs to place more emphasis on vocational training in special schools.

5.3.3.3 Challenges related to the South African government which affects the preparation of learners with special education needs negatively

Some principal and educator participants concur that the government has very limited input in terms of learners with special education needs. In this regard, a principal participant stated:

...government needs to invest more on meeting the challenges of these learners. This includes revising policies, advocacy, funding and creating more employment opportunities.

In terms of government policies, a unanimous perception by principals and educators that the South African government policies are not adequately benefitting employment opportunities for learners with special education needs emerged. The various policies that do exist need to be enforced. The above views are voiced in the following words uttered by a principal:

... the government itself is doing very little in terms of learners with special needs. I'm saying although the constitution is saying ... um ... that people with disabilities must be given priority, nothing is happening in terms of policies where they are forcing or making it an obligation on ... um ... especially big firms like big businesses or small businesses to employ a certain quota of learners or people with disabilities.

On the other hand, one principal participant responded with an opposite view to the above. He stated that:

... businesses will reluctantly fulfill their quota of employing people with disabilities and once this has been achieved, employers will not employ additional people with disabilities. Other deserving people with disabilities will therefore fail to gain employment because of policies and laws that were promulgated to benefit them.

Another educator participant responded by saying that “the *Employment Equity Act* needs to be strictly enforced in terms of employment of the disabled”.

5.3.4 The reasons for inadequate vocational preparation of learners with special education needs presented diagrammatically

In this section, the reasons for inadequate vocational preparation of learners with special education needs are presented in a diagramme which follows a discussion.

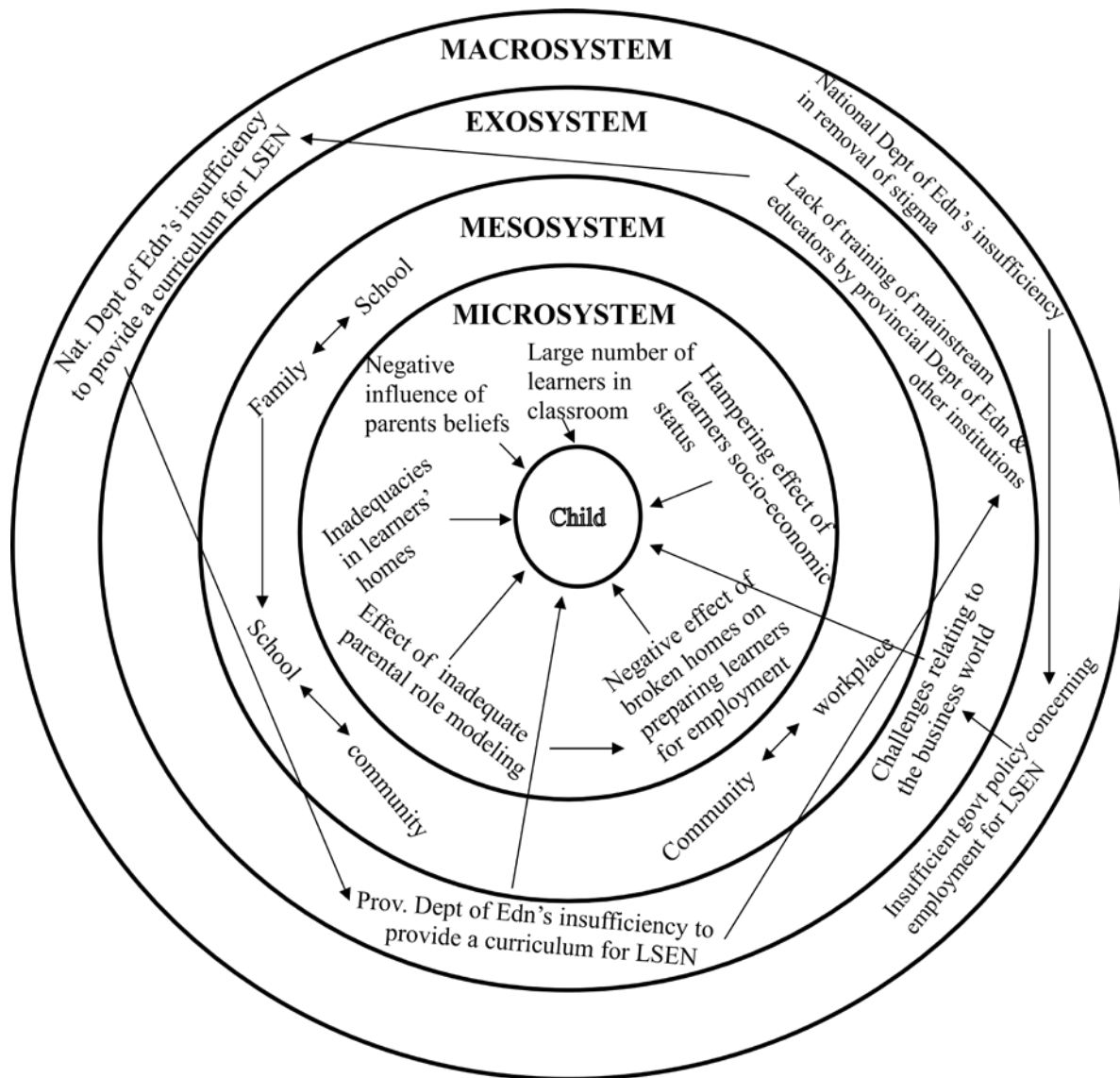


FIGURE 5.1 Diagram of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory depicting the reasons for inadequate vocational preparation of learners with special education needs

The above diagram shows the interrelatedness of the reasons for inadequate vocational preparation of learners with special education needs obtained from an analysis of the interviews conducted with principals and educators in terms of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (also see section 2.2). It shows that factors in the learner's microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem are interdependent and exert reciprocal influences on one another resulting in the reasons for inadequate preparation of learners with special education needs for the world of work.

5.4 ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATION OF ASPECTS RELATING TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Most principal and educator participants stressed the importance of skills training as vital in preparing learners with special education needs for employment (see section 5.2.1.2). Hence, the researcher scrutinized the three learners in each school whilst performing their job/school task (see section 4.3.1.2). Each learner was observed for a maximum of ninety minutes to determine the influence of skills training of learners in terms of the factors that affect the adequate preparation of learners with special education needs for employment in the open labour market. The researcher also scrutinized the mission statements of *Lotus Haven Special School*, *Mountain View Special School* and *All Stars Special School* to ascertain whether they are congruent with that which is essential to Inclusive Education. It will be noted that some observation regarding the attitudes of principals and educators are also integrated into this section. The section will commence with the description of the job/school tasks in which learners were involved.

5.4.1 Description of job/school tasks

Mark (a learner with an intellectual impairment at *Lotus Haven Special School*) has been placed in a motor mechanics workshop in the heart of the central business district. He is involved in prevocational skills training twice a week from 9am to 12am. The researcher observed Mark performing duties which included opening a sump, removing oil filters, removing the crankshaft and stripping the engine and gearbox (under supervision).

Michael (the second learner with an intellectual impairment from *Lotus Haven Special School*) who had shown a keen interest in Home-Economics was placed in the school's kitchen where he assists the chef daily from 9am-12am. His duties include filling the urn for morning tea for both staff and learners; preparing peanut butter or jam sandwiches; packing lunch boxes according to the names of educators and classes; assisting with the trolley delivery of tea and sandwiches and preparing lunch (peeling, slicing etc); and drying and packing away dishes. These duties provide him with the experience for a similar job in a restaurant, hotel or coffee shop.

