

**SKILLS TRAINING AND DISABILITY: A LIFE HISTORY STUDY OF
ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES AT
PROTECTED WORKSHOPS.**

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work, except where otherwise indicated, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any other university for a degree.

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DATE

ABSTRACT

According to Statistics South Africa (2005, p.1) approximately 5 percent of the total South African population are affected with different types of disabilities. People with disabilities experience marginalization and despite legislation and advocacy their employment opportunities are limited. Due to lack of social and physical infrastructure they are excluded from places of employment. This study aimed to document the perceptions and experiences of mildly intellectually disabled adults with regard to skills training at two protected workshops in the Durban region.

The medical, social and biopsychosocial models of disability have influenced policy design and legislation over the years. In recent years due to a paradigm shift disability is viewed within the biopsychosocial model of disability. Thus the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning my study is the biopsychosocial model of disability which focuses on functioning at the level of the whole person in a social context. The second conceptual lens of my study focuses on the concept of self-determination. Self-determined individuals are those that bring about a change in their own lives. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences forms the third conceptual lens of my study. This new concept of intelligence includes areas such as music, spatial relations and interpersonal knowledge in addition to mathematical and linguistic ability.

The study was conducted within the interpretivist paradigm. It was a qualitative study that adopted a life history approach. Interviews and observation were the two methods of data collection as this enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' perceptions and experiences. The data is presented in the form of life history narratives. Content analysis was used to analyse the data and coding was used to categorise the data into themes.

The conclusions reached in the study are included with recommendations for areas of further research with the aim of skills training leading to an income generating activity as well as improving the employment opportunities of mildly intellectually disabled people.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

All the service users who have touched my life in so many different ways during this study.

ACRONYMS

| | |
|------------------|--|
| ABA | - Applied Behaviour Analysis |
| ABET | - Adult Basic Education and Training |
| DPI | - Disabled Peoples' International |
| DSM-IV TR | - Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders |
| EEA | - Employment Equity Act (1998) |
| EFC | - Employers Federation of Ceylon |
| ICD | - International Classification of Disease |
| ICF | - The international Framework |
| ICT | - Information and Communication Technology |
| ILO | - International Labour Organisation |
| IQ | - Intelligence Quotient |
| SDA | - Skills Development Act (1998) |
| NISTADS | - National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies |
| NOD | - The National Organisation on Disability |

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This study explored the experiences and perceptions of adults with intellectual disabilities regarding skills training at two protected workshops in the Durban Region. One protected workshop is in central Durban and the other is in the Durban South Region. This chapter highlights the background and purpose of this study, the rationale for the study, the conceptual and theoretical location of the study, the research aims, the research questions, the research method and the structure of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perceptions of adults with intellectual disabilities regarding skills training at protected workshops.

According to Census 2001, 5% of the total population in South Africa experienced some type of disability. Statistics South Africa mentions that of the 2255982 people afflicted with various forms of disability 1854376 were Africans, 168678 Coloureds, 41235 Indians/Asians and 191693 were Whites (Statistics South Africa, 2005, p.1). McClain (2002, p.5) states that people with disabilities in South Africa continue to face barriers that prevent them from enjoying their full civil, political, economic, social, cultural and development rights. She further mentions that some of the factors that further disadvantage a disabled person are poverty, gender, class, age and geographic location.

Disability is not only an issue of a small minority. Although it is estimated that between 5-12% of the world's population is afflicted with a disability, the effects of the disability impact upon many more. In China a study found that, while about 5% of the population had a disability, about 20 percent lived in households where someone had a disability (Wiman and Sandhu, 2004). McClain (2002) also states that disability affects the lives of almost all South Africans at some stage or in some way. This is because disability does not only affect the disabled individual, but it also

touches this person's family, friends and fellow community members. Therefore people with disabilities should not be ignored or marginalised.

Education White Paper 6 (2001) acknowledges that learners with disabilities experienced difficulty gaining access to educational institutions. It is estimated that special schools accommodated approximately 20% of all learners with disabilities. This means that only 64 200 learners received some kind of education whereas approximately 280 000 learners with impairments and disabilities were not accounted for. The Ministry of Education's aim then was to establish an education and training system to ensure that all learners with or without disabilities develop their learning potential to their fullest (Education White Paper 6, 2001, p.12). This, however, was not the answer to people with disabilities that did not have access to schooling.

From my experience of teaching people with disabilities, I found that they have very limited employment opportunities despite numerous policies that have been passed by the Government to recognise the rights of disabled people. It is mentioned in the Human Resource Management Policy Document of Western Cape (Provincial Government Western Cape, 2004) that legislation alone will not be able to overcome the inherent and deeply rooted social order but instead everybody must be committed to include people with disabilities in their plans and activities. Since people with disabilities experience difficulty finding employment in the open labour market, non-government organisations have realised the need for alternate places of employment. One of the places of employment is protected workshops which are run by Mental Health in South Africa. This type of employment segregates people with disabilities from the rest of society. The focus of this research is on how people with mild intellectual disabilities perceive and experience skills training at protected workshops.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

My rationale for doing the research is discussed under three headings viz. own interest and experience, social relevance and theoretical relevance.

1.2.1 OWN INTEREST AND EXPERIENCE

I have taught intellectually disabled learners previously. The age range of the learners was between 9 years and 17 years. Besides basic maths and literacy, these learners were taught life skills such as buttoning of shirts and tying of shoe laces to make them independent. Learning to cook and bake were some of the other activities taught. I found that, once learners with intellectual disabilities leave school, they encounter difficulties in securing placement in the job market. It became an area of concern for me as very few were able to get employment in the open labour market. By doing this research I aim to ascertain the different types of skills training that people with disabilities have undergone at workshops, their perceptions of these types of training and if it has led to employment.

1.2.2 SOCIAL RELEVANCE

Disabled people have been marginalised and are seen as historically disadvantaged individuals. They are among the poorest of the poor. Poverty is a striking reality amongst them. This is also pertinent to South Africa as Emmett (2006, p.223) asserts that there is an association between poverty and disability. He states that the CASE survey indicated that the three provinces in South Africa with the highest concentration of poverty namely Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo also had the highest rates for disability.

During the apartheid era disabled people experienced inequalities and discrimination especially in the workplace. After 1994 the Government made an attempt to redress these inequalities so that people with disabilities would be given an equal opportunity in the open labour market. The rights of disabled people are protected in the new Constitution. Besides introducing the Employment Equity Act of 1998 which prohibits unfair discrimination with regard to employment, the Government also introduced the Code of Good Practice on Employment of People with Disabilities which forms part of a broader framework that recognises the rights of people with disabilities in the labour market (Republic of South Africa, 1997). However, in my experience, companies still do not meet the employment equity targets. My research seeks to make a contribution to our understanding of the perceptions of mildly intellectually disabled adults of skills training and the barriers they have encountered in obtaining these skills. Researching their experiences and perceptions of skills training could

help with future planning of skills training for intellectually disabled adults and maybe increase their job opportunities or even enable them to open their own businesses. Intellectually disabled people need to have a say in what is best for them in terms of policy planning and training.

1.2.3 THEORETICAL RELEVANCE

There are different models for understanding disability viz. the medical model, the social model and the biopsychosocial model (Ustun, 2002). The medical model sees disability as constituted by the relationship between the individual person and the impairment. Disability is seen as caused by an impairment or disease that needs to be treated or prevented. The focus is on changing the individual so that he /she can adapt or adjust. The social model views disability in terms of the relationship between the individual person and the environment. The environment fails to accommodate people with disabilities. Wiman and Sandhu (2004) maintain that, given the right infrastructure, people with disabilities can be as functional as anyone else. However, the infrastructure has not changed to accommodate disabled people in many instances, thus they are faced with many barriers. The third model is the biopsychosocial model of disability. The biopsychosocial model maintains that biological (how the functioning of the person's body causes an illness), psychological (which encompasses thoughts, emotions and behaviours) and social factors (such as religious beliefs, socio-economic status, culture, technology and poverty) all play an important role in human functioning with regard to disease or illness. Companies are not complying with the biopsychosocial model on integrating the disabled into the work place. The present study adopts this biopsychosocial model as a lens to view the experiences and perceptions of people with intellectual disabilities regarding skills training.

1.3 CONCEPTUAL LOCATION OF THE STUDY

Besides the models of disability the issue of self-determination as a conceptual lens and its effects within the biopsychosocial model was looked at. Self-determination is when a person takes charge of his life and makes decisions regarding his life. The choices that he makes are free from external influences. Self-determined individuals are those that bring about a change in their own lives.

Another conceptual lens that I adopted in the study was aspects of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner speaks of other intelligences besides computational and verbal intelligences. More specifically I looked at body-kinaesthetic intelligence.

1.4 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was undertaken in an attempt to answer the following questions:-

- ❖ What are the experiences of the mildly intellectually disabled adults at protected workshops with regard to skills training?
- ❖ What are their perceptions of skills training at these workshops?

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study was conducted within the interpretivist paradigm. Working within this paradigm enabled me to understand the participants' experiences and how they made sense of their own lives.

I used the life history approach to conduct the research. Using this approach allowed me to get a rich, in-depth understanding of the experiences of disabled people with regard to skills training in the context of their wider lives and life courses.

Six participants were interviewed at two protected workshops run by Durban and Coastal Mental Health Society. These participants had undergone skills training in bead-making and block-making. The two methods of data collection that I used were interviewing and observation.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.6.1 Protected workshops

These are workshops that are run by the Durban and Coastal Mental Health Society which cater for people with intellectual disability and psychiatric illnesses. Some of the services that they offer are psycho-social rehabilitation through skills training and economic empowerment through contract work.

1.6.2 Service users

These are people with disabilities that are employed at the protected workshops. They are engaged in contract work and skills training, amongst other activities.

1.6.3 Service providers

Workshop supervisors; co-ordinators; ABET educators and any other person involved in providing some type of service to the service users are referred to as service providers.

1.6.4 Contract work

Contract work includes gluing of boxes; assembling; packaging and sticking of labels. Companies outsource this type of work to the protected workshops. Service users receive a percentage of the unit cost according to their production.

1.6.5 Skills training

Within the organisation service users receive training to develop skills in bead-making; block making and to perform tasks such as cleaning; reception duties; maintenance dispatching and car cleaning amongst others.

1.6.6 Supported employment

Supported employment is when a suitably screened service user is placed in open labour market employment. This entails a process of matching the service user to the job that is available in the open labour market. The service user continues to receive services from the organisation until the permanent placement. Support may take the form of a telephone call, factory visit or a visit to the service provider. This resembles a very rudimentary Employment Assistance Programme.

1.7 PREVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS THAT FOLLOW

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodological framework within which the research was conducted. Mention is made of the style of research selected, the paradigm and type of approach used. Data collection methods and techniques; sampling; selection of

site; data analysis and interpretation; validity and reliability; limitations of the study and ethical considerations are also highlighted.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of literature on intellectual disabilities; adult education and low skilled learning; learning among intellectually disabled people and employment and skills training. It also includes a review of literature on barriers to training and employment; employment opportunities and benefits of employment. The chapter also establishes a theoretical framework for the study, drawing on the biopsychosocial model of disability and the concept of self-determination and Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences as conceptual lenses.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The main focus of this chapter is on the responses of the participants during the interview process as well as the observation data collected. The experiences of the six participants with regard to skills training at protected workshops are presented in the context of their lives in the form of brief life history narratives.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The key themes and trends that emerged from the experiences of mildly intellectually disabled adults at protected workshops are analysed and discussed in this chapter. The main themes are then examined in conjunction with the key questions and other emerging themes are evaluated in terms of the literature review and conceptual framework.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions drawn from the findings are presented in this final chapter. Included in this chapter are recommendations for areas of further research. The chapter ends with an overall conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

The overall purpose of the study was to investigate the types of skills training those adults at protected workshops are exposed to. The study aimed to document the perceptions and experiences of mildly intellectually disabled adults with regard to skills training at protected workshops. The study was conducted within the interpretivist paradigm. It was a qualitative study and the approach that I used was life history since I thought it would be best suited to my research. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' perceptions and experiences I used two methods of data collection namely interview and observation. The techniques used were semi-structured interview and unstructured observation.

2.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study was framed within the interpretivist paradigm. I worked within the interpretivist paradigm because I was interested in the participants' experiences and perceptions of skills training. My intention was to acquire an in-depth understanding of how they experienced everyday life therefore working within the interpretivist paradigm was most appropriate.

Interpretivism attempts to understand human and social reality. The interpretivist approach "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life- world "(Crotty, 1998, p.67).

"The interpretative sociology considers the individual and his action as the basic unit, as its 'atom'...In this approach the individual is also the upper limit and the sole carrier of meaningful conduct..." Weber (1970, p.55 as cited in Crotty, 1998, p.68).

The interpretive approach assisted me to understand the participants' experiences and how they make sense of their own lives. The interpretive approach is "concerned with how ordinary people manage their practical affairs in their everyday life, or how they get things done" (Neuman, 1997, p.68). The interpretive approach provided insight because it enabled me to understand what is important and relevant to my participants and their everyday experiences. I was able to see their world

through their eyes, in other words, how they perceive reality and what meaning they attach to it.

2.2 RESEARCH STYLE

I was interested in obtaining rich, in-depth data. I wanted to gather the data first hand by understanding the participants' perception of social reality and their everyday life therefore the most obvious choice was to undertake qualitative research.

"The goal of qualitative research is to explore and understand a central phenomenon, which is the concept or process explored in a qualitative research study "(Creswell, 2005, as cited in Maree, 2007, p. 257).

Maree (2007, p. 257) mentions that the qualitative researcher collects words (text) and images (pictures) about the central phenomenon. The data is collected from people immersed in the setting of everyday life in which the study is framed. The researcher serves as an instrument of data collection and asks the participants broad, open-ended questions to allow them to share their views about and experiences with the phenomenon.

In keeping with Maree's view, my participants were asked open-ended questions which enabled them to share their experiences and views about skills training and other pertinent aspects of their life and work situation. As "qualitative research is multi-method in focus" (Denzil and Lincoln, 1994, p.2 as cited in Clandinin, 2007, p.4), I used more than one method of obtaining information and this allowed me to have a better understanding of the issues being researched as well as obtaining other perspectives.

In my study I used the life history approach which resulted in the construction of stories regarding my participants. I was interested in understanding how they perceive and experience the world, in line with Clandinin's (2007, p.4) views:

Qualitative research forms around assumptions about interpretation and human action. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding.

Qualitative researchers often use words in their analysis, and they often collect or construct stories about those they are studying.

One of the strengths of qualitative research design is that it often allows for far greater flexibility than in most quantitative research designs (Silverman, 2000). Using the qualitative approach allowed me to get a rich, in-depth understanding of the lives of persons with disabilities and their experiences. By interviewing the participants I was able to glean information about them that I would not have been able to get had I opted for a quantitative research design.

2.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study is based on life histories of mildly intellectually disabled people at protected workshops. Life history is interested in people's stories and what these stories reveal about them and their society.

Life history does not only entail information that individuals give about their entire lives but can also focus only on a part of it and the area of focus of my study is on the participants' perceptions and experiences of skills training and not on their entire lives. Life history methodology draws on narrative as a source of information and Neuman (1997, p. 400) states that the narrative methodology "presents events as unique, unpredictable and contingent... it surrounds individuals and specific events with a mix of many aspects of social reality."

In a life history interview, researchers interview and gather documentary material about a particular individual's life. The main purpose is to get at how the respondent sees or remembers the past, not just some kind of objective truth (Neuman, 1997, p.373). I chose a life history approach because it enabled me to get an in-depth account of the lives of the participants. Plummer (1983) mentions that the main strengths of life history methodology are its emphases on the subjective reality of the individual, on process and change, and on totality of the individual.

In life story telling, we are really seeking the insider's viewpoint on the life being lived...Life story serves as an excellent means for the understanding

how people see their own experiences, their own lives, and their interactions with others (Clandinin, 2007, p.239).