Sipho (the third learner with an intellectual impairment and eye deformity from *Lotus Haven Special School*) acquires his skills training at a cabinetry workshop. According to the

educators, he is involved in simple and menial tasks such as sanding (using sand paper), varnishing and painting cupboards. The researcher observed Siphon sorting hinges to equip him with skills to prepare him to use a specific hinge in the appropriate place.

The learners at *Mountain View Special School*, Khetu, Cherise and Sifiso, (with intellectual impairment) were observed whilst sewing placemats, doing beadwork and making jewellery. Familiarizing the learners with these skills is geared towards the provision of relevant vocational training in arts and crafts.

The learners at *All Stars Special School*, Fatima, Lindo and Zanele (blind and deaf) were involved in the decoupage of key rings as well as gluing mosaic tiles to frame mirrors. The learners are part of the “Jobs For Kids” programme which was initiated by their educator. Their responsibilities include delivery of cakes and fruit to learners throughout the school, and fetching food from the hostel kitchen which they place in labeled boxes and deliver to assigned classes. They also wash dishes after tea and collect dirty towels and dishcloths from the laundry which they return to classes after laundering; and assist administrative personnel by tidying the offices and ensuring the availability of photocopy material.

5.4.2 Factors that affect the adequate preparation of learners with special education needs for the workplace

5.4.2.1 Person centered planning

Person centered planning which formed part of the literature study (see section 3.7.1.1) and which is based upon the learners’ dreams, interests, preferences, strengths and capabilities, received special attention during observation.

Observation of the learners at *Lotus Haven Special School* (Mark, Michael and Siphon) showed that learners displayed a high level of interest in their skills training. This observation is substantiated by the field notes which served as a basis for the facts provided below.

Mark showed a high level of interest and functional ability in performing his duties at the motor mechanics workshop. The latter became evident after having observed his capacity to complete one task and then move on to another without being instructed.

Michael also displayed a high level of interest in his vocation. He reminded the chef that one of the learners is allergic to peanut butter and proceeded to prepare a jam sandwich instead. His duties included obtaining the number of learners per classroom from educators. He was able to do this without having to write the numbers down.

Sipho who was engaged in sorting hinges, spent approximately an hour completing this task although he did not appear to be bored. Therefore, Sipho seem to exhibit a high level of interest in the task he performed.

Sipho commented to the researcher that he enjoys going to work because he is learning something. He pointed to the cupboards and said, “*See all this, I never knew before how to make it. Now I know. I like to work. If I work I feel happy*”. This comment coincides with the view presented by a principal participant in terms of learners self worth (see section 5.2.1.2). Although Sipho showed a high level of interest, after thirty five minutes of sorting hinges, his work speed and productivity decreased. The researcher’s field notes read as follows: “After thirty five minutes of sorting hinges, Sipho holds the hinges closer to his eyes”. This could be attributed to his visual squint which became more pronounced after a period of time and thus made it difficult for him to distinguish the differences between the hinges.

The above favourable observations of Mark, Michael and Sipho could be attributed to the fact that the principal and educators at *Lotus Haven Special School* consider the learners’ interests and preferences prior to placing them in a skills training programme. This is seen in the response from the educator participant of *Lotus Haven Special School* who said that, learners’ talents and interests should be considered prior to receiving skills training (see section 5.2.1.2).

The two learners at *Mountain View Special School* (Sifiso and Cherise) were eager to show the researcher the jewellery and placemats they had completed. However, Khetu showed more interest in displaying his computer literacy skills rather than showing off his completed products. Field notes in this regard reads:

“Khetu’s eyes widen and he has a broad smile when he shows the researcher the different technical operations that he is capable of performing. It is apparent that his interest lies in

technology rather than in handwork”. This indicates that Khetu’s interests and talents were not given consideration before placing him in the skills training programme.

Stringing beads for Lindo posed a problem due to him using one hand. He was thus easily frustrated and displayed a lack of enthusiasm. The researcher’s field notes in terms of Lindo revealed the following: “After five minutes of stringing beads, Lindo’s facial expression showed frustration. He stopped, looked around the classroom and stared blankly at the researcher”. The following two learners at *All-Stars Special School* (Fatima and Zanele) appeared to be engrossed in their specific activity.

5.4.2.2 Learner’s individual vocation programme

Based on the learner’s interests, strengths and capabilities, an individual vocation programme (IVP) is drawn up for each learner in the United States of America (see section 3.7.1.5). However, in the absence of clear guidelines from the RSA Department of Education, special schools do not implement an IVP. In addition, schools do not follow a specific transition programme.

Apart from the learners at *Lotus Haven Special School*, the learners at *Mountain View Special School* and *All Stars Special School* follow the same skills training programme.

5.4.2.3 Lack of resources/facilities

Unlike *Mountain View Special School*, *Lotus Haven Special School* is an adequately resourced school with regards to Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) and infrastructure (see section 5.2.1.3). Hence, learners are provided with a greater opportunity of gaining skills. On the other hand, the learners at *Mountain View Special School* are limited in their skills training due to the lack of resources and specialist rooms.

Although *All Stars Special School* is also an adequately resourced school, learners are restricted to vocational training within the confines of a classroom. This could possibly be attributed to the principal’s and educators’ despondent attitudes regarding service providers. The principal states that service providers do not want to employ people with intellectual impairments (see section 5.3.2.2).

5.4.2.4 Attitudes of principals and educators

Although principals and educators provide their learners with skills training, lack of support from the RSA Department of Education, the South African government, the community and society at large (see section 5.3.3) causes a noticeable, despondent attitude amongst principals and educators which demotivates them to make an extra effort to secure employment for their learners. This negativity displayed itself during the interviews with principals and educators where it was mentioned that businesses do not want to employ their learners (see section 5.3.3.1).

5.4.2.5 Learning environment

As shown in section 3.5.8 the learning environment constitutes a barrier to or an opportunity for learning and development.

Only the two learners at *Lotus Haven Special School* (Mark and Siphon) are obtaining on-the-job training in the true sense of the word. The benefits of on-the-job training are immeasurable because this relevant learning environment allows them to be exposed to real work experiences; use tools required to perform the job/task; establish interpersonal relationships with both employers and fellow colleagues; acquire basic academic and technical skills; as well as developing an understanding of the link between school and work (see section 3.7.1.6) all of which would not have been available had they been restricted to the traditional schooling environment.

5.4.3 Mission Statements

The mission statement of *Mountain View Special School* is indicative of education geared towards the vocational preparation of learners with special education needs. Basic foundations in this regard, namely non-discrimination and the promotion of fairness and justice, which forms the fundamental principles of the *Constitution of South Africa*, is reflected in its mission statement (see appendix 12).

The mission statement of all three special schools support proper vocational preparation of learners with special education needs since it advocates integration as shown in the excerpts below:

“...we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all” (*Mountain View Special School*).

“... being prepared to take their rightful role in society” (*All Stars Special School*).

“... develop learners to the best of their ability to take their rightful place in society” (*Lotus Haven Special School*).

The importance of social inclusion which has been shown in section 5.2.1.2 was also reflected in the answers given by two principal and two educator participants.

Mountain View Special School and *All Stars Special School* acknowledge the role of parents as crucial stakeholders in the teaching and learning process as shown in section 5.3.1.1. Parental cooperation is considered as being essential in the vocational preparation of their children with special education needs. The excerpts below illustrate the important place of parents in the formal education of their children with special education needs.

“To uplift, empower and encourage parents to be equal partners in the education of their children” (*All Stars Special School*).

“We do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff or pupil or parent...” (*Mountain View Special School*).

5.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The three themes that emerged from the interviews were ‘the complicated nature of providing proper assistance to learners with special education needs that would prepare them adequately for the workplace’; ‘principals and educators possess clear views on inclusive education and what it entails with regards to preparing learners with special education needs for the workplace’ and ‘commendable inclusive education practices with regard to vocational training do exist’.

The first theme, namely ‘the complicated nature of providing proper assistance to learners with special education needs that would prepare them adequately for the workplace’ relates to

the aspects that influence the preparation of LSEN for the workplace as presented in subsequent sections. The second theme, namely ‘Principals and educators possess clear views on inclusive education and what it entails in terms of preparing LSEN for the workplace, demonstrates their realization of fulfilling an important role with regards to preparing LSEN for the workplace by exposing them to skills training within special schools as well as out of school. The third theme, namely ‘commendable inclusive education practices with regard to vocational training do exist’ illustrates the attempt of principals and educators to provide skills to LSEN in spite of challenges that affect the preparation of LSEN for the world of work, which can be found in their microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem.

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory was used as a framework to determine the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education in general, and in terms of preparing learners with special education needs for the workplace.

Findings reveal that, although principals and educators are providing learners with an opportunity to actualize their potential by exposing them to skills training either within school or out of school, limited success has been achieved in securing employment for their learners. A close examination of the learner’s ecosystem in the interviews, revealed that principals and educators in special schools have many issues in the learner’s ecosystem to contend with such as the learner’s family background, the learner’s poor socio-economic circumstances, lack of assistance from the national Department of Education in terms of an absence of policy to ensure that these learners are adequately prepared for the workplace, the reluctance of potential employers to offer skills training and permanent employment, and society’s disabling attitude. Therefore challenges exist at all levels of the learner’s ecosystem.

The analysis of the observational data pertaining to vocational training (see section 5.4) revealed that learners exhibit a high level of interest in the job/school task that they are required to perform when their interests and talents are considered prior to skills training. A low level of interest arose directly as a result of disregarding a learner’s interests as well as his/her ability to perform the set task (see section 5.4.2.1). This became evident from the observation of Lindo and Siphon, where Lindo’s use of one hand made it difficult for him to string beads. In addition, Siphon’s poor eye-sight resulted in his frustration whilst attempting to sort hinges. It is therefore crucial for educators to detect learners’ personal preferences,

talents and strengths prior to engaging learners in skills training. Service providers also need to consider this when recommending learners for skills training.

The general negative attitude of principals and educators concerning the factors that influence job opportunities for learners with special education needs (see section 5.3), had a direct influence on the type of skills training that their learners were exposed to, where skills training within school appeared to be at a superficial level and not geared towards employment in the open labour market.

The mission statements of all three special schools accentuate social inclusion. Parental involvement also features in the mission statement of two schools as shown in section 5.4.3. However, in addition to parental involvement, businessmen also need to alter their perception of learners with special education needs and provide them with the opportunity to attain permanent and meaningful employment. These essential principles should position learners with special education needs for meaningful vocational preparation and subsequent employment in the open labour market.

One of the reasons for the researcher undertaking this study was to investigate the gap that exists between what is taught at schools and what is required in the workplace (see section 3.7). From the analysis of interviews and the observation data, it is apparent that principals and educators at the special schools involved in this study are not equipping their learners optimally with specific skills required for the workplace.

The following chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a summary of preceding chapters are presented before final conclusions and recommendations are made. It will become clear that the research questions mentioned in section 1.2 were answered in this study:

6.2 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

In chapter 1, the reader is introduced to *inclusive education* and its advent both in international countries as well as in South Africa. The reader is further introduced to vocational training and employment of learners with special education needs (see section 1.1). The formulated research questions and the objectives of the research study are presented in section 1.2. The research approach and the data collection methods are described in section 1.3 where the reader is introduced to the qualitative research design. An overview of data management and analysis is described in section 1.4. The terminology is defined in section 1.5 and the chapter is concluded with ‘chapter divisions’ in section 1.6.

An introduction and overview to Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory is presented in section 2.1 and 2.2 respectively, to show how a child’s development is shaped by his/her social contexts. The three ecosystems are discussed in section 2.2.1 to section 2.2.3. Section 2.3 elucidates Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory in relation to learners with special education needs. The section is further divided into section 2.3.1 which focuses on the family in the child’s microsystem and section 2.3.2 which describes the relationships between the components in the child’s microsystem (mesosystem) with special emphasis on school and family partnerships.

The discussion on the partnership between the school and the community is continued in section 2.3.3. The child’s larger socio-cultural context and the influence that this has on the development of the child with barriers to learning, is mentioned in section 2.3.4. Implications of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory to educators and school managers are

discussed in section 2.4. The chapter is concluded in section 2.5 with the importance of viewing learners with barriers to learning holistically.

The introduction of the two discourses of disability namely, the medical discourse and the social discourse is discussed in section 3.1. Salient aspects that are discussed include *inclusive education* in South Africa; barriers to learning; vocational needs and employment opportunities for learners with barriers to learning; policy and legislation in South Africa as well as an outline of a vocational training and transition planning programme adopted in the United States of America.

Section 3.2 provides a comparison of the medical and social discourse of disability. The medical discourse of disability focused solely on the learner's impairment, rather than the extrinsic needs of the learner (see section 3.2.1). The social discourse of disability highlights the importance of the environment (see section 3.2.2). Section 3.3 discusses the *Constitution of South Africa* and the subsequent policy initiatives by the South African government ergo *The National Committee of Special Needs in Education and Training* (NCSNET) and *The National Committee on Education Support Services* (NCESS) in a brief historical overview of special education in South Africa

Section 3.4 reveals the different views of *inclusive education* as expressed in policy documents, as well as writings by various authors and researchers. The social discourse of disability is reiterated in section 3.5 entitled 'Barriers to Learning' which follows a discussion of 'socio-economic conditions' in section 3.5.1; 'attitudes' in section 3.5.2; 'the curriculum' in section 3.5.3; 'language and communication' in section 3.5.4; 'inaccessible and unsafe building environments' in section 3.5.5; 'parent involvement and the lack thereof' in section 3.5.6; 'inadequate and inappropriate provision of support services' in section 3.5.7 and 'physical factors' in section 3.5.8.

The commitment of RSA Department of Education and the South African government with regards to vocational training and employment opportunities for barriers to learning is discussed in section 3.6, within the *National Curriculum Statement* (see section 3.6.1). Strategies for pre employment and on the job training for people with disabilities are mentioned in section 3.6.2, which includes the importance of skills development (see section 3.6.2.1). Skills development should take place in mainstream vocational training institutions

(see section 3.6.2.2) to accommodate specific training needs of trainees with disabilities (see section 3.6.2.3). Trainees must be given the right to further take part in upgrading courses and training programmes (see section 3.6.2.4). These courses and training programmes could be realized if government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector work in collaboration with each other (see section 3.6.2.5).

Section 3.6.3 discusses the employment options that exist for learners with barriers to learning, where protective/sheltered employment is provided for more disabled people (see section 3.6.3.1). Supported employment is designed for people with disabilities who work alongside people without disabilities, usually under the supervision and assistance of a job coach (see section 3.6.3.2). Competitive employment remains unattainable to people with disabilities (see section 3.6.3.3). The role of employment agencies is discussed in section 3.6.3.4.

Various laws and policies detailing equal opportunities for people with disabilities are followed in section 3.6.4. Under the *Constitution of South Africa* (Act no 108 of 1996), unfair discrimination is prohibited (see section 3.6.4.1). The *South African Labour Relations Act* 66 of 1995 which includes *The Code of Good Practice* provides a guide for employers and employees to promote equal opportunities and fair treatment to people with disabilities (see section 3.6.4.3). The *Skills Development Act*, 97 of 1998 is aimed to improve the employment of people with disabilities by providing training and education (see section 3.6.4.4). Discrimination in the workplace due to disability is prohibited in both *The South African Reconciliation and Development Programme* and *The Promotion of Unfair Discrimination Act* No 4 of 2000 (see section 3.6.4.5 and section 3.6.4.6). Legislation and policy in South Africa is concluded with the *Disability Rights Charter of South Africa* (1992).