An advantage of life story approach, as mentioned by Plummer (2001, p.130) is that life stories, more than any other method, can sensitise a researcher to key issues. Life stories can help generate miniature sensitizing concepts, built up through listening closely to what people have to say about their lives.

I gave the service users that were interviewed an opportunity to read their stories once they had been transcribed and they were at liberty to make any changes if they deemed it necessary. I wanted them to be part of the process and have the final say in what is written about them. I ensured that it met with their approval before publication, as Clandinin (2007) advises that the person whose life story it is should be consulted and he or she should have the final say before it is published.

2.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The most common methods of gathering life stories have been three-fold: through writing, recording and a combination of observation and interviewing (Plummer, 2001, p.141)

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.268) state that interviews serve three purposes: they may be used as the principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives; to test hypotheses or to suggest new ones; and in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking. They also mention that interviews entail the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison list of purposes that interviews serve in my research it was used in conjunction with observation to gather data.

I used interview and observation as the two methods to collect data in this study. The interview method was one way of obtaining valuable information from the service users and the observation enabled me to view the service users in their work situation first hand. The use of more than one method of collecting data is referred to as triangulation. "Triangulation refers to the attempt to get a 'true' fix on a situation

by combining different ways of looking at it or different findings” Silverman (2000, p.177). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.112) mention that triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint. It also helps bridge issues of reliability and validity.

Using both methods to collect data enabled me to see if there was a correlation between responses in the interview and what they actually did at the protected workshops. Relying only on one method of data collection would not have enabled me to obtain other perspectives. Triangulation helped me in gaining a variety of perspectives on the service users’ perceptions and experiences of skills training and what activities they engaged in at the workshop. Sometimes people are better at showing you what they do rather than merely talking about it. I found this to be true of the service users that I interviewed since, as people with mild intellectual impairments, oral communication was not necessarily their strength

2.5 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Semi-structured interviews and observation were the two techniques that I employed to gather data.

2.5.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The semi-structured interview provided a framework for my line of questioning and a method for eliciting information from the service users. I used, in a flexible and open-ended manner, a set of predetermined questions which I considered to be relevant to obtain rich, in-depth data that is pertinent to my study.

The service users that I interviewed were unable to sit for long periods of time because of their short concentration spans therefore using semi-structured interviews was most appropriate, as Nieuwenhuis (in Maree, 2007, p. 87) mentions “Semi-structured interviews...it seldom spans a long time and usually requires the participant to answer a set of predetermined questions. It does allow for the probing and clarification of answers.”

The framing of questions for a semi-structured interview also needs to consider prompts and probes (Morrison, 1993, p.66 as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.278). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) further state that prompts enable the interviewer to clarify topics or questions, whilst probes enable the interviewer to ask respondents to extend, elaborate, add to, provide detail for, clarify their responses, thereby addressing richness, depth of response, comprehensiveness and honesty that are some of the hallmarks of successful interviewing. Taking this into consideration I used prompts when designing the interview schedule (refer to appendix 4).

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 6 service users at two protected workshops. Since the service users had short attention spans they could not be interviewed for long periods of time. Sitting through long sessions of interviewing can be demanding on them. They were interviewed for approximately an hour each on two separate occasions since I did not want to tire them. The interview covered key periods like birth, schooling, family background, skills training and work. Goodson and Sikes (2001, p.32) state that life history interviewing requires concentration. During the interviewing process I had to ensure that I was totally immersed in the situation and gave my interviewees my undivided attention. Goodson and Sikes (2001, p.32) state that 'listening beyond', picking up on clues and hints about what might be a productive line of enquiry, simply knowing what someone has said, all depend on the interviewer giving their total attention to the conversation and the social situation generally. Besides interviewing the service users I also walked around the workshop and observed what activities they were involved in at the workshop. Using observation as a method of data collection emanated from the interviews. Basically one flowed into the next and it is difficult to separate one from the next as it was different for each participant. On completion of the observation I had unplanned interviews with the supervisors. Since these were unplanned interviews there was no specific interview schedule with a list of questions. However, during the unplanned interviews some of the topics covered were the types of skills training that the service users undergo; who teaches it; the methods used in teaching it and how the service users responded to it. On each occasion the interviews lasted approximately forty minutes. The information that they shared with me was useful in shedding light on the service users' perceptions and experiences.

In an attempt not to rely only on my memory and note-taking the interviews were taped so that I did not miss out on important information. Valuable information can be overlooked because we tend to summarise during note-taking. Using a tape-recorder enables one to record intonations, pauses and repetitions amongst others. It can also be replayed whilst transcribing the interviews.

Conducting the interviews enabled me to see the service users' world through their lenses and the problems they encounter as intellectually disabled adults. It allowed me to collect personal narratives that were sometimes of a sensitive nature. In doing so I attempted to "bring forth the voice and spirit "of the participants (Atkinson, 1998 as cited in Crotty, 1998, p.224). When conducting the interviews I had to also be aware of the subjective nature of their stories.

2.5.2 OBSERVATION

Observational data are attractive as they afford the researcher the opportunity to gather 'live' data from 'live' situations. The researcher is given the opportunity to look at what is taking place *in situ* rather than at second hand (Patton, 1990, pp.203-205 as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.305). Patton (1990, p.202) also suggests that observational data should enable the researcher to enter and understand the situation that is being described. During observation the researcher might discover things that might not have been revealed during the interview.

Because of the nature of their impairments, the service users that I interviewed were not very eloquent. However, during observation I was able to gather data that was not revealed during the interview session. This enabled me to obtain another perspective on their work situation. I was also able to observe them at work and saw the kinds of activities they are involved in at work.

Observation enables the researcher to gather data on the physical setting (for example the physical environment and its organisation); the human setting (for example the organisation of people, the characteristics and make up of the groups or individuals being observed, for instance gender, class); the interactional setting (for example the interactions that are taking place, formal, informal, planned, unplanned,

verbal, non-verbal, etc); and the programme setting (for example the resources and their organisation, pedagogic styles, curricula and their organisation) (Morrison, 1993, p.80 as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.305). Regarding Morrison's observational domains, I was able to gather data on the physical, human and interactional setting.

In some instances after the first interview session I observed the service users at work. By this time there was a degree of trust established between the service users and me. They were now prepared to show me around and demonstrate what exactly they did at the workshop. Since the area of focus in the study was on their skills training and work experience I observed them at the protected workshops to see if there was consistency between what they mentioned at the interview and what they actually did at the workshop. Some of them demonstrated what their work entailed and explained the process. However, other service users were observed just prior to their second interview. The observation also gave me insight into the service users' experiences with regard to skills training and their achievements. In addition the observation helped me to construct a line of questioning for a second interview. The second interview was conducted after the observation at a time that was appropriate for the service user and the workshop supervisor. However, in a few instances, the observation occurred just prior to the second interview. I used note-taking as a means of recording information that I gathered from observation. The focus of my observation was on the kind of work that the service users in my research were involved in and whether it correlated with what they said they did.

2.6 SAMPLE

"Sampling in qualitative research is neither statistical nor purely personal, it is, or should be, theoretically grounded" (Silverman, 2000, p.104). Qualitative researchers only really seek samples that are 'information rich' - they are much less concerned with representativeness than quantitative researchers (Plummer, 2001, p.133). The sample that was selected for my research is not representative of the total population as qualitative research is about gaining insight into individuals' lives and experiences and not about making generalisations that hold true for the whole population of, in this case, people with intellectual disabilities. Since I was embarking on life history approach, I felt that six service users would suffice as my sample size.

Two main methods of sampling are probability (also known as random sample) or a non-probability (also known as purposive sample). In a probability sample the chances of members of the wider population being selected for the sample are known.

Qualitative research seldom uses probability sampling, but would use some sort of deliberate sampling like purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is sampling in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind (Punch, 2005). Silverman (2000, p.104) states that “purposive sampling demands that we think critically about the parameters of the population we are interested in and choose our sample case carefully on this basis”.

In purposive sampling the chances of members of the wider population being selected for the sample are unknown. Not every person has an equal chance of being included in the sample. The researcher deliberately selects a particular section of the wider population to include in or exclude from the sample. Non-probability sampling only represents a particular group or a particular named section of the wider population. Since it does not represent the whole population it may demonstrate skewness or bias (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

I used purposive sampling for this study in that six mildly intellectually disabled people at two protected workshops were selected as the sample as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.103) mention that researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality. In this way they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs. According to Neuman (1997) the researcher never knows whether the cases selected are representative of the population.

The criteria used in selecting the service users were that they were mildly intellectually disabled adults, had undergone skills training and were employed at protected workshops. Based on these criteria the service users were selected by the workshop personnel of Challenge Unlimited at the two protected workshops. Demographics in terms of race, gender and age were also taken into consideration

when selecting the service users. The workshop personnel selected one male and five female service users. In terms of race there was one white service user and five African service users. Their ages ranged between 20-39 years. Purposive sampling was done because the aim of my study was to determine if skills training had an effect on their lives.

2.7 SELECTION OF SITE

The study was conducted at two protected workshops run by the Durban and Coastal Mental Health Society. The criterion I used in selecting these workshops was that intellectually disabled people received skills training at these premises. Some of the types of skills training that they received were block-making and bead-making.

2.8 NEGOTIATING ACCESS TO THE RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS

It is important for the researcher to obtain consent to gain access to the institution or organisation where the research is to be conducted, and acceptance by those whose permission one needs before embarking on the task. Gaining access and acceptance offers the best opportunity for researchers to present their credentials as serious investigators and establish their own ethical position with respect to their proposed research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.53).

In keeping with the above, authorisation to conduct research at two protected workshops run by the Durban and Coastal Mental Health Society was sought by me. A letter was sent to the Director of Durban and Coastal Mental Health (Appendix 2). Permission was granted to conduct the research (Appendix 3).

Permission was also sought from the supervisors of both workshops to conduct the interviews. The supervisors were informed of the topic, purpose, and significance of the study. They were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The selection criteria of the service users were made known to them. A list of potential service users was given to me.

A meeting was set up with the service users who were going to be the prospective participants in my research whereby they were informed of the topic, rationale,

significance of the study, data collection methods and issues pertaining to anonymity and confidentiality were discussed. They were politely asked if they would like to participate and informed that their participation was purely voluntary. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they so desired. Once they agreed to participate I read the informed consent to them (Appendix 5). Having obtained the informed consent a date and time for the interviews were set up. The interviews were conducted at their place of work so as not to inconvenience them and not incur unnecessary cost.

2.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Analysis is about making sense of, or interpreting, the information and evidence that the researcher has decided to consider as data. This usually involves fitting the evidence and information into a framework of some kind. The framework may take the form of classifications, categories, models, typologies or concepts (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p.34).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.147) state that data analysis involves organising, accounting for, and explaining the data; in short, making sense of the data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.147).

Narrative analysis refers to the approach that you adopt in analysing the narratives that you have collected. Riessman (2004) refers to four models of narrative analysis namely:

- thematic analysis (the emphasis is on content of the data and recurrent themes);
- structural analysis (the emphasis is on the way the story is related);
- interactional analysis (focuses on the interaction between the teller of the story and the listener)
- performative analysis (the emphasis is on narrative as performance that uses words and gestures to get the story across).

The criteria for deciding which forms of data analysis to undertake are governed both by fitness for purpose and legitimacy - the form of data analysis must be appropriate for the kinds of data gathered (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.82).

I transcribed the data that I collected from the interviews and these were then looked at in conjunction with the observation notes. I used a set of codes to ascribe to the data that I collected. The list of codes generated was based on the data collected. Some of the codes generated were based on the key research questions which are:- what are the experiences of the mildly intellectually disabled adults at protected workshops with regard to skills training and what are their perceptions of skills training at these workshops. Other codes were suggested by emerging themes from the data themselves like stigma and confidence. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.148) "codes define categories; they are astringent, pulling together a wealth of material into some order and structure". The notes were then read and reread to check for frequencies of themes and patterns. I used content analysis to analyse the narrative as I thought this would be the best method suited to analyse the data that I collected during the interview and observation. The data were coded and categorised into themes. I focused on key emerging themes from the service users' narratives.

2.10 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity is another word for truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers ...and reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different occasions (Hammersley, 1990, p.57 as cited in Silverman, 2000, p.175).

Silverman (2000, p.188) mentions that" we cannot say that the claims of a research study are valid when:

- Only a few exemplary instances are reported
- The criteria or grounds for including certain instances and not others are not provided
- The original form of the materials is unavailable."

There are three central issues that underpin the quality of data generated by life history methodology. They are to do with representativeness, validity and reliability. Reliability in life history research hinges upon the identification of sources of bias and the application of techniques to reduce them. Bias arises from the informant, the researcher, and the interactional encounter itself (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.132).

In qualitative data validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher. In qualitative data the subjectivity of the respondents, their opinions, attitudes and perspectives together contribute to a degree of bias (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.105).

There is a danger in life history research of treating the stories that are told uncritically. The researcher needs to be aware of the possible motives that the teller might have in relating his/her story, and how these motives might affect the story. Babbie and Mouton (1998, p.285) suggest a number of 'validity checks' when using this methodology. These include:

- getting the subject to read the entire product and present an auto-critique of it;
- comparing the source with other written sources of data collected by means of other methods;
- comparison with other official records if possible;
- comparison with other informants

To increase validity and reliability of the research findings I used more than one method of collecting data (triangulation). In addition to the interview I used observation. Sometimes the service users' verbal responses were not in accordance to what they were actually doing at the workshop therefore, besides interviewing them, I also observed them. This helped validate the information that the service users gave.

Another attempt by me to validate the data was asking the service users to read and give input on transcriptions of the interviews. Where information from the service users needed verification, the supervisors were consulted.

The participants were selected by the workshop supervisors. One male and four females were selected. Since this is a small scale qualitative study the findings are not representative of all people at protected workshops instead it was an attempt to gain insight and understanding of the lives and experiences of participants that I interviewed.

However, one must bear in mind that in qualitative research one seeks insight rather than absolute truth.

2.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Interviewing service users during the day posed a problem for me as I had to take leave from work to conduct interviews. There was also the possibility that the service users that I selected could have withdrawn at any time during the interview then I would have had to select other service users.

Service users could be hesitant to respond when they knew they were being recorded and I had this experience when I piloted my interviewing instrument. I had to explain to the service user I was interviewing that there was nothing for him to be afraid of and to allay his fears initially I allowed him to listen to a short tape recording of the conversation.

Another limitation is the validity, generalisability and predictability of the data collected. Since I worked with a small sample the results cannot be generalised as they may not be representative of the entire population.

Since I taught intellectually disabled learners before, I had preconceptions of the service users. These preconceptions could have clouded my judgement of them. Therefore I deliberately tried to go into the interviews with an open mind and not to let my previous experiences influence the present situation.

Another limitation was the power relation issue. Some service users saw me as an authority figure and as a result they were intimidated to respond. They might have felt they were being assessed and were afraid to say what they actually felt. Some

even experienced reservations about participating. One of the ways I tried to allay their fears was by not going straight into the interview. Instead I engaged in casual chatter about issues like the weather or even asked them about their day. I found that the respondents felt more relaxed and were not as nervous as before. I even asked them to show me what they actually did at the workshop and in this way recognised their self determination and expertise at what they were doing. Some people are better at demonstrating what they actually do than speaking about it. This also showed them that I was interested in what they did at the workshop. Since they spoke from a point of expertise in terms of their job it boosted their self-esteem.

Not being able to comprehend and speak IsiZulu fluently also posed a problem for me during the interview process. I had service users that were not conversant in English but who felt more confident communicating in IsiZulu. To overcome the language barrier I was fortunate to have a workshop supervisor to act as interpreter. Besides translating the questions into IsiZulu, she also interpreted their responses for me into English. She was also able to use Sign Language and this was of invaluable assistance when I interviewed a hearing impaired participant who is intellectually disabled.