Considering that the United States of America has made significant strides in inclusive education as well as vocational training and transition planning, a transition planning process that is used in America is discussed in section 3.7. Section 3.7.1 discusses the assessment of transition needs based on the learner's interests, preferences, strengths and capabilities by obtaining information from the learner and the family (see section 3.7.1.1). The curriculum including knowledge and skills is discussed in section 3.7.1.2 which is achieved by working in collaboration with other professionals in various areas of expertise (see section 3.7.1.3). Supported employment is discussed under transitional programmes (see section 3.7.1.4).

Transitional planning constitutes an important component of the transition planning (see section 3.7.1.5). Section 3.7.1.6 discusses job placement and training. Employment models are described in section 3.7.2. Section 3.7.2.1 describes sheltered workshops where all workers who are disabled, are required to perform jobs requiring low skills. Supported competitive employment is discussed in section 3.7.2.2. The chapter concludes with the importance of instituting a vocational training and transition planning programme for learners with barriers to learning in South Africa (see section 3.8).

Section 4.1 outlines chapter 4. The research design is explained in section 4.2. The research design namely the interpretivist paradigm is discussed in section 4.2.1. The qualitative research approach is explained within the interpretivist paradigm using a case study approach (see section 4.2.2 - 4.2.3). Section 4.3 presents the research methodology. Section 4.3.1 provides an explanation of the methods of data collection. Semi-structured interviews, observation and documentary analysis are discussed in sections 4.3.1.1 - 4.3.1.3. Section 4.4 explains population and sampling. The population was the select participants who could best contribute to the understanding of the topic under investigation (see section 4.4.1). The sample chosen is described in section 4.4.2.

The procedures of gathering data are explained in see section 4.5. A brief discussion on instrumentation is followed in section 4.6. The issue of trustworthiness appears in section 4.7. The steps followed in data analysis are discussed in section 4.8. Ethical considerations of the research are discussed in section 4.9. The limitation of the research study is mentioned in section 4.10. The chapter concludes with a summary in section 4.11.

Section 5.1 presents an introduction to the analysis section. The analysis of interviews is explained in section 5.2. An introduction to the general themes is presented in 5.2.1. The discussion on the general themes appears in section 5.2.1.1 to section 5.2.1.3. The reasons why inclusive education does not take place optimally, are discussed in section in 5.3.1 to section 5.3.3. Reasons for the inadequate vocational preparation of LSEN are presented in a diagramme in section 5.3.4. Section 5.4 discusses the analysis of observational data including the description of the job/school task in section 5.4.1 and the factors that affect the adequate preparation of LSEN for the workplace in section 5.4.2. Section 5.4.3 follows a discussion on the mission statements of each school. A summary of the chapter is presented in section 5.5 and the chapter concludes in section 5.6.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions presented in this section are based on the findings presented in chapter 5. As was the case in chapter 5, references will also be made to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory which was discussed in chapter 2 and the literature study presented in chapter 3 when deemed necessary.

6.3.1 General conclusions

Inclusive Education in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal has a firm foundation for future improvement based on principals' and educators' understanding of inclusive education in general as well as in the vocational preparation of learners with special education needs for the workplace.

For any formal educational strategy to succeed, it is essential that a clear understanding of that which constitutes the essence of the intended plan, is understood by the education practitioners. The findings of the empirical research undertaken for this study revealed that the principal and educator interviewees had a clear understanding of what '*Inclusive Education*' entails (see section 5.2.1.1). These views were to a large degree, congruent with views expressed by the *Constitution of South Africa*, *The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training* (1996), the *National Committee for Education Support Services* (1996), the *Education White Paper 6* and the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* (1994) (see sections 1.1 and 3.3). The principals' interviewees' views on *inclusive education* were also to a large degree similar to the opinion of prominent scholars namely Lawson, Miles and Daniels (see section 3.4). However, despite the fact that the educator interviewees accepted the fact that *Inclusive Education* comprises equality of all learners, including learners with special education needs and their integration in the open labour market and society, the majority of educator interviewees were of the opinion that learners with special education needs should undergo formal education in special schools (see section 5.2.1.1 (a)).

The specific reasons for inadequate vocational training of learners with special education needs indicated the complex nature of addressing these needs (see section 5.3).

6.3.2 Reasons for the inadequate vocational training of learners with special education needs that became apparent from the analysis of interviews

As shown in section 5.3.1; section 5.3.2 and section 5.3.3, principals and educator interviewees considered the reasons for the inadequate vocational preparation of LSEN to include the following in terms of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

6.3.2.1 Reasons relating to the microsystem

- Inadequate parental role modeling
- Broken homes
- Uncertainty and false beliefs of parents
- Low socio-economic environment of learners
- Large numbers of learners with special education needs in the classroom

6.3.2.2 Reasons relating to the exosystem

- Lack of training of mainstream educators by the provincial Department of Education and other institutions
- Negative impact of the business world

6.3.2.3 Reasons relating to the macrosystem

- Stigma attached to learners with special education needs
- National Department of Education's challenge of removing the stigma attached to disability
- Lack of providing a suitable curriculum for learners with special education needs by the national Department of Education
- The South African government's challenge of enforcing policy

6.3.3 Reasons for the inadequate vocational training of learners with special education needs based on observation

Based on the observation conducted for this study (see section 5.4), reasons for the inadequate vocational preparation of learners with special education needs were also

identified. The reasons are listed below according to the microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory:

6.3.3.1 The microsystem

- Lack of person-centered planning
- Negative attitudes of principals and educators

6.3.3.2 The exosystem

- Inadequate resources/facilities provided by provincial Department of Education
- Lack of learner's individual vocation programme provided by provincial Department of Education

6.3.3.3 The macrosystem

- Lack of adequate finance provided by the South African government to the national *Department of Education* for the provision of resources/facilities at schools

It should be noted that it is important for educators and managers to view the reasons for problems experienced in a holistic way, so that solutions provided would address issues that pertain to more than one system or sphere in a multidimensional manner (see diagramme in section 5.3.4).

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE REASONS FOR THE INADEQUATE VOCATIONAL PREPARATION OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS BASED ON INTERVIEWS

These recommendations would relate to addressing the reasons for the inadequate vocational preparation of learners with special education needs in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. However, studies could be conducted across the country so that a comprehensive list of reasons could be obtained for South Africa. The recommendations would be discussed and addressed in terms of conditions in the microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem.

6.4.1 The microsystem

In this section, recommendations regarding the following aspects are provided:

6.4.1.1 Inadequate parental role modeling/Uncertainty and false beliefs of parents

A lack of interpersonal skills is a major reason for unemployment of learners with barriers to learning (see section 3.5.6). In this regard, educators need to make parents aware of their crucial role in fostering acceptable social skills in their children.

In addition to fostering acceptable social skills, parents play a significant role in securing suitable skills training and possible employment for their children. Families can provide valuable information in the process of developing a vocational training and transition planning for their child such as what their child's learning interests are and consequently what type of job would be suitable for their child. Furthermore, families could act as advocates in the child's skills training as they may have contacts in the community who may serve as potential service providers.

By participating in their child's vocational training and transition planning programme, parents should be made aware of the nature and level of their child's difficulties and strengths. Therefore, it is imperative that parents serve as positive role models to their children with a special education need. This can be achieved by the school (microsystem) engaging the input of experts on role modeling such as educational psychologists from tertiary institutions (exosystem). Furthermore, parents' beliefs and perceptions of their child with a special need are pivotal in reaching his/ her educational goal. If parents view their child in a positive light and believe in the capabilities of their child and continuously offer empowerment, motivation and support, the possibility of the learner being successful in a work situation, may be higher.