2.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were of particular importance since the service users in my study belonged to a vulnerable group in that they were intellectually disabled. Ethics has been defined as “a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others, and that ‘while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better’” (Cavan 1977, p.810 as stated in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Pseudonyms were used to protect participants’ anonymity. I informed the service users that I would guarantee anonymity in that I would not reveal their identity or any other personal means of identification and confidentiality by not revealing any sensitive information they shared with me. I assured them that the purpose of the study was not to cause them any harm. Clandinin (2007, p.541) states that:

The principle of assurance of confidentiality and privacy to participants is central to the very possibility of doing narrative research. Unless our

participants trust that we will insure their anonymity, they would not tell us what they tell us. Therefore, we must do everything we can to safeguard their privacy. We need to tell participants that we will do all that is humanly possible to keep material confidential.

I also mentioned to the service users that if they were not happy or comfortable about being interviewed then they were not forced to do so. I made it clear to them that they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage. After explaining the study to them, I obtained their informed consent. In order to build a relationship of trust I allowed the service users to read or hear their narratives once they were transcribed. They were at liberty to change any information so that the stories are reported in the way the service users felt was most correct thus giving them ownership of their stories.

2.13 SUMMARY

The research design and methodology were outlined in this chapter. The study was framed within an interpretivist paradigm and adopted a life history approach. Semi-structured interviews; observation and unplanned interviews with the supervisors were the methods used to collect qualitative data. Service users were informed that their participation was purely voluntary and had to sign the informed consent forms. Steps were taken to validate information given by using more than one method of data collection. The data received from the interviews and observations are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning my study is set out first, followed by a review of related literature. Since the focus of my study is on perceptions and experiences of mildly intellectually disabled adults, my literature review focuses on pertinent literature with regard to intellectual disabilities, adult learning and low skilled learning, employment and skills training, and lastly on nature of employment of the intellectually disabled.

People with disabilities are a heterogeneous group that form an integral part of society. There are approximately 600 million people with disabilities worldwide and this comprises about 10 percent of the world population. Disabilities include mental, physical and sensory impairments. If one looks at the impact that disability has on the lives and livelihood of family then one can estimate that 25 percent of the world population are affected (Edmonds, 2005).

Although there is no single accepted definition of disability the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), defines disability as “an outcome of the interaction between a person and an impairment and the environmental and attitudinal barriers that he or she faces” Edmonds (2005, p.1). The environment plays a vital role in either promoting or restricting an individual’s performance. Unavailability of assistive devices, negative attitudes and inaccessible buildings can create barriers which can hinder a person’s performance whereas ramps and other assistive devices can increase ones performance. The ICF classification places disability within the biopsychosocial model. DPI (Disability Peoples’ International) sees disability as a political, human rights issue and a matter of creating equal opportunities and has adopted the definition in the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

The different models of disability, namely the medical, social and biopsychosocial models, have influenced policy design and legislation over the years. Therefore it

would be appropriate to start with the theoretical and conceptual framework which highlights the different models of disability. The framework also focuses on the concept of self-determination and Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences.

3.2 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

3.2.1 The biopsychosocial model of disability

Previously the medical model, which saw disability as an impairment or disease to be prevented and/or treated, shaped policies and legislation.

“Disability was seen as the problem of the person which was directly caused by some disease, trauma or any other health condition, which requires medical care provided in the form of individual treatment by professionals” (World Health Organisation, 2001, p. 20). Disability was seen as something to be ‘cured’. The medical model saw the cause of disability as being within the individual. Curing the disability or the individual's adjustment and change in behaviour was seen as managing the disability. The main aim was to cure the individual or provide a system of care. The medical professionals decided on the treatment and the disabled person was merely the passive recipient of the treatment. Correct medical care was of paramount importance and at the political level the main focus was on modifying or changing the health care policy. The focus on the medical model was “on modifying the person, assuming that any difficulties lie in the individual's deviation from “normal”, rather than in the lack of accommodation within the environment” (Finkelstein, 1991 as cited in Quinn, 1998, p.X1X). There were no attempts to accommodate the individual in society. People with disabilities were institutionalised and were isolated from the rest of society. Ustun (2002) mentions that people with disabilities were not even considered as being able to make a contribution to the labour market but seen as a burden to the economy.

For the past 20 years the social model has had an impact on shaping legislation and policies as stated by Dube (2005). This model emerged largely from the disability movement, beginning in the United Kingdom in the 1970s, and from research conducted by people with disabilities (Swain, Finkelstein, French and Oliver, 1993 as stated in Quinn, 1998). The social model maintains that, even though a person with

a disability may function differently from some other people, the problems the person encounters do not result entirely from the nature of the impairment (Quinn, 1993 as stated in Quinn, 1998). As the person who has a disability recognises and acknowledges the numerous barriers erected by society, feelings of depression, passivity, or hopelessness may emerge, and these may be interpreted by outsiders as a lack of motivation and adjustment (Quinn, 1998). According to the social model disability is the result of society's attitude and obstacles in the man-made environment. Disability is located outside the individual and is seen to be the result of a disabling and oppressive environment. Society is seen as disabling people. The environment is seen as responsible for erecting barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating in all spheres of life. In order for people with disabilities to be equal participants in society then all societal barriers must be removed. According to Disability Net, United Kingdom (1997) it is mentioned that the social model perceives a person as disabled if the world at large does not take into consideration his or her physical or mental differences. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (World Health Organisation, 2001, p.20) says that the social model of disability does not view disability as an attribute of an individual but as a complex collection of conditions, many of which are created by the social environment.

Those working within the social model regard work as an important aspect. There are many people with disabilities that would want to work but cannot do so due to barriers in the infrastructure thus making places of employment inaccessible. Seirlis and Swartz (2006) mention that not only structural barriers but also attitudinal barriers exist to disabled people finding employment. From my readings (Fasset, 2008; Edmonds, 2005; Briggs, 2005) I also found that the negative attitude of employers contribute to disabled people not being successful in obtaining jobs. Even when they are employed they are paid a lower salary than other able-bodied people. They are not given opportunities for skills training because employers don't see them as making a valuable contribution to the labour market. Greater opportunities are given to employees without disabilities. They are also sidelined when it comes to promotion. Disabled people are still under-represented in the work force. A study conducted by Global Business Solutions (Department of Labour, 2001) found that less than 1 percent of the total workforce in South Africa is reported as people with

disabilities. Should the infrastructure be modified to accommodate disabled people they would be as functional as any one else and would be able to contribute to the societies to which they belong.

More recently there has been a paradigm shift in the way health and disability is viewed. The previous two models ignored the relation among the biological, social and psychological factors associated with disability. Hence, we have the emergence of the biopsychosocial approach which provides a coherent and holistic view of different perspectives of health viz. biological, individual and social. The International Classification Framework (ICF) is based on the biopsychosocial model of functioning and disability. According to this model functioning and disability are multi-dimensional phenomena experienced at the level of the body, the person and society (Ustun, 2002). The biopsychosocial model is seen as a combination of individual, biological and social perspectives. It focuses on functioning at the level of the whole person in a social context. Accessing Safety Initiative Understanding Disability (2006, npn) states that “One is more or less disabled based on whether the physical, information, communication and social and policy environments are accommodating and welcoming of variation in ability.” According to the ICF, disability is seen as lying on a continuum and disability is viewed as an outcome of interaction between health conditions, external environmental factors and internal personal factors. In my research I am going to use the biopsychosocial model in understanding disability whereby disability is best understood in terms of a combination of biological, psychological and social factors. The biopsychosocial model of disability will help me understand and make sense of the data that I collect from my respondents in terms of how disability is viewed.

3.2.2 The concept of self-determination

As a second conceptual lens, I use the notion of self-determination. The issue of self-determination and its effects within the biopsychosocial model will be looked at. Powers, Sowers, Turner, Nesbitt, Knowles & Ellison (1996, p.292 as cited in Wehmeyer and Bolding, 2001) define self-determination as referring to “personal attitudes and abilities that facilitate an individual’s identification and pursuit of goals”. Self-determination reduces learned helplessness and promotes motivation and self-efficacy. The learned helplessness is reinforced by environmental factors that

encourage passivity. Self-determination is when a person takes charge of his life and makes decisions regarding his life. The choices that he makes are free from external influences. Self-determined individuals are those that bring about a change in their own lives. Wehmeyer (2001) asserts that self-determination entails controlling one's life and one's fate. Deci and Ryan (1985 as cited in Wehmeyer, 2001) see self-determination as more than a capacity, instead it is also perceived of as a need.

The prevalent assumption is that people with intellectual disabilities cannot or do not become self-determined individuals. However, Wehmeyer and Bolding (2001) believe that, by addressing issues pertaining to environment and opportunity, and if adequate supports and accommodations are provided, people with intellectual disabilities can enhance their self-determination and assume greater control of their lives. Self-determination empowers people. It is imperative in obtaining respect and dignity and essential in seeing oneself as worthy and important; therefore people with disabilities constantly want to take control over their lives. Achieving self-determination is never easy for a disabled person. The issue of self-determination and its effects is relevant in my study to understanding the perceptions of the intellectually disabled and whether they were able to overcome adversities and take charge of their lives. Also self-determination could result in them being intrinsically motivated to make changes in their lives by acquiring skills and wanting to seek employment.

3.2.3 Multiple intelligences

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences will form my third conceptual lens (Gardner, 1993). The traditional view of intelligence only focussed on computational and verbal aspects which can be measured using intelligence tests but in 1983 Gardner proposed a new view of intelligence known as the theory of multiple intelligence. This new concept of intelligence included areas such as music, spatial relations and interpersonal knowledge in addition to mathematical and linguistic ability. Gardner defines intelligence as "the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural setting" (Gardner & Hatch, 1989 as cited in Brualdi, 1996, p. 2). The eight intelligences that Gardner defines are logical-mathematical intelligence; linguistic intelligence; spatial intelligence; musical intelligence; body-kinaesthetic intelligence; the personal intelligences (comprising of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences) and naturalist intelligence. Gardner maintains that these

intelligences rarely operate independently; rather they are used concurrently and complement each other as people develop skills or solve problems. Gardner's body-kinaesthetic intelligence is relevant to my study. The service users in my study do not excel in verbal and mathematical intelligence but excel in body-kinaesthetic intelligence.

3.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Since my research is focussing on the experiences and perceptions of skills training of intellectually disabled adults my literature review will focus on the following headings viz. intellectual disabilities; adult learning and low skilled learning; learning among intellectually disabled people; employment and skills training; barriers to training and employment; benefits of employment and lastly employment opportunities.

3.3.1. INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

3.3.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Exact definitions of intellectual disabilities vary from group to group, so much so that intellectual disability is defined slightly differently even in the three definition classification manuals, namely the American Psychiatric Association, the American Association on Mental Retardation and the International Classification of Disease (ICD-10- World Health Organization, 1992 as cited by Hodapp and Dykens, 2004, p.3). Although the definitions differ slightly, the three areas of focus are common, namely deficits in intellectual functioning, deficits in social-adaptive functioning, and onset during the childhood years.

Intellectual disability, according to Sim (1999, p.12),

is defined by a person's capacity to learn and by what they can or cannot do for themselves. People with intellectual disabilities are identified by low scores in intelligence tests and by their poor social competence. They usually need people to look after their basic needs and protect them from common dangers.

Intellectual disability should not be confused with mental illness or psychiatric disability. Examples of intellectual disability include Downs syndrome, autism and developmental disability whereas mental illness include schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, anorexia, bipolar disorder and post traumatic stress disorder, among others (Intellectual Disability, 2009).

3.3.1.2 CAUSES

Cape Mental Health (2007, p.1) claim that brain damage or poor brain development causes intellectual disability. They further state that although people with intellectual disabilities may be slower in learning, but they do have the potential to become proficient in tasks not requiring major intellectual skills. This perception of people with intellectual disabilities not being able to learn tasks as quickly as their more able-bodied counterparts but nonetheless having the ability to carry out tasks that do not require complicated intellectual skills is pertinent to my study as my participants are mildly intellectually disabled.

3.3.1.3 ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS

Disabled People South Africa (2000, npn) mention that people with intellectual disabilities find it difficult to learn and retain new information, and often to adapt to new situations. Children with intellectual disabilities often develop slower than their peers and require additional support to develop. In South Africa, according to the Census 2001, 11, 5% of the disabled African population were affected by intellectual disabilities, 15, 5% of the Coloureds, 13, 9% of the Indians and 17, 6% of the White population (Statistics South Africa, 2005, p.14).

3.3.1.4 CATEGORISATION ISSUES

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM- IV-TR) people with intellectual disabilities are categorised in accordance with their functioning. The table below taken from DSM-IV (1994, p. 52) indicates the different categories. Mental retardation is classified as an Axis 11 disorder in DSM-IV-TR. The code is based on the degree of severity reflecting level of intellectual impairment:

| | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 317 | Mild Mental Retardation | IQ level 50-55 to approximately 70 |
| 318.0 | Moderate Mental Retardation | IQ level 35-40 to 50-55 |
| 318.1 | Severe Mental Retardation | IQ level 20-25 to 35-40 |
| 318.2 | Profound Mental Retardation | IQ level below 20 or 25 |

To determine ones IQ score a person undergoes a psychological test of intelligence. One of the contentious issues is that different IQ scores are used as a benchmark to define deficits in intellectual functioning.

Categorizing people according to their level or degree of intellectual impairment has also caused concern. Perceiving intellectual disability as an interaction between the individual and the environment the 1992 AAMR definition instead of focussing on categories of intellectual disabilities based on levels of impairment individuals are now categorised in terms of their need for supportive services. Supportive services are classified as intermittent, limited, extensive and pervasive.

The inability to display personal independence and execute social responsibility is seen as a deficit in adaptive behaviour. Adaptive behaviour is another criterion used for defining somebody as intellectually disabled. Hodapp and Dykens (2004, p.4) mention the four aspects of adaptive behaviour. Firstly adaptive behaviour is seen as a developmental construct. In other words as one gets older more is expected in terms of following rules, eating, drinking and social interactions. Adaptive behaviour is also seen as a social construct. Adaptive behaviour is seen as exhibiting appropriate behaviour. However, the term appropriate behaviour is relative because it differs from one culture to another or from one locality to the next. Thirdly, adaptive behaviour may differ across various situations where a child's behaviour changes according to what the situation demands. Lastly, adaptive behaviour is defined by typical rather than optimal performance. The focus is on whether the child routinely performs a particular behaviour rather than on whether the child has the ability to perform it.

The third criterion is onset during early childhood years. In order for one to be diagnosed as intellectually disabled the diagnosis must occur early in ones life.

Diagnosis may occur up till the age of 18 but problems that besiege one as an adult is not defined as intellectual disabilities.

Although all three criteria are used in assessing intellectual disability each criterion has inherent contentious issues.

The focus in my research is on mildly intellectually disabled people whose IQ ranges from 50-69. However, with specialised training, these adults are able to perform unskilled or semi-skilled labour. Some adults with intellectual disabilities can be trained to do highly skilled manual labour and subsequently work in the open labour market.

3.3.2 ADULT EDUCATION AND LOW SKILLED LEARNING

A discussion of adult education in relation to skills training is relevant to my focus on the experiences and perceptions of adults with intellectual disabilities regarding skills training at protected workshops. The participants that I selected for my research have undergone skills training in block-making and bead-making. Literature on adult education and low skilled learning helps to frame understanding of the kind of training the participants have undergone.

Illeris (2006) mentions that the more education one has in advance, the higher is the probability of one participating in organised adult education. He further states that the low-skilled are more vulnerable than the able-bodied people in terms of acquiring life-long learning. Their opportunities for acquiring employment are reduced because, Illeris maintains, when unemployment is relatively high the better educated look for jobs that are below their level of qualifications. Intellectually disabled people are part of this vulnerable category of people who are marginalised in society and in the labour market. From his research based on Workplace Learning in Denmark, Illeris found that workplaces are often reluctant to involve the vulnerable group in special learning initiatives. This research also pertains to the situation in South Africa where employers are reluctant to provide opportunities for people with disabilities in the open labour market as Census 2001 indicates only 19% of people with disabilities are employed (Statistics South Africa, 2005). Thus the vulnerable group is not as

successful in getting employment because they lack competencies. Illeris suggests that amongst other things a secure learning environment must be created, relevant types of activities and inputs must be provided to suit the needs of the participants.

3.3.3 LEARNING AMONG INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED

The way in which people with intellectual disabilities learn skills appeared as the focus of an article entitled Mental Retardation and Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) that appeared in Mental Help.net (2009). It states that when tasks are taught to people with intellectual disabilities these tasks must be broken down into small parts and taught sequentially; the learning must be hands-on and visual rather than merely lecturing and feedback on things learnt must be immediate. Skills are also taught in the same way whereby they are introduced in small steps systematically. When one skill is mastered then the next skill is introduced. This method of teaching skills to intellectually disabled people will benefit them because they tend to learn better through demonstration, performing tasks hands-on and learning sequentially.

In order to ensure that productivity of people with disabilities is maximised there may be specific needs that might need to be met. In the case of a hearing impaired person there might be a need for the supervisor to use alternate methods of communication like sign language and people with psychosocial disabilities might find the need to take more frequent breaks especially if their concentration is impaired. In the case of intellectually disabled people, the job tasks will have to be broken down into a sequence of more easily understood steps as mentioned by Powers (2008).

The manner in which people with intellectual disabilities learn is also highlighted by (Job Access, 2009, p.2). It is mentioned that people with an intellectual disability are capable of learning; however, their learning is highly dependent on the competence and quality of instruction. The person's learning will often take longer and require systematic teaching methods and extra help. Some skills or knowledge may be too demanding or complex, or require constant reinforcement. These articles will contribute to my research in understanding that intellectually disabled people are capable of learning most skills but the methods used to teach them is different and their learning will take longer.

3.3.4 EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS TRAINING

With regard to employment, the social model has influenced formulation of policies and legislation in South Africa. We have some of the most comprehensive legislation and policies protecting and promoting the rights of disabled people. The Government introduced the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1998 which was aimed at redressing the inequalities in employment experienced by the historically disadvantaged including the disabled. The Skills Development Act, 1998 (SDA) was passed in order to transform skills development in South Africa. This was partly to improve employment opportunities of previously disadvantaged including disabled people (Dube, 2005). Although we have comprehensive policies and legislation in place, the implementation of these policies have not been successful. This view is also echoed by Palime (2006) who was part of the Tripartite Workshop held in Pretoria, who mentioned that people with disabilities rely on the Government to develop quotas for their employment.

Being in paid employment is seen as a means of breaking the link between poverty and disability. Priestly (2003) is of the opinion that if there are structural changes it will enable greater participation of disabled adults in economically productive labour. Providing employment for disabled people will also benefit the State especially when there is a high demand for labour and when there are limited welfare resources. Schneider (2006), who conducted research in South Africa, found that the cost of providing welfare grants is escalating as the population age and age-related disabilities are increasing. Since there are economic and social advantages to being employed, both activists and policy makers are advocating greater employment opportunities for disabled adults.

People with mild intellectual disabilities that have been trained are quite capable of maintaining part-time or full-time employment according to research conducted by the Austin Travis County Mental Health Mental Retardation Centre (2009) in the United States of America. They are capable of being punctual and reliable and they have successfully fulfilled job responsibilities in a number of vocations. Price Waterhouse Coopers (2005, p.3) as cited in Fasset (2008), also mentions that people with disabilities are likely to regard employment highly and will therefore likely

be highly committed employees. South Africa's legislative framework supports principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination yet there still exists barriers to inclusion and equal opportunities.

To meet the employment needs of disabled people an alternative strategy has been the development of micro-enterprises and entrepreneurship projects run by disabled people as mentioned by Priestly (2003). Walls, Dowler, Cordingly, Orslene and Greer (2001 as cited in Priestly, 2003) state that these initiatives have enabled disabled people not only to achieve success in terms of income generation but also in terms of exercising control over their management of workloads and workplace environments.

Another initiative in terms of employment for disabled people has been 'supported' placements in the open labour market. Research conducted by Thompson, Powers and Houchard (1992, as cited in Priestly, 2003) reveal that disabled people earned a higher salary in individual placements rather than in sheltered employment or group placements.

There have been interventions by the State to provide employment opportunities for disabled people. However, employers in capitalist economies are concerned with productivity and profit, based on competition between employees. Thus not all disabled people will be able to successfully be employed in the open labour market unless the notion of work is reformulated as Gleeson (1999 as cited in Priestly, 2003) suggests including principles of social obligation and interdependency.

The importance of skills training regarding people with disabilities is advocated by Powers (2008) who conducted research in Geneva. Powers maintains that skills development is a crucial factor in enabling disabled people to find employment. Those who have acquired marketable skills have been able to earn a living and make a contribution to the world of work. Good skills training, job availability and awareness of employers were facilitators to finding work as mentioned by Schneider (2006). My study will ascertain whether the perceptions and experiences of the respondents in my research with regard to skills training correlates with what Powers (2008) and Schneider (2006) mention in their study.

Being equipped with skills places one at an advantage when seeking employment. The main skills that are pertinent to employment have been identified by Korpinen (2006) at a Tripartite Workshop held in Pretoria. He identified basic education, technical skills and core skills as the most important skills that are important for employment. In order to find suitable employment both able-bodied people and people with disabilities must have competitive skills to participate in the labour market. People must be in possession of basic education, vocational skills and or have the business expertise to be an entrepreneur.

The facilitators for skills acquisition included accessible buildings, willingness to train on the part of service providers, access to information, self motivation, training with other disabled people and practical training.

With regard to the implementation of legislation on employment of people with disabilities the Department of Labour stipulated that approximately 2 percent of all employees in medium and large public and private entities should be persons with disabilities. However, Briggs (2005) states that to date the target has not been met by either the private or public sector. The Human Resource Management Policy Document of the Western Cape (2004) also bears testimony to this because according to research conducted in 2002 it was found that people with disabilities only comprised 0,25 % of the public service personnel which fell short of the stated 2% target.

The following studies highlight the role that intellectually disabled people play in the economy of our country and the contribution they make to it.

3.3.5 BARRIERS TO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Census, 2001 state that only 19% of people with disabilities in South Africa are employed whereas Price Waterhouse Coopers (2005 as cited in Fasset, 2008) estimated that approximately 99, 28 percent of people with disabilities in South Africa that are employable remain unemployed. Lack of employment opportunities and skills training are some of the reasons for high unemployment amongst people with disabilities.

Barriers to skills acquisition, as mentioned by Schneider (2006), included lack of funds, lack of information, transport and lack of awareness of providers. In the research the most frequently mentioned barriers to finding work were lack of jobs, lack of awareness from employers and lack of skills training. Participants in the research also reported that they experience negative attitudes from employers who see workers as less productive, and costs incurred by providing reasonable accommodation and assistive devices.

Access to appropriate skills training is not available to a significant number of disabled women and men for differing reasons. In many cases, inclusive policies are not in place and training programmes fail to encourage or accommodate the participation of the disabled persons (Powers, 2008, p. v).

The barriers encountered by people with disabilities is mentioned by Seirlis and Swartz (2006) who state that without the full application of the Skills Development Act in South Africa it is naïve to think that there will be enough skilled persons with disabilities to be employed in all sectors of the economy. Public transport also hinders people in getting to their place of work. South Africa lacks safe and accessible transport to cater for people with a range of disabilities. Seirlis maintains that skills development leads to the empowerment of persons with disabilities but these skills development opportunities are not accessible to them because of our present transport infrastructure. "Reasonable accommodation", besides referring to changes in the building infrastructure also refers to attitudinal change amongst other things, is another issue which companies have not made provision for regarding employees with disabilities. The issue of inaccessibility to built environment including public transport is also highlighted by (Edmonds, 2005, Briggs, 2005) as barriers for people with disabilities to participate in the social and economic activities. Seirlis states that one needs skills to be employed and these are traded to employers for income. This study is valuable in understanding whether the respondents in my research encounter the same barriers when seeking employment and whether skills acquisition does lead to employment in all instances.

3.3.6 BENEFITS OF EMPLOYMENT

The benefits of employment are highlighted by Berthoud, Lakey and McKay (1993) who state that employment not only contributes to one's economic welfare but it is also important to one's social and psychological well-being. It is an indication of one's social status. Social contact, personal development and the accumulation and use of skills are just some of the psychological benefits of employment. Being unemployed for long periods cause one to feel isolated and devalued. In addition to these feelings disabled people also experience isolation in terms of environmental constraints and inadequate support, and devaluation because of society's attitude towards their disabilities.

The advantages of people with disabilities being employed are also elaborated by Sim (1999) who carried out research among females with disabilities in Thailand. Finding employment for disabled people gives them a sense of social integration and psychological well-being because it gives them income and means to be financially independent, improves their self-esteem because they have a role in society, they earn respect from society as they are seen to be more independent, contributing to the lives of others, as a tax payer, colleague and friend, provides opportunities for social contacts to interact with others and to learn new skills. This study is useful in understanding the perceptions of people with disabilities who are successful in the labour market and how they see their contributions to the economy

People with disabilities have the capacity to become productive citizens and contribute to national development as mentioned by Edmonds (2005). Given their large numbers, the short term goals of educating and integrating persons with disabilities will be surpassed by the long term savings to families and society. He maintains that countries will enjoy productivity gains and economic returns when disabled people are allowed to develop their skills and intellectual and physical potential, and engage in economic activities.

In addition to the social responsibility South Africans have with regard to marginalised groups, there is business value to employing people with disabilities and implementing employment equity and diversity management in the workplace as

mentioned in Fasset (2008). People with disabilities may possess skills that may be suitable to many occupations and like any other disadvantaged group in South Africa with appropriate bridging and support they may be able to perform in the workplace. This view is also maintained by Powers (2008, p.26) who states that the willingness of employers to make relatively minor adjustments to job design, work station set-up or production processes, or to allow workers to use adaptive tools and technology can significantly enhance productivity.

3.3.7 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

3.3.7.1 PROTECTED WORKSHOPS

Protected workshops are institutions or organisations run by Non Government Organisations and Government. Protected workshops involve a group of disabled people working in a community-based protected employment situation. The work is usually sub-contracted from industries and employees are paid a nominal wage. There is intensive supervision for employees and the work is usually repetitive (Mental Health in South Africa, 2000). Molamu (2008) states that protected workshops provide rehabilitation services and “work” opportunities for People with Disabilities, who due to their disabilities, environmental and or social situations experience barriers in accessing the open labour market. These protected workshops operate as non-profit organisations. Some protected workshops equip people with skills so that these skills could be used to generate an income and thereby enhancing the quality of their life. Developing skills and expertise is one of their focus areas. Being employed in protected workshops does not expose one to the competitiveness of the open labour market. The Department of Social Development is currently subsidising approximately 300 workshops.

Epilepsy South Africa and Durban and Coastal Mental Health are just two of many organisations that run protected workshops. The Care-Craft workshop run by the Western Cape branch of Epilepsy South Africa provides, according to them, “a holistic economic empowerment programme that incorporates both economic and social development. Some of the products that are made are kennels, rabbit hutches and chicken pens. Workers are paid according to their level of functioning and participation in the production process. The workers are exposed to life skill

programmes, development of social skills and individual support and advocacy programmes which enables them to lead productive lives and participate meaningfully in all spheres of society” (Epilepsy South Africa, 2008, npn).

In keeping with the social model of disability the focus of protected workshops is now on overcoming attitudinal and environmental barriers. A policy framework has been developed in South Africa to transform protected workshops. The policy framework is based on three pillars of development namely psychosocial development, skills development and business or economic development. There is greater focus on training and capacity building to enable people with disabilities to compete in the labour market. On the other hand one must also realise that not all protected workshops can be commercialised because not all people with disabilities can enter the labour market (Molamu, 2008).

3.3.7.2 INTEGRATION INTO MAINSTREAM EMPLOYMENT

The Rehabilitation Amendment Act of 1986 and the American Disability Act of 1990 were policies formulated in the United States of America to facilitate the employment of people with intellectual disabilities. There are also job procurements and retention programmes that have been introduced to allow the employment of people with disabilities in the open labour market. In South Africa the Employment Equity Act of 1999 was passed with the intention of obtaining equity in the open labour market. The purpose of this legislation is to promote the “equal representation of previously marginalised groups such as women, mentally and physically disabled, at all levels in the open labour market” Mental Health in South Africa (2000, p.14).

The attainment of high productivity levels in the open labour market is highlighted by Powers (2008, p.17) who made mention of the following cases that support the “business case” for employing people with disabilities. It includes: the Du Pont Surveys (1973, 1981, 1990- for example in performance of duties, 92 percent were average or above; employees with disabilities are not absent any more than employees without disabilities; workers with disabilities performed significantly higher than their non-disabled counterparts in the area of safety); the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (1976- for example, “job performance was the same or better than other workers”); the National Organisation on Disability (NOD) Harris Surveys (1995- for

example; 76 percent of managers described the performance of disabled workers as “pretty good” or “excellent”. People with disabilities being rated lower than average employees on productivity; better than average employees on reliability and maintenance were some of the findings of Graffam et al (2002, as cited in Powers, 2008) who conducted a survey among Australian employers of people with disabilities.

There are successful projects of integrating people with intellectual disabilities into mainstream employment as mentioned by Powers (2008). One such project is the Fundacion ONCE was established in 1988 and it is based in Spain. The project entails training people with disabilities in information and communication technology (ICT) and subsequently finding employment in industries. The focus was on ICT because the advancement in technology was causing a loss of jobs and creating jobs as well. From 1997-1999, 933 people with disabilities were trained and 742 were employed by companies in the Fundosa Group. Between 2000 and 2002 another 742 were employed. Some of the types of jobs included call centres, telephone survey implementation and emergency telephone services.

3.3.7.3 SELF-INITIATED PROJECTS

South Africa is plagued by a high unemployment rate of approximately 40 percent for able-bodied people and an even higher rate for people with disabilities. There is definitely a need for vocational programmes to promote and support sustainable self-employment and income generating ventures amongst persons with intellectual disabilities who can participate in these (Mental Health in South Africa, 2000).

An example of a flourishing self-initiated project is the Therapeutic Mushrooming growing in India. A study was conducted by the National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (NISTADS) amongst intellectually disabled people in India. There are approximately 25 million intellectually disabled people in India. Intellectually disabled people are normally trained to pursue jobs such as candle-making and sewing. NISTADS found that these jobs seldom led to personal satisfaction or personal growth. They set about finding new jobs that intellectually disabled people would find interesting and at the same time generate sufficient income for them. They found a niche-market in the form of cultivation of oyster

mushrooms. There was a demand for this type of mushroom and it fetched a high price. Ten intellectually disabled adults were trained to grow these mushrooms. Over a three year period they learnt how to work independently, to deal with vendors and assist customers. This project helped improve the participants' motor co-ordination, their overall mental and physical health, attention span and stamina (NISTADS, 1994).

NISTADS found that society has very low expectations for disabled people. Unfortunately, it is not their own personal limitations that deprive disabled people of satisfying, productive work. Instead, society fails to appreciate the potential of disabled people due to an overall lack of awareness, understanding and knowledge about their capabilities. Normally society views intellectually disabled people only in terms of their problems. These problems include limited logical and abstract thinking abilities, short attention spans, inadequate communication skills, motor deficiencies and behavioural problems.