Having mentioned the significant role that families play in the education of their child with a special need, educators must acknowledge the challenges that parents are faced with which may contribute to them perceiving their children in a negative light. Some of these challenges include lack of knowledge, cultural differences and child rearing (see section 2.3.1). Schools need to acknowledge these challenges and find ways to assist parents thereby making them

feel included, valued and empowered. This can be achieved by advocating parent support groups as well as providing counseling sessions where parents share their thoughts and fears. Having said this, parent's positive beliefs in their children can be further strengthened by the involvement of the national Department of Education and the South African government in the macrosystem in terms of policies and practice that foster independence and meaningful employment of learners with special education needs. Perhaps, parents would then look beyond their child's disabilities and focus on their abilities.

6.4.1.2 Broken homes/Low socio-economic environment

Issues that affect the learner's training and capacity to be prepared for employment in the open labour market include poverty and disintegration of family life (absence of a maternal figure) (see section 5.3.1.2).

The following recommendations can be made as regards learners with special education needs from broken homes and a low socio-economic environment:

- It is imperative to have specifically trained guidance counselors trained by tertiary institutions (exosystem), who are responsible for providing both personal counseling as well as vocational counseling.
- Schools need to be fully involved in the learner's personal and social life familiarizing themselves with the learner's family background by carrying out home visits.
- Schools must foster a partnership between the learner's home and the school. In this regard, cooperation with specialists in parental involvement at tertiary institutions in the exosystem could be established.
- A 'pastoral care' committee needs to be set up to discuss ways to assist learners that require assistance. A pastoral care committee will consist of staff in the microsystem (principal, educator, parent) as well as specialists in the exosystem (learning and support coordinators from the provincial Department of Education, health care workers, social workers, spiritual leaders and educational psychologists).

- Learners with special education needs are in receipt of a social grant. The South African government, in the macrosystem, could authorise schools to investigate the maintenance of this grant for the benefit of the learner.
- Schools need to secure sponsors/donations from the community in the exosystem and therefore, have to develop school/community partnerships.
- The South African government in the macrosystem needs to work in conjunction with businesses in the exosystem to ensure more job creation for learners with special education needs exiting school.

6.4.1.3 Large number of learners in mainstream classrooms

Educators are faced with learners of diverse cultures in an inclusive setting. Educators need to be sensitive to this diversity and be creative in their choice of teaching strategies and activities, accommodating all learners as effectively as possible. This can be achieved by attending workshops provided by the provincial and national Department of Education, involvement in further study at tertiary institutions as well as communicating with other educators from other schools in information-sharing sessions.

6.4.2 The exosystem

6.4.2.1 Lack of training of mainstream educators

The RSA Department of Education has the responsibility of providing training to mainstream educators via the provincial Department of Education in the exosystem in terms of how to manage learners with special education needs.

6.4.2.2 Negative impact of the business world

The business world remains ignorant of learners with mental and physical challenges and therefore needs to be educated in terms of the capabilities and strengths of these learners and offer them opportunities to exhibit their attributes. This training can be provided by the national Department of Education in the macrosystem.

6.4.3 The macrosystem

6.4.3.1 Department of Education's challenge of removing the stigma attached to learners with special education needs by providing a suitable curriculum

It is apparent that both the national and provincial Departments of Education have negated their commitment towards learners with barriers to learning in terms of curriculum needs (see section 5.3.2.3). It is imperative that special schools have a curriculum designed specifically for learners with barriers to learning. The curriculum will have to include vocational training and transition planning guidelines comprising of the needs analysis of the learners based on their strengths and interests. Based on this needs analysis, an individual education plan (IEP) has to be drawn up to identify the knowledge that the learner needs, to attain his/her goal, including a time frame on the accomplishment of these goals. Following the IEP, an individual transition plan (ITP) should be compiled for learners at the age of thirteen or fourteen years old. The ITP involves teaching the required skills needed for on the job training (see section 3.7).

In line with the *National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training* (NCSNET) and the *National Committee for Education Support Service* (NCESS) that was set up by the *Department of Basic Education* to investigate inclusive education, the *Department of Basic Education* needs to commit to setting up a committee to deal with career pathing for learners with barriers to learning, specific to their impairment. It is therefore recommended that apart from providing skills and knowledge, the curriculum must make provision for educators to serve as placement coordinators. Depending on the specific logistics of the school, an educator can fulfill this role on a part time or full time basis. The duties of the placement coordinator should include securing local big/small businesses willing to offer learners skills training with a possibility of permanent employment. The placement coordinator would assist the educator by providing him/her with the specific skills that need to be taught to the learner to function effectively on the job. This will fulfill the objective of providing academic training in combination with real work experience. The placement coordinator will accompany the learner to the place of work, supervising and providing assistance when the need arises. The placement coordinator will gradually limit assistance and contact with the learner as the learner becomes more independent and proficient on the job.

6.4.3.2 The South African government's challenge of enforcing policy

It was shown in section 3.7 that the United States of America has made impressive strides in *inclusive education* and consequently in vocational training and transition planning for learners with barriers to learning. A possible reason for this is that legislation and policy in the United States of America (see section 3.7) does not merely pay lip service in their commitment to learners with barriers to learning, but ensures that there is enforcement on the educators to train their learners to prepare them for employment. A major part of the educational programme in the United States of America focuses on vocational training and transition planning of learners with barriers to learning from the age of fourteen (see section 1.1). Contrary to the United States of America, there is no legislation in South Africa that ensures that vocational training and transition planning for learners with barriers to learning is mandatory. Therefore, schools remain reluctant to equip learners with barriers to learning, with skills necessary for the workplace.

In South Africa, enforcement of the employment of people with barriers to learning in the open labour market should be more than just a social obligation. Mechanisms for enforcing such obligation need to be given priority in policies of the Education Department as well as in laws governing South Africa. Penalties for breaking the stipulated quota to ensure the equity of people with barriers to learning are employed in the open labour market, must be instituted

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE REASONS FOR THE INADEQUATE VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS BASED ON OBSERVATION

As was the case with recommendations to address the reasons for the inadequate vocational training for learners with special education needs based on the interviews, the recommendations based on observation, will also be presented in terms of Bronfenbrenner's microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem.

6.5.1 The microsystem

6.5.1.1 Lack of person-centered planning

Once again, the recommendation is made that, as in the United States of America, the learner's dreams, interests, preferences, strengths and capabilities should be taken into consideration when planning skills training (see section 3.7.1.1). If a learner displays interest in performing a task/skill, his/her motivation level is high and consequently he/she may achieve success in completing the set task/skill.

6.5.1.2 Negative attitudes of principals and educators

The attitudes of inclusive education expressed by the participants inform their practice on the promotion of inclusive education to prepare their learners for employment in the open labour market. Some participants focus on learner's disabilities and consequently expose them to skills training within school that may not necessarily equip them for employment in the open labour market (see section 5.5). Preparing learners for the world of work is an arduous task. Professional training of educators as well as all other stakeholders is essential. This training will empower educators to adequately assist learners with special education needs with achieving their vocational goals. This in turn, will foster a positive attitude amongst principals and educators. This training can be provided by the provincial *Department of Education* through their district offices (exosystem).

6.5.1.3 Lack of an official learners' individual vocation programme at schools

As mentioned in section 6.4.3.1, the curriculum must make provision for a vocation programme for each learner with a special education need. This would mean that the national Department of Education in the macrosystem in conjunction with the provincial Department of Education in the exosystem together with representatives from schools and parent bodies in the microsystem, work together, to create a curriculum suitable to learners with special education needs.