However, disabled people also have strengths that are ignored by society. Like other able-bodied people they can improve their skills through training. Due to their inability to get bored quickly they are able to handle routine tasks more efficiently. To compensate for their intellectual deficiencies they tend to work harder. Since they tend to be less ambitious they are less likely to change jobs. Overall they tend to be warmer, less demanding and more helpful than their able-bodied counterparts. Research and surveys conducted by NISTADS have shown that intellectually disabled people can perform more complex tasks than experts previously believed possible. My study looks at the experiences and perceptions of intellectually disabled people concerning skills training at protected workshops and see how this compares to the intellectually disabled people that were part of the Therapeutic Mushroom Growing project in India. Society needs to change their attitude about intellectually disabled people by focussing on their strengths rather than on their limitations. I believe this attitudinal change will help in creating employment opportunities for the disabled.

A recycling and waste management project run by The Oasis Association based in Cape Town also boasts phenomenal success. It provides employment for 365

moderately intellectually disabled adults. According to Peuckert (2005) the project provides a one stop service to 1500 households, 98 businesses and 15 schools. Good marketing and marrying a social cause with an environmental one are the ingredients of success according to Peuckert (2005). Besides the recycling project Oasis Books and Bric- a- Brac are the other initiatives of the Association. Being employed at the Oasis Association has enabled people with disabilities maintain their dignity of work opportunity and by interacting with business supporters it has helped change their attitude and broke down barriers of stereotyping. They have become more accepting and realised that people with disabilities do have potential.

It is these issues of competence and self-determination and its effects within the biopsychosocial model that forms the basis of my research with regard to the perceptions and experiences of skills training of mildly intellectually disabled adults.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

CHALLENGE UNLIMITED IN DURBAN CENTRAL

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Challenge Unlimited is run by Durban and Coastal Mental Health Society which is a Non Governmental Organisation subsidised by the Department of Social Development. Durban and Coastal Mental Health has nine Challenge Unlimited Protected Workshops. Approximately 700 service users with intellectual and psychiatric illness are offered psycho-social rehabilitation through skills training as well as economic empowerment through contract work, block-making and supported employment. Contract work is secured from the business community and service users receive a share of the unit cost according to their production. Most of the contract work is of an unskilled, repetitive and labour intensive nature. Service users are mainly involved in gluing, assembling, packaging and labelling various items. I chose two protected workshops in the Durban region to conduct my interviews.

When I arrived at the Durban Central protected workshop on Monday, September 8, to interview the two service users, David and Precious, I was impressed with the layout of Challenge. It is situated on a large expanse of land. Since this protected workshop is the head-office there are a number of social workers based at this venue. Amongst other things, the building comprises a block-making project and a workshop. These are separate components of Challenge. The workshop is on the ground level and the block-making project is on the lower ground level. The workshop is the place where contract tasks are undertaken like packaging of cards, assembling earplugs and co-traps as well as other tasks. Although the workshop and block-making supervisors are different, the project manager, Mr. Naidoo, is in charge of getting contract work for the workshop and getting orders for blocks for the block-making project. The buildings are huge and the workshop where contract work is undertaken caters for approximately 195 service users. I was informed that the daily absentee rate is approximately ten percent. I was met by a curious number of on-lookers as this was their lunch-break. Some came forward to shake my hand and

others greeted me as I proceeded to the reception area. The staff was co-operative, friendly and accommodating. I was then introduced to David.

4.2. SERVICE USER 1- DAVID LE CREST

INTRODUCTION

I had the pleasure of interviewing David on two separate occasions. My first interview was on September 8 and my second interview was on October 9. David had undergone skills-training in block-making and was still involved in the block-making project. He was interviewed in the sick room as the staff felt that it would be quiet and private. At first David was shy as he had his head down. I introduced myself and explained my purpose in wanting to interview him. He seemed afraid and I tried to allay his fears. He was generally soft spoken but I found that when I enquired about things that excited him his tone of voice was raised. By the second interview he seemed more comfortable speaking to me. My first interview lasted approximately 50 minutes and the second lasted about 30 minutes. My first interview focussed on his early life, his family, his daily routine, schooling and skills training. My second interview focussed on his experiences at Challenge as well as verification and probing of certain issues. Thereafter I spent time looking around the site where blocks are made and spoke to Mr. Jabu who is involved in the training and making of blocks.

EARLY LIFE AND FAMILY

David was 38 years old. He was approximately 1,75meters tall and on both occasions when I interviewed him he was dressed casually in shorts, boots and an overall jacket. His dress was appropriate for the kind of work that he was involved in, namely block-making. He was born in Curepipe in 1970. When I enquired about his unusual surname he mentioned that he hailed from Mauritius. He was not sure whether he was 5 or 10 years old when he came to South Africa. According to David he came to South Africa alone to live with his aunt in Greyville, Durban, and later some of his other siblings and dad joined him. His parents were divorced and his mum continued living in Mauritius. He was not upset by his parent's divorce as his

response was “No, I was happy that they went their separate ways.” However, on both occasions when I spoke to him, he did not hesitate to state “my dad married three times” although this response was not pertinent to the question. David had six brothers and two sisters but one brother has passed away. One sister lived in Margate and the other in Mauritius. Two of his brothers lived in Australia, one lived in Umhlanga, one in Durban North and another one who lived somewhere in Durban he did not keep in contact with. He had not seen his one brother from Australia for twenty five years and he had seen the other brother from Australia only once. Both his parents are late. He was obviously close to his mum and he cited her death as the saddest moment in his life. David said “I saw my mum lying in the cold fridge and that made me sad.” The sad tone in his voice indicated that he sorely missed her. He vividly remembered the details leading up to her funeral although it occurred in 1996. David was able to easily recall the day when he received the message of her death, when he left for Mauritius and when her funeral took place.

David was fortunate in that he got to spend every alternate weekend with his brother from Durban North. He spent some weekends and the festive period with his sister from Margate. He got quite annoyed when he was unable to spend time with his siblings. Recently, his brother Philip, whom he spent a lot of time with, had plans with his family and couldn't pick David up for the weekend. This disappointed him. According to Mr. Jabu, his supervisor, David tried contacting his sister to spend the weekend with her but she was unable to arrange transport to pick him up and then he tried to contact his brother's friend but to no avail. He was morose the entire weekend but his brother made amends the following weekend and picked him up.

Philip repaired fridges and he worked from home. When David visited him he did not help him repair the fridges but instead to move and transport them. He helped his brother with odd tasks in the garage. He loved spending time with him and one of the things he would like to change in his life if he had the opportunity would be to spend more time with his siblings. His response was “I don't see my brother Monday to Friday... he works...I only see him during weekends and I see my sister sometimes...” Whenever he was asked about his family the hurried response and tone in his voice indicated that he was excited and proud of them.

SCHOOLING

David attended a school in Mauritius but he could not remember the name of the school. When he arrived in South Africa the two primary schools that he attended were William Hartley School and thereafter he went to Parkview Primary. Whilst at school he stayed at Nazareth House in Ridge Road, Durban with his sister for ten years. He then attended Golden Hours School which was a Special School. He was a scholar here for nine years. While he was here his dad wanted to remove him from school but later agreed to leave him until the age of 18. He enjoyed schooling at Golden Hours. "I used to like that school, he remembers, "and was doing well but I don't miss it any longer." He found working at Challenge more exciting. At Golden Hours he learnt to write, swim, and varnish tables and desks as well as gardening. He stated that nothing exciting happened during his schooling career except that he won a medal when he participated in sport. David was certain that he did not win the medal for coming first but he was not sure whether he came second or third. David said that he did not have any problems coping with work at school. He cited Golden Hours as being his favourite school. When he left Golden Hours he then came to work at Challenge, a protected workshop. He was not sure who informed him about Challenge and said "I don't know, my dad brought me here. I came by car." He arrived at Challenge in 1993.

EXPERIENCES AT CHALLENGE

David had been employed at Challenge since April, 1993. He had been a boarder at the local hostel for 15 years. I was given to understand that his disability grant contributed towards his upkeep at the hostel and his family also made a contribution. David had been involved in various activities at Challenge. He had worked in the kitchen and in the workshop. At the time of the interview he was very much involved in block-making. In the kitchen his tasks involved wiping counters, cleaning, sweeping and mopping. In the workshop he was involved in various project tasks from the production of co-traps which were plastic clamps and ear-plugs to sticking labels on bottles. In the mornings after breakfast he arrived at Challenge at 7:15 as he had to "sort out his things." Since David was a boarder he did not leave Challenge at 14:30 like other service users. Instead he left at 15:30. He had

additional responsibilities like washing cars, closing windows and doors, checking the trucks and other simple tasks. David said he only washed the cars if he felt like it. The people that work at protected workshops are referred to as service users. Service users get paid according to the number of items they complete for the day. His salary ranged between R80 to R120 per fortnight.

SKILLS TRAINING

At any given time five to six people undergo training to make blocks. The skills training of block-making lasts 3 months. Males from other centres were also given the opportunity to learn block-making. The criteria in selecting people to learn the skill, according to the supervisor, are “that they must be able-bodied and be able to easily travel to Challenge.” Mr. Jabu, the supervisor, mentioned that public transport poses a problem especially in the mornings and, with the recent bus fiasco, the service users were besieged with transport problems. They were unable to get to the centre where the training was taking place. With the previous transport company the disabled enjoyed discounted fares but unfortunately they did not enjoy the same privilege with the taxi industry. Normal transport fares were exorbitant therefore it was not economical for some service users to attend the training although many were keen to attend. Service users that attended the training needed to be able-bodied since block-making involves manual labour. Another criterion used in selecting people is that they must be males because of the manual labour involved. The service users had to physically transport the consumables to the spot where the blocks were being made. Learning the skill of block-making at Challenge was purely through practical demonstration and there was no theoretical component to it. Therefore being able to read was not one of the criteria used in selecting people for this particular type of skills training. The training was offered free of charge.

The skill training was done by Mr. Jabu. He had been involved in the project since the beginning of the year. Challenge received orders from the private sector and members from the community came to the workshop to purchase blocks. The workshop was able to produce between 90 to 120 blocks per day but on some days they were able to produce up to a maximum of 150 blocks. The supervisor had been motivating for service users to receive certificates at the end of their training but

unfortunately the certificates had been delayed due to some unforeseen circumstances. The supervisor was of the opinion that the certificates would prove to would-be employers that the service users had undergone skills training and would stand them in a better stead to get a job. Mr. Jabu mentioned that the service users could not be left unsupervised for long periods of time because they got into fights. Some of them resorted to name calling and insulting each other and when they got offended they got into fights. Since they were working with dangerous tools they had to be constantly supervised.

With regard to training the supervisor mentioned that he reminded himself that the service users were not like him and they needed instructions to be repeated several times. They tended to be forgetful. He gave the service users simple instructions. He also taught by doing a lot of hands-on demonstration. The supervisor initially showed the service users the different consumables that were used in block-making. He then asked them to repeat the names after him. Service users were then asked to identify the different consumables used individually. According to the supervisor getting them to identify the different consumables was not easy. A lot of repetition took place. The service users were also shown the different tools. Some of them were able to identify the tools easily but others took longer to learn the names. Once they were familiar with the different consumables, he demonstrated to them how many of each was required for the block mixture. The supervisor demonstrated to the service users the process of mixing, exactly how much of the mixture should be used in the mould and how the mould should be placed and removed. Failure to place and remove the mould properly resulted in the blocks being skew. The service users learnt the skill of block-making by actually making blocks themselves. One can describe the learning that took place as experiential learning since the service users were learning by doing.

When the service users got used to a particular computation of mixing sand, stones and cement, asking them to change the variation brought about confusion. When the workshop was running short of cement mix and the supervisor asked them to reduce the loads of stones, the service users looked confused and did not know what to do. In training the people, sometimes language became a problem. Mr. Jabu, being a

foreigner, was fluent in English but did not understand IsiZulu and he had to get others in the group to interpret for the people that did not understand English.

Sometimes the service users did not place the moulds correctly and if this happened then the blocks slanted to one direction and these were then rejected. If the blocks were wet they could be remoulded but if they were rejects then they were sold as seconds. The supervisor had to constantly check even when they were washing the machines. When the service users were not supervised, they did not clean the machines properly. A lot of the cement mix got left behind; therefore constant supervision was important, according to the supervisor.

DAVID AND SKILLS TRAINING

David had been involved in learning the skill of block-making. Like others he also received three months training but he was asked to stay on after the training was over. His three months of training were completed in August. Due to the bus strike, Challenge was not getting other service users from other centres attending the course therefore David was asked to stay on until the end of September. David indicated that he enjoyed the training course. He was *au fait* with the procedure of block-making. He said “you take two wheelbarrows of stones and put on the floor and we open up one packet of cement - then you put the bag of cement on top of the stones, then you put the sand on top of the cement- again the last wheelbarrow of stones we put on top again – after that we all stand around in a circle with our spades... two stands here and another two stands there and we mix and that is what we do. After that we put water.” It was interesting to watch his response because while he spoke he used hand gestures and his face lit up while explaining the process. He was obviously excited about explaining the process to me. Although he was keen to show me what he did at the block-making project after my first interview with him, it was already past 14:30 and all the equipment was put away. I saw the workshop but did not see work in progress. David was disappointed that I was unable to see his work as the sad look on his face said it all. He was happy to introduce me to his Supervisor, Mr. Jabu. I found Mr. Jabu extremely co-operative, friendly and accommodating. I promised to return to see what he did at the block-making project. After my second interview, I had the pleasure of being shown around the workshop

and David was able to proudly point out the different tools used and the different types of blocks that they make. I also viewed newly moulded, wet blocks and those that were rejected.

According to David he did not experience any problems learning how to make blocks. His response was “Nope, it is easy to do.” Even the supervisor confirmed that David was able to follow instructions but sometimes became forgetful. His supervisor found him hardworking and found his attitude amenable. When customers came to the workshop David said “we show them the pattern...they choose what blocks...tell them what the price is...pack them on the trucks.” He assisted with taking inventory. Although David knew the different tools by name, counting was a problem. He had to be asked to recount the tools to confirm the stock.

David’s view about skills training was “it was important ...it is fun...joy.” Although he felt that the training would help him find employment in the labour market, he would not like to work in the open labour market but preferred working at Challenge. David was not sure whether he would like to work for someone that made blocks. He said he wouldn’t mind opening his own business. David mentioned that in order to open his own business he needed open space and he would like to use the same kind of mould that he was using at Challenge as he was familiar with it. He displayed some business acumen by stating that he would need pamphlets to advertise his business and transport to deliver the orders. At the time of being interviewed he did not have his licence but he wouldn’t mind going for it. David also mentioned that “when you advertise your business you would need help, you would need people to work for you.”

David was given an option of staying on in the project because his brother promised to take him on a ship cruise if he saved his money and contributed towards his ticket. The supervisor knew of this offer and when his extended time at the project was over he gave David the option of staying on at the project. The offer was made to him because he would earn more at the block-making project than at the workshop. The service users from the workshop and block-making project are not interchangeable but those at the block-making project can assist at the workshop if they had contract work that they needed to complete urgently and could not cope with the present

service users. People making blocks could earn additional money if the workshop got contract work and they needed help. David earned approximately R120 per week making blocks whereas at the workshop he would earn this amount over two weeks. When the block-making project service users were requested to help at the workshop with contract work they got paid for work done there as well.

According to Mr. Jabu, David experienced difficulty making decisions. He could not decide whether he wanted to stay with block-making or go back to the workshop. Eventually he consulted with Mr. Naidoo, the project manager, before deciding to stay with block-making. David failed to realise that staying with block-making would enable him to earn more money since he needed the money for his trip.

Although David enjoyed block-making his first choice of a career would have been painting. Nobody had taught him to paint but he knew what needed to be done prior to actually painting. When David spoke about painting, the intonation in his voice indicated that it was something he loved. While speaking he got up and pointed to the walls to indicate what he was capable of. David was aware that the walls needed to be prepared before painting began and that paper needed to be placed on the floor to prevent spilling on the floor. If he had a choice he would choose painting.

DAVID'S EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE THE WORKSHOP

As mentioned earlier, David resided at the local hostel. He had been doing so for the past 15 years. All his meals were catered for at the hostel. David mentioned that there were regular fights at and outside the hostel. However, he did not get involved. Instead he preferred remaining in his room and staying out of trouble. He said "sometimes there is a fight going on, I run away from the fight... I don't get involved and I stay in my room the whole day, that's what I do."

David mentioned that when people found out that he worked at Challenge they were okay. They did not jeer him. People were generally not unpleasant towards him. They did not treat him differently; however, Mr. Jabu told me that some food-outlets took advantage of the people that worked at these protected workshops. Since they were aware that most service users had a poor concept of money, they did not give them

the correct change. To prevent this from happening, the house mothers normally did bulk ordering of take- away meals. In this way people were not robbed of their change. It was safer for them to purchase their meals at the cafeteria inside the workshop.

From my discussion with Mr. Jabu I discovered that David also had a poor concept of money. When he was going to purchase overalls at R 60, 00 a pair he had no notion that two pairs would cost him R120, 00. Instead he was under the impression that the cost was going to be R240, 00. His supervisor had to inform him that this amount of money was too much. Thus service users could easily fall prey to thieves.

David's life revolved around his place of employment, hostel and his family. He rated spending time with his siblings as of paramount importance. To David the chance of leaving the protected workshop was not an option although he might prefer opening his own business. He was realistic in that he realised the demands of owning a business were quite complicated.

4.3 SERVICE USER 2 PRECIOUS SHANGE

INTRODUCTION

Precious was the second service user that I interviewed at the protected workshop based in the Durban Central region. She was also shy when I first met her. I suppose this was expected because I was a stranger to her. When she was called to the reception area she first checked with Carol, who was also a supervisor, whether it was okay to speak to me. Once again I was asked to conduct the interview in the sick room because of its privacy and its distance away from the hub-hub of the workshop. Both my interviews with Precious were conducted at this venue. My first interview with Precious lasted approximately 45 minutes and my second interview approximately 30 minutes. My first interview focussed on her early life, daily routine, schooling and family. The second interview focussed on skills training, her experiences at Challenge and her perceptions about skills training. By the second interview Precious said she was no longer afraid of me. I also had the opportunity of meeting Precious' supervisor, Anne.

EARLY LIFE AND FAMILY

Precious was 20 years old. She was approximately 1, 55 meters tall. She was well dressed. Precious was fairly eloquent in English. She did not have complete use of her left leg and hand. Precious tended to restrict the movement of her left arm, held it up to her waistline and walked with a slight limp. She was born with this disability. Precious was quite conscious of her physical disabilities and often said "I got a problem." She said "My hand and leg is like this." It would appear that Precious had not accepted this disability although she was independent in her activities of daily living. Although at first she was shy and reserved gradually she became friendly as she got used to me. Precious was born at the King Edward Hospital in Durban on the 20th of May 1989. She lived in Umbilo with her mum, step-dad and younger sister. She did not have contact with her biological dad. Her sister was nine years old. She attended Stellawood Park Primary in Umbilo. Her mum was a manager of a company and her step-dad had his own business. On my second interview I discovered that Precious' mother had been diagnosed with intestinal cancer. Either her mum or her step-dad brought her to work in the morning and in the afternoon she went home by public transport.

Precious shared a normal relationship with her sister that included fighting with each other as well as sharing things together. Precious' mother got upset when the two girls fought. Sometimes she blurted out that Precious should get out of the house. Precious got upset by this and she mentioned that her mother told her "To get a kick out of the house." (In a raised voice) she said her mum told her this "When I am very naughty...Sometimes I fight with my sister... I am not talking to her... I ignore her... I get pissed off... (Uses hand gestures) she puts things that way... I put it this way...she interferes with me...she hits me...I hit her back." In the same breath (in a hurried, excited tone) she also said "but we also do things together ... it happens with her...it happens with me ...we talk about it." Despite the age difference they seemed to share a close relationship.

Precious' daily routine included getting up at six o' clock in the morning. Bathing, eating her cereal and making her lunch were part of her routine. She got herself ready and packed her lunch bag with juice, fruit and anything else that she wished to

eat for the day. When she got home after a day's work at Challenge she did her washing. "My mother washes my sister's and fathers ...I wash my own." With regard to cooking Precious mentioned "my mum does the cooking, she likes doing it. I can help, I can manage...not that much sick...I can manage." Precious sometimes made mashed potatoes and dip. She said "I like my mashed potatoes and dip... it is quicker... just boil it...ja, it is easy." Besides helping at home, Precious also ran errands for her mum. She went to the local Spar supermarket for her mum. "She writes it down what she wants... I go to Spar and buy it and go back home." The Spar was close to where she lived.

Precious initially said her step-father had influenced her life the most but also acknowledged what her mother did for her. "He does everything for me...my mother...half...half...my father gives me money and my mother buys me clothes." With the money her father gives her she said "I have to take bus home...buy food...buy chips or sweets ...pocket money." "He sometimes when it is my birthday he buys me cakes...he buys me everything...sometimes gives me R200." Her mum did not want her to spend all her money. Instead she told her to save her money. This value of saving was also instilled by her grandmother. Precious said "my grandmother says I must save enough to get a new phone. My mum will buy a new phone...my sister wants my other phone, the Nokia. So I want another phone."

Besides her parents, her maternal granny and aunts also played a role in her life. "I go with her church...er...she spoils me sometimes ...when she is sick I take care of her...I worry about what wrong with her...I worry about my granny and she worries about me." Her relatives understood her and they did not make fun of her. Precious said "I got families that understand me...my aunty understands me...everybody knows me."

PRECIOUS' EXPERIENCE AT CHALLENGE

Precious arrived at Challenge on the 31 March 2008. Her mother brought her by car. "My aunt had forms...somebody told my aunt about Challenge...she told my mother to come here...Challenge." At the time of the interview Precious had already spent a

year at the Challenge Workshop in Sherwood. Precious enjoyed working at Challenge. She said “I enjoy it here...I love the staff, supervisor, friends and everybody.”

Prior to coming to Challenge Precious did not receive any training for the work that she was doing at the moment. At the workshop Precious had learnt the skill of assembling earplugs and co-traps (plastic-clamps), sticking badges and velcro on envelopes. According to Precious these skills were taught by the supervisor. She was always in favour of learning new things. Precious said learning these skills were easy because they were taught simply and in a language they understood. A lot of demonstration was done. The supervisor, if she was teaching them the skill of assembling earplugs (or *uvex* as Precious sometimes called them, usually showed them each part and told them what it was called. She then demonstrated to them the assembling process. This process was done step by step. A lot of repetition was done until the people understood. The supervisor then asked them to assemble the earplugs themselves to demonstrate that they understood and knew how to undertake the task. Service users usually learnt by doing it themselves. Thus one could say that experiential learning took place since they learnt by doing. Different tasks were undertaken by different groups of people. The process involved threading, counting and packing. Precious knew what the process involved and was also good at counting. Precious did not always find her work easy: “some is easy, some is difficult... counting is easy ...sticking da...da silver badges is difficult.” Precious was of the opinion that skills training would help her find employment in the open labour market. However, Precious (in a raised voice) said “I like to work at Challenge...I like to work at Challenge...work here for many more years until retirement.”

She was eager to show me around the workshop. As we approached the workshop Precious was a bit shy and tended to tilt her head to one side. Other service users looked curiously as we walked around. Some smiled and greeted excitedly. Precious was eager to introduce her friends to me. She was elated when she introduced her supervisor to me. I was given a tour of the workshop and showed the different tasks that the service users were involved in. Precious also showed me exactly what she did at the workshop. The supervisors told me what a supervisor’s job entails and how each person’s salary was calculated. The supervisors that I spoke to, have been

working at Challenge for many years and were happy to be there. Their strength lay in being patient and in understanding that the service users were different to them. The supervisor mentioned that Precious was punctual and her attendance was excellent. She was prepared to undertake tasks given to her and Precious' strength lay in being able to count.

The supervisor mentioned that the higher functioning people were given the more difficult tasks and the lower functioning people performed the simpler tasks. Precious got a salary of approximately R80-R125 per fortnight. The amount varied according to the work done during those two weeks.

PRECIOUS' SCHOOLING CAREER

Precious attended only special schools. Initially she was at Golden Gateway, then she was at Browns school and lastly at Golden Hours. At Golden Gateway she spent six months. Precious spent seven months at Browns school and seven years at Golden Hours. She did not attend any other school. At Browns school she had physiotherapy. Precious said "At Browns school...Browns school ...been to exercise my hand...had my hand exercised...person came to exercise my hand...and for my legs...I was having problems with my leg."

Precious enjoyed Golden Hours. She said "It was a nice school...they did a lot for us. They used to give us money... you could buy stuff for yourself... own toiletries...teachers cared for us...had lots of teachers that liked me...loved me." She made lots of friends at school and met new people.

Precious left Golden Hours in 2007. She was eighteen years old when she left school. She could have stayed on at Golden Hours until the age of 23 but her mum did not want her to stay on. The reason Precious gave for leaving school was "Er...my mother didn't like the way other children were behaving...they were fighting and all. Some of them was violent...some of them was nice." Precious was initially angry with her mum for wanting her to leave school. Her step-dad did not interfere in the decision that her mum had taken.

At Golden Hours she learnt to cook and bake. She enjoyed eating cakes. Although at home she sometimes prepared easy meals such as pap and roast meat, she did not bake. At school she also played different codes of sport. Precious (in an excited, hurried tone) said "I played netball, hockey, skittles...all that...I was the defender for netball." She also said "In June or July we had other people coming and seeing what we were doing...I was in netball." She cited leaving Golden Hours as the saddest moment in her life. With a quiver in her voice she said, "I was sad... I was leaving the school...I was not going to see other children and staff and all that...I was sad...sad times...sad moments...all that."

She still kept in contact with some of her old friends from Golden Hours. Precious said "sometimes they call me...they tell me to come to the school for something...I must go there...then I go there...my mum lets me go." Her mum took her and she met up with her old friends.

When she left Golden Hours she spent a year at home and then joined Challenge.

PRECIOUS' EXPERIENCES WITH PEOPLE OUTSIDE CHALLENGE

Precious had a group of friends that she interacted with in her neighbourhood, Umbilo. She sighed when she said "Some of my friends...sometimes they frighten me...sometimes even if I am quiet...I wouldn't talk...they say bad things." Precious didn't like to fight and have arguments. She said about her friends "sometimes we have arguments the whole week ...they come to my house and irritate me...they bang the gate...they hit the gates and windows...I go mad...I want to stay somewhere else."

Precious said that, when people knew that she worked at a protected workshop, "they say I am mad...I am in a special school...I say to them I am in Challenge...they say only mad people ...mad children...I tell them who...I say because I am a person...I am not mad ...You can see me that I am a person...I am not a person that goes mad...I am like normal...I have a problem that they don't understand." These things are said by a few people who lived in her neighbourhood. This was one of the reasons why she would have liked to move to another neighbourhood.

PRECIOUS' ATTEMPT AT FINDING A JOB

Precious made an attempt to get a job in the open labour market. At the end of August she applied for a job at Pep Stores in Umbilo. She experienced difficulty answering some questions on the application form as she found them difficult to read and comprehend. She felt that if these questions were asked orally then she might have been able to answer them. The other staff members were not allowed to help her by reading the questions so that she could answer them. They told her that the Manager would not allow them to do that. If they did help they would have gotten into trouble. Thus she was not successful at getting a job at Pep Stores. However, the staff was quite friendly and nobody made fun of her. She did not discuss the questions with members of her family. This would have indicated a willingness to overcome this kind of challenge in the future.

She also wanted to open a crèche but her dad was not in favour of doing so. He said she wouldn't have managed with children because taking care of other people's children was a big responsibility. He also mentioned that some children might not understand her. Besides, her mum was ill and she needed peace and quiet. Children would make a lot of noise and this would be a disturbance. So the idea of opening up a crèche was not feasible.

Precious said that she wouldn't like applying for a job at the local Spar Supermarket because "they wouldn't understand me...know that I went to a Special school ...wouldn't understand me...wouldn't take me ... sometimes they laugh at me." It was not the management or staff that laughed at her; instead it was the customers who lived in her neighbourhood. This was probably one of the reasons she would be happier if her family moved to another area. Although she would like to apply for a job as a packer she was quite adamant that she would not get a job because people would not understand her and make fun of her. Even though she would like to work in the open labour market Precious believed that other companies would react in the same way. Therefore she firmly believed that Challenge was the place for her and she was prepared to stay on until her retirement.

CHALLENGE UNLIMITED IN THE DURBAN SOUTH REGION

4.4. INTRODUCTION

The Durban South Challenge Workshop is situated in Darjeeling Road and is also run by Durban and Coastal Mental Health Society. The building was previously a hall and subsequently it has been converted into a protected workshop. The building is huge and is an open-plan venue. Although the building is huge it is not situated on as large an expanse of land as the one based at the head-office. The offices are situated on the upper level where one has a good view of what is happening on the floor. The supervisors seem very hands-on and the workshop caters for people with different levels of functioning. There were approximately 100 service users at the venue when I visited. I made telephonic arrangements beforehand on both occasions for me to interview the service users.

On both occasions I was greeted by an enthusiastic service user who ran to open the entrance gate. On my first visit service users were on tea-break so I was met by a number of curious onlookers who came forward to shake my hand while others were shy. Some smiled and others had their heads bowed. Prior to entering the main hall on the right hand side is a kitchen as I noticed lunch containers stacked up. Later I discovered that service users leave their lunches there so that they can be heated in a microwave prior to their break. On my first visit as I entered the workshop I was met by Susan, the person in charge of this workshop. I introduced myself and she in turn introduced me to Amanda who is also a supervisor but who, more importantly, was going to be my interpreter. Susan first enquired from me my proficiency in IsiZulu and therefore suggested that Amanda sit through the interviews acting as the interpreter. Susan was busy so I did not want to disturb her. However, she asked me if I would like to use the craft room adjoining the building as there would be fewer disturbances. I agreed and Amanda and I then proceeded to the craft room.

At the craft room I found service users busy working with beads. At one end of the room was a display table with items of jewellery made by the service users. These included earrings, necklaces, bracelets and aids badges. Amanda then cleared a table of beads and jewellery so that we could be seated there to conduct our

interviews. The service users were selected by the workshop personnel. According to Susan the criteria used to select the service users were that they are mildly intellectually disabled and have an innate interest in bead-making. All four of the service users were African females. They were Zulu speaking and were not very fluent in English. Although the room was airy and quiet the grass was being cut and this caused a bit of disturbance. Nevertheless we made the most of the situation.

During the break I had the opportunity of meeting the four supervisors. They were all friendly. With the exception of Amanda, who had been there for two years, the others had been working there for over ten years. They obviously enjoyed doing what they did because one could hear the excitement in their voices. I was also told that the service users had an excellent track record when it came to attendance. Despite the recent bus strike service users managed to use alternate transport to the workshop. The supervisors therefore did not like the service users to be idle. When they did not have contract work they were taught dancing and engaged in bead work. The workshop was also quite proactive because ABET classes were also offered. Service users had the opportunity of learning English, Maths and IsiZulu. The ABET teachers were paid by the Department of Education and the classes were held twice a week, on a Tuesday and Thursday. The lessons lasted an hour each. According to the supervisors the service users enjoyed these classes and some for the first time were learning to write their names in English.

On my second visit one service user was standing behind the kitchen counter and enquired who I wanted to see. When I informed her that I was there to meet Susan she took me to her. There was a hub of activity in the workshop with some people engaged in cleaning a part of the workshop floors; other service users were busy with sticking boxes and counting tissues and some had their heads on the tables and were resting. These lower functioning people had no contract work but nevertheless came to work to attend dance classes. My second set of interviews was conducted in the office upstairs. Once again Amanda was used as the interpreter.