6.5.2 The exosystem

6.5.2.1 Inadequate resources/facilities

On a national level, a budget must be set aside for special schools, and later when inclusive education is fully implemented, for mainstream schools, earmarked for specialist skills rooms to ensure that younger learners with special education needs receive the necessary skills to

prepare them for employment in the open labour market prior to receiving skills training out of school.

It is recommended that schools should persist to request the required resources and facilities from the provincial Department of Education in the exosystem or contact the national Department of Education, in the macrosystem, if unsuccessful.

6.5.3 The macrosystem

6.5.3.1 Lack of adequate finance from the South African government

The South African government must provide adequate economic support to the national Department of Education and the provincial Department of Education to ensure that schools have proper resources/facilities. This reference is congruent with a previous recommendation based on an analysis of interviews undertaken for this study.

6.6 DIAGRAMMATIC PRESENTATION OF REASONS AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE INADEQUATE VOCATIONAL PREPARATION OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Below, is a diagrammatic representation of the reasons and solutions for the inadequate preparation for learners with special education needs based on the interviews with principals and educators. Reasons and solutions are placed according to Bronfenbrenner's microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem levels of development so that an integrated approach to improving vocational preparation of learners with special education needs is obtained. It is followed by the reasons and solutions for the inadequate preparation for learners with special education needs based on observation undertaken for this study.

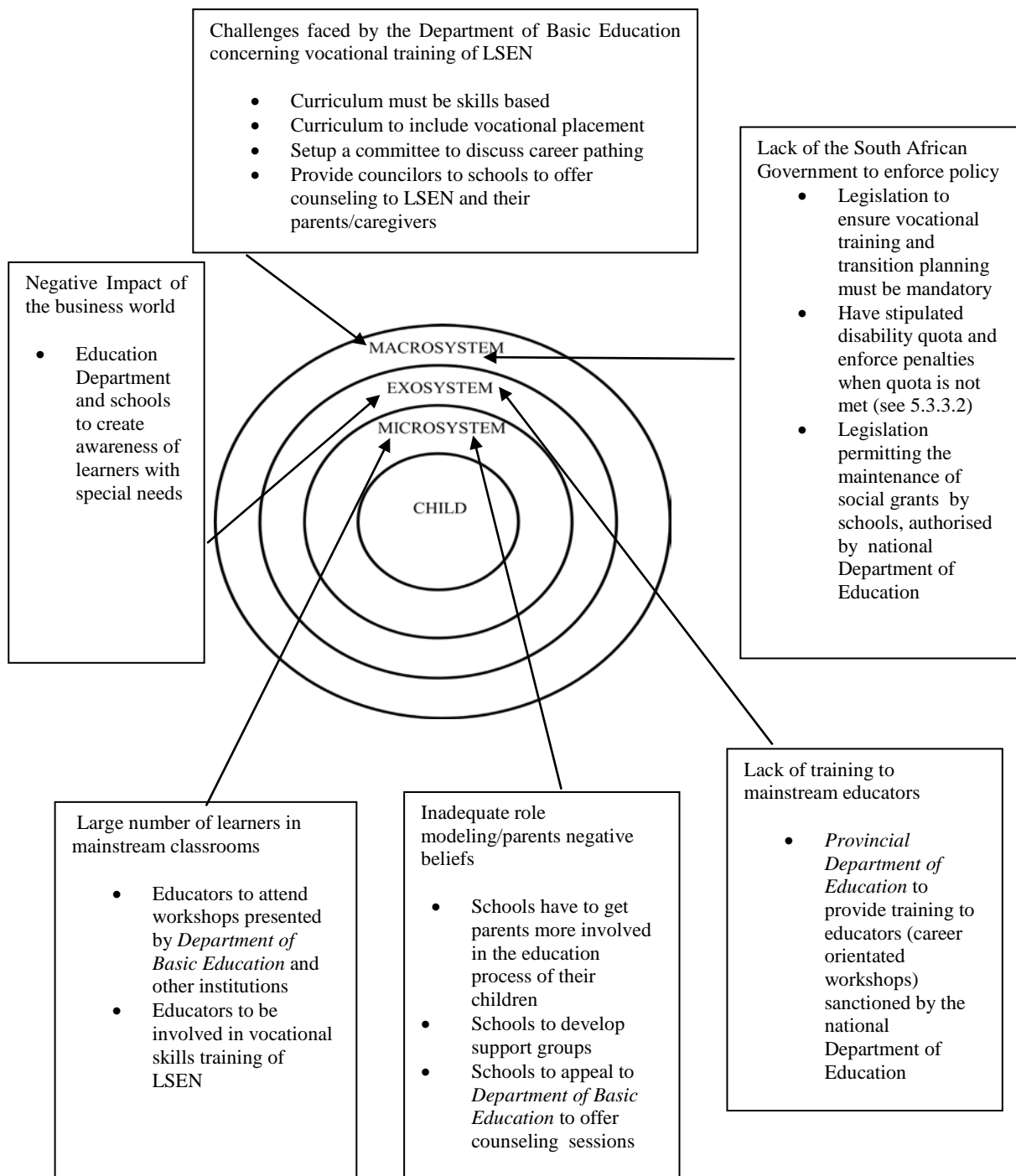


FIGURE 6.1 Reasons and solutions for the inadequate preparation of learners with special education needs for the workplace based on interviews with principals and educators