With regard to dancing two dance teachers from the B&R dance club trained them. This training was done once a week. Training took place on a Friday and the lesson lasted an hour. However, when the service users did not have work to do, they spend

time training under the guidance of their supervisors. Dancing was a form of stimulation for them. The supervisors mentioned that it was astounding to see a transformation in some of the service users. Some that were shy previously were now keen on dancing. The service users were fortunate in that they had sufficient male and female dance partners as many were keen to engage in this activity. The service users were members of B&R Dance Academy. They had paid an enrolment fee of R150. This included membership fee and a T-shirt. Since the protected workshop was an NGO the service users were not charged for their lessons. Service users learnt line dance, cha-cha and they were going to learn other ballroom dances such as fox-trot and rumba.

On my second visit the supervisor was proud to announce that 20 of the service users were going to represent their club and participate in the 2009 South African Championships on the 24th October. Four provinces were going to participate. This competition was hosted by The South African Line Dance Association. The service users were going to perform four line dances. Their dress code for the competition was going to be either a black skirt or pants and their club T-shirt. I was fortunate to witness the dances that were going to be performed for the competition. The service users were keen on demonstrating their skill. It was refreshing to see Amanda join them in performing the dances. The Supervisor mentioned that they were performing better a few days earlier as they may be making mistakes due to the stress of the competition. The supervisors are also taking dance lessons and are contemplating participating in the competition next year.

In my subsequent telephone conversation with Susan on the 26th October to enquire about the outcome of the competition I was informed that the service users were brilliant. Since other able-bodied people were participating they were divided into categories. Two service users from the Merebank workshop came first. Zinhle and Chilie took top honours in the female and male categories respectively. All participants received medals and those that excelled received certificates as well.

INTRODUCTION

Elizabeth (affectionately known as Lizzy) was the first participant that I interviewed at this workshop. Throughout the rest of my interview she is referred to as Lizzy. She was selected by the workshop personnel to be interviewed. The selection criteria used were that she was mildly intellectually disabled and had undergone skills training in bead-making. I first met Lizzy in the craft room. She was one of the people that was busy with bead work and helped clear up the table with beads and jewellery. My first interview with Lizzy was conducted in the craft room with Amanda as interpreter and the second interview was conducted upstairs in the workshop. The first interview which lasted approximately 45 minutes focussed on her family, her schooling, her experiences at Challenge and skills-training. The second interview which lasted about half an hour involved more probing and verification of certain information. Initially Lizzy was shy and she felt more confident with Amanda being present.

EARLY LIFE AND FAMILY

Lizzy was 29 years old. She was approximately 1, 6 meters tall. She thoroughly enjoyed traditional dances and ballroom dancing. She seemed introverted and reserved. Although Lizzy was able to speak English, she mostly responded in IsiZulu. Only a few questions were answered in English. On both occasions she was well-dressed. Her dressing was well co-ordinated with matching shoes. She also carried a fashionable bag. Amanda mentioned that she came from a well-off family as she came in “posh cars” and was always smartly dressed. She was soft-spoken and did not raise her voice during the interviews. She lived in Umlazi with her parents, her two brothers and her daughter. She was the only daughter. She was 20 years old when she had the baby. Her daughter, now nine years old, was named Thandisa and was in grade three. Lizzy’s mum worked at a clothing factory but later became a home executive and her dad was an engineer. Both her brothers were policemen. One was stationed at Westville Police Station and the other at Bekithemba Police Station which is in Umlazi. Lizzy’s mum took care of Thandisa. Lizzy was no longer in

a relationship with the child's father. The paternal granny sometimes contributed towards the child's upkeep. Thandisa's father was in part-time casual employment. When her parents found out that she was pregnant they asked her why she didn't tell them she had a boyfriend. Thandisa was obviously well-taken care of as she was on Lizzy's brother's medical-aid.

Lizzy's family was quite protective of her. Her dad brought her to work in the mornings. While the other service users left the Workshop at 14:30 Lizzy very often left at 15:30 because she was either picked up by her dad or one of her siblings. Sometimes she used public transport to go home. Usually she boarded the bus but if there was a problem she used the taxi. Recently when there were problems with the public transport one of her siblings would telephone and ask her to wait until they picked her up. She did on occasion board the bus into town with her friends to go window shopping or to shop when they got paid.

She normally got up at 5:00. She had her breakfast, made her lunch and gave her child a bath. Lizzy left home at 6:25 and reached the Workshop around 6:45. She shared a good relationship with her brothers. They were not married. Lizzy helped them with their washing and ironing. Over weekends Lizzy cooked but during the week her mum did the cooking. Lizzy enjoyed frying food; making chakalaka and cooking beef or mutton. She also enjoyed baking. Lizzy liked making chocolate and orange cakes as well as scones. In fact she made her own birthday cakes. Actually according to Lizzy she was able to bake anything provided she had the recipe as she knew the ingredients and was able to measure ingredients correctly. According to Lizzy, she had a very happy home life as she did not get into arguments with her siblings. She said that if she didn't have a disability she would have liked to be a teacher since she loved working with children. The one thing that she would have liked to change was her disability. She considered family gatherings as the happiest times in her life.

She rated her parents as having the greatest influence in her life. She said that when she was sick they cared for her...took her to the doctor...gave her a bath and showered her with love and attention. As a person with a disability they tried their best for her.

LIZZY'S SCHOOLING CAREER

Lizzy started her schooling career at Bavumele Primary. She spent one year at this school. She then moved to Musemuhle Primary where she spent three years. She was not sure why she moved from one school to the next. Thereafter she went to Khalipha Primary where she spent five years. These schools are located in Umlazi. She enjoyed learning maths at Khalipha. While there she was assessed by a psychologist because she was experiencing difficulty coping. She was then referred to Damorosa, a pre-vocational school in Chatsworth, Durban. Lizzy spent four years at Damorosa.

At Damorosa she learnt pre-vocational skills such as baking, cooking and hairdressing. She also learnt English as at her previous schools she was learning IsiZulu. It was here that Lizzy first came into contact with the skill of bead-making. They used beads to decorate tray cloths and cloths for side-tables. They were not allowed to take their handiwork home. All the items that were made were left at school. Lizzy also sang in the school choir. They won a trophy in a competition for choir singing. She also played sport and enjoyed school.

LIZZY'S EXPERIENCES AT CHALLENGE

Lizzy started work at Challenge in the year 2000. Her parents heard about Challenge via the media. At Challenge she was involved in ABET and dancing besides the contract work and bead making. Lizzy was one of the twenty people from the Workshop that represented her club in the line dancing competition. She was also excited because her family promised to be part of the audience supporting her. When she spoke about dancing her face lit up with excitement. During the first interview she was prepared to give a demonstration of what she had learnt. It was amazing that, while she did the dance steps, there were no inhibitions. She was not the shy, reserved person that I knew at the interview. At home she also taught her daughter the dance steps that she learnt during her lessons at the Workshop.

Lizzy attended ABET classes twice a week. Attendance at all three classes was compulsory. In their English class they were learning the letters of the alphabet,

phonics and functional English. Days of the week, months of the year and seasons are some of the things taught. There was a lot of emphasis on oral communication. In Maths, amongst other things, the service users were learning about time, the place value of numbers, the value of money, working out simple computations and the use of ATM'S. Lizzy said she enjoyed these classes because the service users work at their own pace and they are allowed to ask questions and verify things which they are not sure of. The educators are patient and are prepared to repeat things taught. Attending these classes has helped her to improve her communication in English. Lizzy also said that by attending the Maths classes she was able to use an ATM on her own which she was not able to do before.

Lizzy enjoyed herself at Challenge. She looked forward to parties like the one they had for Casual Day and their Christmas party as well. She also enjoyed the outings that they went for. Twice a year outings were planned for the service users. They went to places like Ushaka, Blue Lagoon and Sun Coast, places that the supervisors thought they would enjoy. She mentioned that she enjoyed these outings because she liked spending time with her friends. During my conversation with the supervisors I was told that the service users did not have many opportunities to go on outings with their families. Some families did not have the financial means or some might be embarrassed to take their children to these places. Therefore the outings arranged by the workshop were in some instances the only ones that the service users went for. When people realised that she worked at Challenge they told her "you so lucky that although you got the disability, you got the opportunity to do something...you work at Challenge."

Learning the skill of making jewellery using beads was taught at Challenge Unlimited in the Durban South protected workshop. This skill was normally taught when the service users did not have contract work. Sometimes the supervisor Susan, who I was given to believe was extremely creative and excellent in crafts, or Nirvana, who was an occupational therapist, taught them the skill of jewellery-making using beads. There were no specific criteria in selecting people to learn this skill except that they must be able to use their hands. This skill improved one's hand-eye co-ordination. Basically there was no time frame to learn this skill. Some were able to grasp this

skill quicker than others. There was no cost involved in teaching this skill except that the Workshop needed to have the materials necessary for bead-making.

By the time Lizzy reached Challenge she was familiar with bead work. At school she had already learnt to use beads on fabric. Another service user, Patricia had taught Lizzy the art of making jewellery, using beads. Lizzy said it did not take her long to learn because she knew how to work with beads. She found the skill easy to learn and learnt the skill when she had no work to do. She said Patricia had taught her step by step what to do. Although she was familiar with the threading of beads she had not made any jewellery previously. Lizzy knew that black was the colour of mourning in the Zulu culture but she was not familiar with the significance of the other colour beads.

Lizzy made items of jewellery which were on display on a table. She proudly showed me the earrings and necklaces that she made. She only made jewellery at work and not at home because she did not have the equipment needed. She was familiar with what was required to make jewellery as she mentioned "I need beads...need needle to thread beads...need scissors and cotton, not normal cotton...need stronger cotton and hook." She did a demonstration of how she was able to thread beads with the end result being an item of jewellery. Although Lizzy would like to make jewellery for sale, she did not have the equipment. The item that she was most proud of making was a necklace which she showed me. The pride was evident in her broad smile and the glitter in her eye. Learning bead-making has empowered her to be able to make her own jewellery. Amanda informed me that the jewellery that was being made was not being sold to the public as yet as they did not have complete sets of jewellery (that is neck-chain, earrings and bracelet). The service users needed to complete the sets so that these could be sold.

Besides learning to make jewellery Lizzy also learnt to sew pyjamas. Once again she proudly showed me a sample of what she made. This sample was also on display. She has not learnt to cut the patterns as yet as Amanda does the laying out of the patterns and cutting. The service users do the stitching. Amanda told me that she still had to teach them the technique of designing patterns and laying them out on fabric. According to Lizzy she could make her own dresses if she wanted to.

Although Lizzy had learnt these skills she had not attempted to find employment in the open labour market. The reason for not wanting to find employment in the open labour market was that she was happy being at Challenge and besides her family was protective of her and wouldn't like her to find employment elsewhere.

4.6 SERVICE USER 4

THANDEKA NGUNI

INTRODUCTION

Thandeka was the second service user that I interviewed at this workshop. She was selected by the workshop personnel to be interviewed. The criteria used in selecting her were that she had a mild intellectual impairment and had learnt the skill of bead-making. Thandeka was interviewed on two separate occasions in October 2009. My first interview which lasted approximately 40 minutes focussed on her early life, her family, schooling and her experiences at Challenge. Unfortunately the latter part of our conversation was not taped as I hadn't noticed that the tape recorder had stopped. Our second interview lasted about 45 minutes in which the focus was on her experiences at Challenge, her perceptions of skills training and her attempts to find employment in the open labour market. During the second interview I also clarified some issues which I was not certain about.

Thandeka was one of the people involved in bead-making when I went to the craft room. My first interview with her was conducted in the craft room and the second was conducted in the office itself which was situated in the upper level of the workshop. Amanda, the Supervisor sat in on the interviews and she acted as interpreter. My first impressions of Thandeka were that she was friendly and confident. She smiled and came over to shake my hand as she was introduced by Amanda.

EARLY LIFE AND FAMILY

Thandeka was 32 years old and approximately 1, 56 meters tall. She was single and did not have any children. At both the interviews she was well spoken in IsiZulu and spoke audibly. She sat upright and made eye contact while speaking. Thandeka was

well dressed, had a pleasant demeanour and exuded confidence. She had two brothers and three sisters. Thandeka mentioned that she was “the last born”. Thandeka lived in Lamontville with her mum. Her dad had passed away. Her mum was a domestic worker for a White couple in Umbilo. She did their ironing and took care of cats which entailed giving them milk and putting out their food. Thandeka said initially her mum was weary of cats but in due course she got used to the seven cats that she had to take care of.

Her one brother was working in Cape Town but she was not sure what work he did. The other brother was studying at the Mangosuthu Technikon. One of Thandeka’s sisters was studying nursing, one worked in Johannesburg and the other was a dressmaker who worked from home. Besides her mother she considered the sister from Johannesburg as having the biggest influence in her life. When her sister came down to Durban she took her to Truworths to do shopping. She said her sister always bought her nice clothes. Thandeka had visited her sister in Johannesburg on two separate occasions. Thandeka travelled by bus to Johannesburg and her sister met her at the bus terminal. Thandeka said her mum accepted her the way she was and loved her despite her disability. Her mum always wanted the best for her and was protective over her. She did not tell Thandeka that she could not do anything because of her disability. She allowed her to do things on her own.

Thandeka was disappointed that she was not able to be educated like her other siblings. She cited her independence as being the thing that she loved most. She said that she was able to travel anywhere on her own. She regularly went to central Durban on her own. She was also able to purchase things on her own and was able to engage in transactions without being robbed. She knew the value of money. She and her sister, the dressmaker, took turns to cook. Although she shared a good relationship with her siblings, she said she got sick when she was angry. She laughed when she remembered one occasion when her sister borrowed R400, 00 from her and did not return it. She was so angry that she refused to cook for a week. Her mum told her that she must not lend her sister money in future.

Her daily routine included getting up at seven o’ clock. She made her own bed and cleaned the kitchen and dining-room. Thandeka enjoyed having cereal for breakfast.

She made her own lunch, dressed and then boarded the bus to Challenge. When there was a problem with the busses she took a taxi. Her favourite dish was spicy chicken curry. At Challenge she ate at 10 o' clock and then at two o' clock.

One thing that she thoroughly enjoyed was dancing. Her face lit up when she spoke about dancing. She preferred dances involving partners. Thandeka liked the fox trot and tap dancing. At this point in the interview, she voluntarily got up and did a demonstration. She did not have any reservations about dancing. Her dance partner was Siyabonga, another service user from Challenge. She smiled coyly when she spoke about Siyabonga as he was special to her since he was her boyfriend.

Thandeka was one of the twenty people representing her club at the dance competition. She was excited about the competition and her face lit up as she said she was ecstatic and looked forward to meeting other people. She was going to wear a long skirt to the competition and using her hands she showed the height of the heels of her new pair of shoes.

Thandeka got a disability grant from which she gave her mum R500, 00. She also has learnt to save and this quality was instilled by her mum. She paid R100, 00 for stokvel. There are different types of stokvel. One type is when people make a fixed monthly contribution. The person responsible for co-ordinating the stokvel then banks the money because, Thandeka explained, it was unsafe having lots of money in your possession. At the end of the year, whatever money was collected was then divided amongst the people that contributed. When they collected the money, they generally purchased food items with it. Another type is when people make monthly contributions and each person has a turn to collect a sum of money every month depending on how many people are in the club. One trustworthy person in the community was generally responsible for co-ordinating the stokvel. When Thandeka collected her stokvel money she bought meat with it for the festive period. She also had a funeral policy with a bank towards which she contributed R139, 00 a month. This funeral policy covered her and her parents. However, now that her dad was deceased it was just for her and her mum. The money that she earned at Challenge was for her to spend as she wished.

Thandeka would have loved to study nursing as she enjoyed working with old people. Another desire of hers was to be well-educated so that she could read and write her own letters.

SCHOOLING CAREER

Thandeka first attended Ntuthukweni Primary school which was in Lamontville. Here she completed her grade one. She was experiencing problems in grade two so she went to live with her older sister on a farm in Bhizani. She then attended Bhizani-Sotsele Primary. Thandeka couldn't make it to pass grade two because she was a slow learner. She learnt her subjects through the medium of IsiZulu. Her mother was then called in and advised by teachers to take her to a special school because they felt she was experiencing difficulty coping at school. At this stage she couldn't write her name. Her mother then enrolled her at Ningizimu which was a special school in Montclair. She was not sure how old she was when she attended Ningizimu. She spent a few years here and was not sure what age she left school. Thereafter she sought employment at Challenge Unlimited.