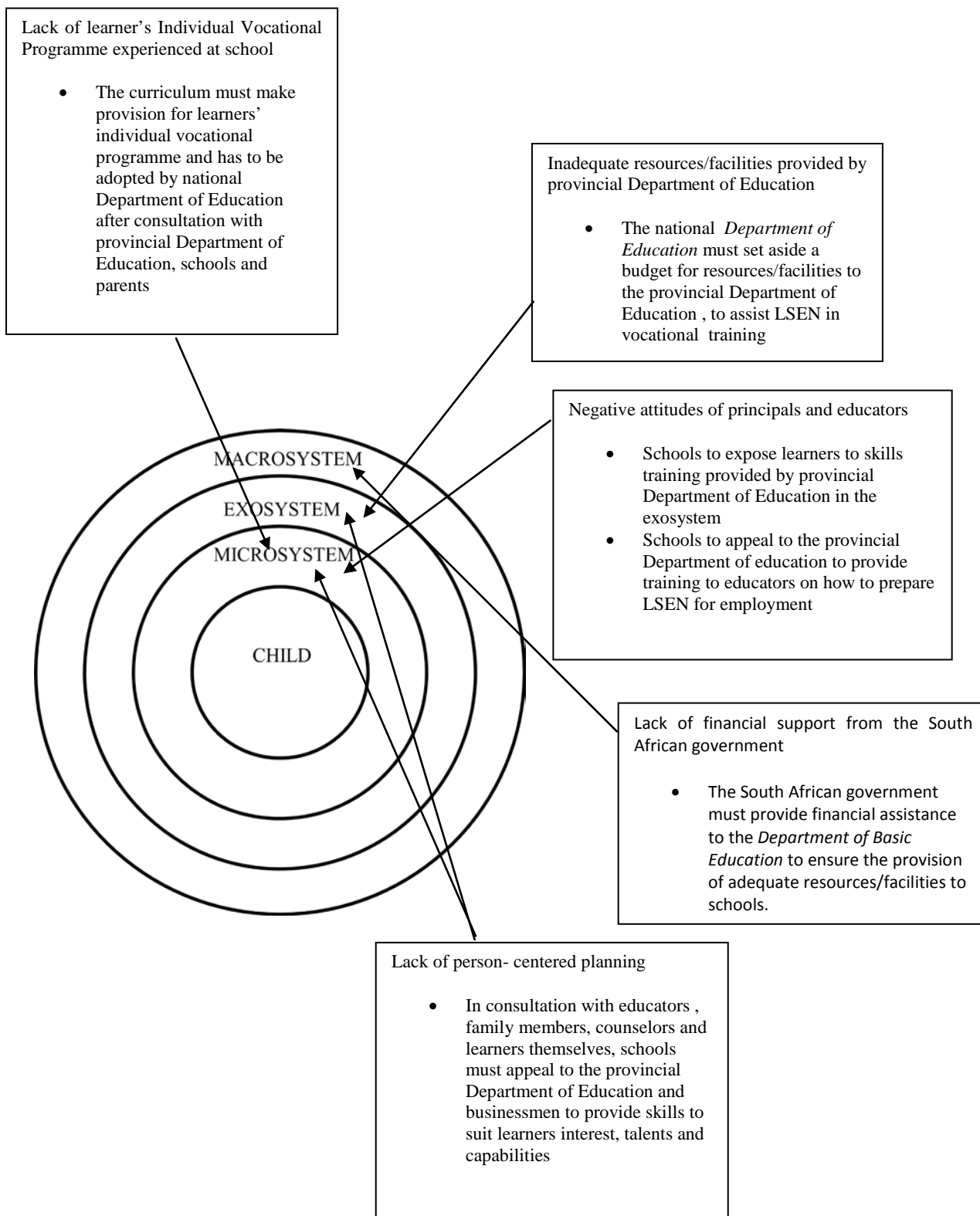


FIGURE 6.2 Reasons and solutions for the inadequate preparation of learners with special education needs for the workplace based on observations

Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2 reflect the following similarities:

1. There is an absence of curriculum policy and its implementation for LSEN in both mainstream and special schools.
2. Due to an absence of underlying curricula for vocational training, there is a lack of specific skills and training programmes for LSEN.
3. There exists a dire need for workshops to assist educators to equip LSEN for the world of work both within and out of school.
4. Challenges are faced by LSEN on different levels (school, socio-economic and socio-cultural).

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The ultimate goal of educators is to equip learners with barriers to learning with skills that can be applied in the open labour market to ensure that they are effective workers. The advantages of placing learners in the open labour market are mentioned in section 5.6. Research involving the strategies as adopted by the United States of America (see section 3.7.1) needs to be conducted to determine whether South Africa can use it or adapt it to also achieve similar success

In order to assist educators and relevant educational personnel to position learners with barriers to learning for equal opportunity in the open labour market, it is essential that educators receive training in the development of vocational training and transition planning programmes, focusing on knowledge and skills training to ensure a smooth transition from school to the workplace. Specific studies concerning the training of educators (content and implementation) need to be conducted.

Any applicant is considered for a job based on their experience as well as their qualifications. In respect of this, learners with barriers to learning are grossly disadvantaged as advanced skills programmes offered by FET's and SETA's are unattainable due to learners' limited numeracy and literacy skills. A research study into developing an achievable skills

programme suitable to learners with barriers to learners needs to be undertaken to ensure that learners have a choice of receiving accredited qualifications from FET's or SETAs after they have completed their schooling career.

The RSA *Department of Basic Education* has envisaged a twenty year plan for inclusive education to be fully implemented. Presently, special schools that accommodate learners requiring low, moderate and high levels of support, continue to exist. Therefore, research on a national level needs to be conducted to formulate a curriculum based on a skills approach with the objective of ensuring meaningful employment for learners with barriers to learning requiring low and moderate levels of support until inclusive education is fully realized and implemented.

6.8 A FINAL WORD

Work is an essential part of life. The type of job we are engaged in, define us as individuals and our role in society. Therefore, it is imperative that all learners, irrespective of disability, be given the opportunity to be productive contributors to the open labour market. Educators and school managers in special schools are faced daily with the insurmountable task of securing permanent employment in the open labour market for their learners with barriers to learning. Their challenge is further exacerbated by the non-involvement of stakeholders that influence the development of learners and consequently their opportunity of societal acceptance. This presents a barrier to employment for learners with barriers to learning exiting school.

The researcher adopts a positive attitude to inclusive education (see section 3.4). However, the *Department of Basic Education*, focusing its energy on the promotion and promulgation of inclusive education, has sidelined special schools that continue to exist. Educators and school managers at special schools, receive minimal or no support from the education authorities. Education authorities have further diminished the chances of learners with special needs from being employed.

A further barrier to employment of learners with barriers to learning in the open labour market involves the negative attitudes of society. Society continues to view learners with barriers to learning as objects of pity and offer skills training out of social obligation with

little or no intention of offering permanent employment. This marginalization can only be resolved if all stakeholders including the learner with barriers to learning, parents, schools, community, education authorities and legislators invest means on how to enhance the opportunity for learners with barriers to learning to be employed in the open labour market. Commitments must be made in terms of policy and practice to intensify the prospect of securing permanent employment for learners with barriers to learning that are currently in special schools as well as for learners with barriers to learning in mainstream schools.

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Publications.

APPENDIX 2 LETTER TO CIRCUIT MANAGER

Dear Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO A RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Radhika Maniram. I am an educator at School. I am currently studying towards my Masters Degree in Education Management at UNISA. The topic of my dissertation is: “Managing inclusive education at special schools in Pietermaritzburg with special reference to vocational training of learners with special education needs”.

There is a paucity of research or opportunities concerning employment for our learners with special education needs. I humbly request your permission to explore how our special schools are preparing learners for employment. To achieve the above, I have chosen three special schools to conduct research.

The research will take the following form:

- 1) Interview with the respective principals (40 minutes)
- 2) Interview with the educator responsible for prevocational skills training at the school (40 minutes)
- 3) Observation of learners whilst they are carrying out their assigned jobs/tasks (90 minutes)

All sessions will be pre-arranged and conducted at a time, suitable for all participants.

I hope that this request will receive your approval.

Regards,

.....
Mrs R Maniram

The details of my supervisor are as follows:

Professor A.E. Van Zyl Contact number at work: 012 4294036

Email: vzylae@unisa.ac.za

I will gladly provide any further information that may be required.



education

Department:
Education

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

TO: THE PRINCIPAL

OPEN GATE LSNE

Mr ERRAADU

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. Ms Radhika Maniram has written to my office seeking permission to conduct research at your institution.
2. I herein grant her such permission as detailed in the attached letter.
3. I hope she will be well- received and accordingly assisted.
4. Your co-operation is always appreciated

Mr MA Mncwabe: 

ACTING CES

UMSUNDUZI CMC

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Physical Address: 130 Boom Street • Pietermaritzburg • 3201 SOUTH AFRICA

Tel.: +27 33 897 8150 • Call Centre: +27 0860 596 363 • Fax: +27 033 897 8168 • Email: faith.ngubo@kzndoe.gov.za • Web:
kzndoe.gov.za

APPENDIX 4 LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Radhika Maniram. I am currently studying towards my Masters Degree in Education Management at UNISA. The topic of my dissertation is: “Managing inclusive education at special schools in Pietermaritzburg with special reference to vocational training of learners with special education needs”.

There is a paucity of research regarding vocational training and transition planning for our special learners in South Africa, especially in Pietermaritzburg. I therefore humbly request your permission to explore how special schools prepare our learners for employment. I have identified your school to conduct research into these aspects.

The research project is framed by the following research questions:

- 1) How do principals and educators in selected schools in Pietermaritzburg understand and promote inclusive education in general and in terms of preparing learners for employment?
- 2) What factors, personal and socio-ecological, have facilitated or hindered the implementation of inclusive education especially in terms of vocational preparation of learners?
- 3) How should principals and selected educators in special schools use inclusive education to assist with preparing their learners for employment in the open labour market?
- 4) What recommendations in terms of various social levels surrounding learners with special needs, would improve the readiness of these learners for employment in the open labour market?

In an attempt to achieve the above, I will be conducting individual interviews with you, as well as the educator/s responsible for prevocational training at the school. In addition to the interviews, I would appreciate access to any documents pertaining to prevocational training example minutes of meetings, circulars, photographs etc.

I would like to observe learners whilst they are carrying out their assigned jobs/tasks. In this regard I have attached a separate learner consent form to be signed by the parent/guardian.

The contents of my survey are purely for research and analysis purposes. Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence and by no means is it a commission of inquiry. The identity of the school as well as the identities of the participants in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by UNISA. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, participants will be asked to complete a consent form.

I will be contacting you telephonically to set up an appointment to discuss issues with respect to my research project, at your convenience of course.

I thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

.....

Radhika Maniram (M.E.d Student)

Declaration

I (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project. I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that all information gathered is purely for research purposes only and therefore completely confidential. I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this project at any time.

Signature of Principal

Date

.....

.....

APPENDIX 5 LETTER TO EDUCATORS

Dear Sir/Mam

My name is Radhika Maniram. I am currently studying towards my Masters Degree in Education Management at UNISA. The topic of my dissertation is: “Managing inclusive education at special schools in Pietermaritzburg with special reference to vocational training of learners with special education needs”.

There is a paucity of research regarding vocational training and transition planning for our special learners in South Africa, especially in Pietermaritzburg. I have identified your school to conduct research into these aspects. I humbly request your permission to explore how special schools prepare our learners for employment.

The research project is framed by the following research questions

- 1) How do principals and educators in special schools in Pietermaritzburg understand and promote inclusive education in general and in terms of preparing learners for employment?
- 2) What factors, personal and socio-ecological, have facilitated or hindered the implementation of inclusive education especially in terms of vocational preparation of learners?
- 3) How should principals and selected educators in special schools use inclusive education to assist with preparing their learners for employment in the open labour market?
- 4) What recommendations in terms of various social levels surrounding learners with special needs, would improve the readiness of these learners for employment in the open labour market?

In an attempt to achieve the above, I will be conducting an interview with you, as the educator responsible for prevocational training at the school.

The contents of my survey are purely for research and analysis purposes. Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence and by no means is it a commission of inquiry. The identity of the school as well as the identities of the participants in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by UNISA. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, participants will be asked to complete a consent form.

I thank you for your co-operation.
Yours sincerely

Date

.....

.....

Radhika Maniram

Declaration

I (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project. I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that all information gathered is purely for research purposes only and therefore is completely confidential.

I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this project at any time.

Signature of educator

Date

.....

.....

APPENDIX 6 LETTER TO PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Radhika Maniram. I am currently studying towards my Masters Degree in Education Management. The aim of my research is to explore how special schools are preparing learners for employment. I humbly request your permission to observe your child/ward whilst carrying out their assigned jobs/ tasks at or outside school.

A child assent form will be given to your child/ward informing him /her about the research study. Your child/ward would be required to sign the child assent form, giving me permission for him/her to be observed.

I assure you that your child/ward will remain anonymous for the purpose of the study.

Kindly complete the consent form and return to school.

I thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Radhika Maniram

.....

Researcher

Consent Form:

I Hereby give permission to my child/ward..... to take part in the research study.

Signature of parent/guardian

Date

.....

.....

APPENDIX 7 LETTER OF INFORMED ASSENT TO LEARNERS

Learner informed assent form

I, have been told that Mrs Maniram is doing a project on prevocational skills training. I have been asked to be part of this project. Mrs Maniram will observe me while I do my work.

If I don't wish to take part in the project anymore, I may change my mind at any time.

My name will not be mentioned in the project.

I wish to take part in this project and I agree to be observed.

Sign your name

Date

.....

.....

APPENDIX 8 LETTER TO SERVICE PROVIDERS

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO OBSERVE LEARNERS IN TRAINING

My name is Radhika Maniram. I am an educator at School. I am currently studying towards my Masters Degree in Education Management at UNISA. The topic of my dissertation is: “Managing inclusive education at special schools in Pietermaritzburg with special reference to vocational training of learners with special education needs”.

There is a paucity of research or opportunities concerning employment for our learners with special education needs. I humbly request your permission to observe the learners whilst they are carrying out their assigned jobs/tasks as part of my research study.

I thank you for your co-operation.

Kind Regards,
Radhika Maniram

.....

Declaration

I (Full names of service provider) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project. I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that all information gathered is purely for research purposes only and therefore completely confidential.

I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this project at any time.

Signature of service provider

Date

.....

.....

APPENDIX 9 ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

Maniram, R [44573545]

for a M Ed study entitled

**Managing inclusive education in selected
Schools in Pietermaritzburg with reference to post school
transition for learners with special education needs (LSEN)**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two
years from the date of issue.



Prof CS le Roux
CEDU REC (Chairperson)
lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za

Reference number: 2013 Aug/44573545/CSLR

15 August 2013

APPENDIX 10 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your understanding of Inclusive education?
2. As a Manager/Educator, how do you promote or implement inclusive education?
3. How does the school's inclusive education programme adequately prepare the learner for gainful employment?
4. What effect has the learners personal and socio-ecological environment, had on their training and their capacity to be prepared for employment in the open labour market?
5. What do you believe your role should be in ensuring that the learners are fully prepared for employment in the open labour market?
6. How have you used inclusive education to fully prepare learners for employment in the open labour market?
7. What social factors do you think could be changed to improve the readiness of learners with special needs for employment in the open labour market?
8. The South African Government has various policies and laws in place example The Labour Relations Act and The Employment Equity Act. Do you think these policies will benefit employment opportunities for LSEN? Please support your answer.

APPENDIX 11

**DEPICTION OF SCHOOLS, PARTICIPANTS
AND METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

Schools	Participants				Method of data collection	
	Principal/ Educator	age	Learners	age	Principals/ Educators	Learners
Lotus Haven Special School	Mrs. Reddy Mrs. John	55 50	Mark Michael Sipho	16 16 16	Semi- structured individual interviews	Observation/ Documentary analysis
Mounta in View Special School	Mr. Naidoo Mrs. Naik	56 45	Khetu Cherise Sifiso	12 13 13	Semi- structured individual interviews	Observation/ Documentary analysis
All Stars Special School	Mr. James Ms. Thomas	53 48	Fatima Lindo Zanele	16 17 16	Semi- structured individual interviews	Observation/ Documentary analysis

APPENDIX 12 SCHOOLS' MISSION STATEMENTS

We pledge with faith and hope to develop all our learners to the best of their abilities so that they can take their rightful place in society (Lotus Haven Special School)

We do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff or pupil or parent, on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

We promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We recognise that doing this may entail treating some pupils differently.

We seek to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of Educational opportunities provided by the school.

We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination That may form barriers to learning for some groups.

We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training Systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.

We challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.

We value each pupil's worth, we celebrate the individuality and cultural Diversity of the community centred on our school, and we show respect for all minority groups.

We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are caused by poor self-image and by ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes, and respect for all (Mountain View Special School)

All Stars Special School strives to provide quality education, in conjunction with all Stakeholders, to Learners with Special Education needs, where the primary disability is sight-related, in Kwazulu-Natal from Grades 0-12. The culture of learning and teaching services will be free from any form of prejudice with Learners, respecting the rights of others, being prepared to take their rightful role in Society.

- *To teach each learner with love, dignity and respect deserving of every human being.*
- *To provide opportunities for quality learning and learners.*
- *To uplift, empower and encourage parents to be equal partners in the education of their children.*
- *To adequately equip the learners to become independent in their daily living skills and thus become independent adults in society (All Stars Special School)*