She first learnt to dance when she was a learner at Ningizimu. Thandeka was good at dancing and she was part of the dance troupe that represented her school in Cape Town at a dance competition. The troupe won a trophy for the school.

Thandeka also went to Cape Town for an art competition. Although she was unplaced in the art competition, she thoroughly enjoyed the experience as she was fortunate to have represented the school twice in Cape Town. She enjoyed art and she also learnt to draw house plans whilst at school. She said she would not be able to draw her own house plans now because she was out of touch. However, she would love to take a refresher course so that she could hone her skills.

At Ningizimu she also played different codes of sport like netball, hockey and participated in athletics. The school had a swimming pool and Thandeka was fortunate in that she also learnt to swim. She spoke fondly of her educators at Ningizimu as she said they took an interest in her. She also learnt about the seasons whilst at school. She was taught to write her name and do some maths. Thandeka

said she enjoyed maths and being able to count has helped her to do the work that she was engaged in at Challenge.

During her stay at Ningizimu she spent lots of time with older people like her educators because they gave her good advice. Many of the girls her age were either pregnant or already had babies. Some of them influenced her to have a boyfriend. Her mum advised her otherwise and told her to wait and not have a boyfriend. Her mum told her if she had a boyfriend he would take advantage of her and she would fall pregnant. She knows her mum gave her good advice as she would not have been able to take care of a baby. Therefore to stay away from bad influences she preferred associating with her educators. Thandeka said she shared a good relationship with her educators because she was helpful and assisted them by running errands. She had not kept in contact with her friends from Ningizimu. However, on the rare occasion she had bumped into her former educators, they were proud of her achievements thus far.

THANDEKA'S EXPERIENCES AT CHALLENGE

Thandeka started at Challenge in 1999. At the time of the interview she had been working there for ten years. When she turned 22 the Principal from Ningizimu, whom Thandeka fondly referred to as Mam Ngubane, telephoned her mum to inform her that she has found a place for Thandeka at a workshop. The Principal told her now that she was grown up she needed to learn some skills so that she could become independent. Mam Ngubane made the arrangements and Thandeka arrived with her mum at Challenge Unlimited. She had no regrets about working at Challenge. In fact she enjoyed herself at work. She had made lots of friends and loved narrating stories to her colleagues. During break-time they normally gathered around her to listen to tales.

She was also happy that she did not wear a uniform to work because if she did then people would laugh at her. Thandeka had nasty experiences when she was attending Ningizimu. At the Special school they wore uniforms and when people saw her in uniform they laughed at her. She felt people were cruel in jeering her. She often felt hurt by their comments as they sometimes said she was mad. She understood what

people said as they spoke in IsiZulu. Now that she was allowed to dress in casual attire nobody knew that she worked at Challenge thus she was not subjected to these cruel comments. She said people now look at her as a person and not as somebody with a disability. Only her family knew that she worked at Challenge and they were happy that she was occupied. Otherwise they were afraid that if she stayed at home people from the neighbourhood would take advantage of her during the day while nobody was at home. Thandeka very often went with her friend Elizabeth, who was another service user, to the city. They went window shopping and looked at what was in fashion and when they got paid they went out and purchased some of the things they fancied.

At Challenge Thandeka was involved in contract work and she had also learnt the skill of making jewellery using beads. However, she engaged in this activity only when she did not have any contract work. Some of her contract work involved counting envelopes and cards. At the time of the first interview they were busy counting and packing Christmas and birthday cards. The packaging was done for Clicks and Woolworths. When I returned for the second interview the service users were working in a production line. They were engaged in gluing the tissue boxes together as well as folding and packing tissues. Some service users were busy making up tissue boxes by gluing them together. Whilst others were folding the tissues and another group was counting 20 tissues and stacking them. Finally some were placing the stacks of 20 tissues into the boxes and sealing them. On my second visit to the workshop Thandeka was busy counting tissues.

Thandeka mentioned that, prior to coming to the workshop, she did not receive any training for the work that she was doing. All that she learnt was taught by the Workshop Supervisors. The skill of making jewellery using beads was taught to her by two other service users, namely Bongi and Nothando. Thandeka said initially this skill was difficult as it took her three days to master. She said the other service users were very patient with her and did a lot of demonstration and repeated the process several times just so that she could learn the skill. By practising several times she learnt the skill. She learnt the skill by making the jewellery herself. A lot of trial and error was involved. Eventually she was able to do it on her own. Now she finds jewellery making easy because she has mastered the skill. The first thing that she

learnt to make was an AIDS badge. She knew the process and rattled it off “you take the thread then the needle and you thread it. Then you count the different colour beads and see how many is needed and then you thread it.”

Besides the AIDS badge, Thandeka mentioned that she made a necklace and earrings. She was proud to show off her masterpieces. She had not made any items of jewellery for herself because she did not have beads at home and the equipment that was needed. She was not sure where she could purchase beads but she indicated that she would like to make items of jewellery and sell to the public. However, she needed somebody to teach her other styles and designs of bead-making besides the one she learnt at Challenge. She said by learning other styles she would be able to make a variety of patterns so that the customers would be spoilt for choice. However, she could not see herself doing this as a full time employment. She said she could probably do this as a part-time job.

Besides learning bead-work, Thandeka was happy to be part of ABET. She said for the first time she had learnt to write her name in English. She was also excited because she was also slowly learning to read. She was now able to read simple sentences. Previously she was only literate in IsiZulu. She was ecstatic that she was making progress and hoped to one day read newspapers that were printed in English and write her own letters. She was able to read newspapers and pamphlets that were printed in IsiZulu. Thandeka said the educators that were involved in ABET were patient and they allowed the service users to ask questions. This was something new to Thandeka because in her previous schools the learners were not allowed to ask questions. When the educators taught them something and if she did not understand what was taught, she was afraid to ask the educators to repeat the explanation. In hindsight she felt that if she had clarified her uncertainties she might have been able to make better progress at school. The ABET classes had enabled her to communicate with her work colleagues in English although she sometimes combined English with IsiZulu if she did not know the English equivalent. According to Thandeka, learning English had also helped her in understanding instructions given to her by her Supervisor while Maths had helped improve her counting skills. This skill was beneficial to her with regard to her work because she did counting of tissues.

Thandeka had not attempted to find employment in the open labour market. She said she did not think that business people would employ her because she was at a special school and she was not literate in English as yet. Besides, her family was not putting any pressure on her to find another job as they were happy that she was employed at Challenge.

4.7 SERVICE USER 5

NOTHANDO ZUNGU

INTRODUCTION

When Amanda, the interpreter, introduced Nothando to me she mentioned that she was hearing impaired. Nothando was interviewed on two separate occasions at her place of employment. My first interview with her lasted approximately 40 minutes and the second interview lasted about 30 minutes. During both interviews Nothando was shy and did not make eye contact with me. When she spoke she looked directly at Amanda. The impression I got was that she was probably scared of me and she probably felt more confident speaking to Amanda. Another reason that she could have been looking at Amanda was that she was hearing-impaired. Amanda used Sign Language to communicate. It made more sense for her to have eye contact with Amanda rather than with me.

Nothando was one of the service users selected by the workshop personnel to be interviewed. The reason for them selecting Nothando was that, besides having an intellectual impairment, she was also hearing-impaired. They thought it would be a good idea to explore the experiences of a hearing-impaired person in learning the skill of bead-making. During both interviews Nothando's questions were translated into IsiZulu. While translating the questions, Amanda also used Sign Language. It seemed that Nothando was able to lip read. Amanda was able to use Sign Language very effectively.

EARLY LIFE AND FAMILY

Nothando was 39 years old. She was born in Kwa-Makutha in 1970. She was approximately 1, 6 meters tall. She was married and had one daughter. Nothando was born with the hearing impairment. She was very soft spoken and her responses to questions were almost like a whisper. Nothando mentioned that she was able to read newspapers printed in IsiZulu. She lived in Umlazi with her husband, daughter and her nephew. She was the guardian of her late sister's son. He was 13 years old. Her daughter was four years old. While Nothando was at Challenge her daughter was in a crèche.

She said that she had a hearing aid but it was not functional at the moment because there was something wrong with the wires. She got her hearing aid from Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital and she needed to go back there to have it sorted out. She only used the hearing aid for four months. Although the hearing aid broke a while ago she did not have it repaired because she was unable to go there by herself. Her husband said he would accompany her but he was unwell therefore she hadn't gone as yet. Since he was feeling much better, she hoped to go soon to have it repaired or replaced. Although the hearing aid improved her hearing, she was able to do without it for a long time therefore she saw no urgency in having it sorted out.

Nothando had four siblings. Her one sister was deceased. She cited her sister's death as one of the saddest moments in her life. The second sister who was married was a housewife. Her older brother was a builder and the younger one worked for someone that made blocks. Her siblings did not have any disabilities. Her dad, who was a pensioner, had previously worked for Dunlop and her mum worked as a domestic servant for a White couple. Her parents were divorced but she still had contact with her dad who lived in Kwa-Makutha.

She said that sometimes her hearing had affected her relationship with her siblings. When they told her to do something and she did not do it they thought that she was just being stubborn. However, they did not realise that she did not hear them in the first place and they needed to repeat themselves or that they needed to look at her and speak as she was able to lip read. None of her siblings learnt to sign, however

her mum was more patient with her and normally repeated herself or looked directly at her and spoke. Nothando mentioned that her mum had the greatest influence in her life because she had always been there for her. Whenever she had a problem she confided in her mum.

Nothando met her husband at church. She said she was a regular church goer. During courting her husband paid her lobola which amounted to R10 000, 00. Her husband knew that she was hearing impaired and he accepted her the way she was. He understood her and was able to communicate with her. Over the years he had also learnt to sign. In 2001 they tied the knot in the presence of approximately 200 family members and friends. She cited her wedding day as the happiest day in her life. Her husband worked for an asbestos company in Jacobs and had since been retrenched. Since her husband was unwell, he received a disability grant. She paid her bills with the money she earned at Challenge and with the grant that both of them received.

Nothando's daily routine included getting up at 4:30 am. She then had a bath and did the ironing of school uniforms and whatever clothes she decided to wear. She also ironed a set of clothes for her husband. She made lunch for herself and the children. She also prepared something for her husband to eat. Once she had done that she woke the children up and got them ready for school and the crèche. She then prepared breakfast for everybody. Nothando left home around 6:30 and boarded the bus to work. If there was a problem with the bus then she used the taxi. Being a householder, she had many chores. When she got home she had to wash clothes, clean the house and prepare supper. She said she had no time to socialise with her neighbours. At the end of the day she was exhausted and just wanted to rest.

Nothando said that sometimes she got upset with her neighbours because they gossiped about her. They knew that she was hearing-impaired and they assumed that she could not hear them when they were speaking about her but they failed to realise that she could lip read. She had been without a hearing aid for many years therefore she had learnt to lip read very well. Nothando said she got troubled when other people gossiped because she did not like to talk too much.

HER SCHOOLING CAREER

Nothando began her schooling career at Thambo Primary in Kwa-Makutha. She enjoyed her stay at this school. When she completed her junior primary education she then attended Mkhumbi Senior Primary. She saw her hearing impairment as a problem and said that nobody understood her. She said nobody took the time to help her so that she could get her hearing aid. She said she was always misunderstood at school.

At the age of 15 years an educator realised that she might have a hearing problem. Her parents were called to school. The educators complained that they could not manage to teach her and said that she needed to go to a special school. They found a special school for her in Johannesburg. Her parents said that the school was too far away and she left school in grade 7.

She was unhappy about leaving school. Nothando did not attend any special school and had to stay at home. She had to then help with the household chores. She said her greatest difficulty at school was that she could not hear the educators. She felt that if somebody had taken the time to help her sort out her hearing impairment she would have been able to successfully complete her studies. Nothando said if she had a hearing aid she would have understood what the educators were saying. She cited passing from one grade to the next as the highlight of her schooling career.

After the school informed the parents that she may be hearing impaired they took her to the doctor. The diagnosis was that she was hearing-impaired but nothing was done to remedy the problem. She regretted that nothing was done to help her otherwise she would have loved to have continued with her studies and would have probably been in better employment. She said that probably the reason why her parents kept her at home could have been the stigma of having a disabled child and they did not make an attempt to help her.

EXPERIENCES AT CHALLENGE

When Nothando left school she was at home for many years. Then in 2001 she got married and moved to Umlazi. Here she befriended Thandi who told her about Challenge. Nothando was not sure how Thandi came to know about Challenge but she was also a service user at Challenge. Thandi made enquiries for Nothando and in 2002 she started work at Challenge. Thandi had since left Challenge and she did not keep in contact with her because she was no longer living in Umlazi.

Working at Challenge was her first full time employment. Nothando enjoyed working at Challenge and she had made some friends. She said she did not like to talk too much therefore she had a few selected friends. Not everybody understood her. She was aware that even people at work talked about her because she could lip read what they were saying. She kept to herself and people could not accept her for what she was. Nothando felt that she could not contribute fully to a conversation because she might not have heard everything that was said therefore she felt the less she said the better. She felt that it was better to associate with people her own age or even those older than her because they had similar interests. Nothando said the younger people enjoyed going to central Durban to while away time since they did not have many responsibilities whereas she had to go home to complete her household chores.

Nothando did not receive any training for the work that she was presently doing at Challenge. She was involved in counting tissues and stacking them up so that they could be packed into boxes by another service user. She also counted envelopes for Christmas and birthday cards. Nothando mentioned that it was easy to learn these tasks. Her supervisor showed her how to undertake these tasks. It did not take her long to learn. After a few demonstrations by the supervisor Nothando was asked to perform the task herself. Through trial and error she was able to count and stack the tissues. She first counted ten tissues and then counted another ten and stacked them up together. The supervisor often checked whether they were doing the right thing. According to Nothando they did not make mistakes often. Even when she made mistakes her supervisor politely corrected her and was not harsh towards her. Her salary for the contract work ranged between R300, 00 to R500, 00 per fortnight. She

was happy that her supervisor was very patient with her and was able to use Sign Language. Since she was soft spoken she did not like other people to scream at her. Even at home she preferred members of her family speaking softly.

While Nothando participated in dance lessons she did not represent the club in the line dancing competition. She felt that her impairment had restricted her in listening to the beat of the music. Therefore she did not feel confident dancing. She merely performed the dance steps by following others. Although nobody jeered her when she did not perform the steps correctly, she was very self conscious and shy. She got embarrassed when she did the wrong movements.

Nothando also participated in ABET classes. She was learning to write her name in her English class. She said that she was proud of her achievements. They were also learning recognition of breakthrough words and involved in discussion of pictures. They were shown a picture and they had to explain what they saw in the picture. This promoted oral communication. In Maths they were learning simple computations and were given simple transactions involving money to perform.

Besides being involved in contract work, Nothando also learnt the skill of making jewellery using beads. Prior to coming to Challenge Nothando was not involved in jewellery making. She had seen other people do it but, due to her limited financial resources, she never bothered to learn the skill. Whilst at Challenge Susan took her to Ningizimu, a special school, to learn bead-making. Nirvana, who was an occupational therapist at Ningizimu, taught her the skill. Learning the skill from an occupational therapist made learning easier. Nothando said Nirvana was informed that she was hearing-impaired. Therefore, whenever Nirvana gave an instruction, she made sure that she was facing Nothando and speaking. Since Nothando could lip read, she was able to follow instructions.

The first thing that Nothando learnt was the different things that one required when making jewellery. She was able to name the consumables that one used like needle, beads; clasps, hooks; thread and she mentioned that one could not use ordinary thread to make jewellery. She said the reason why one couldn't use ordinary thread

was that it was too weak and might break while one was busy threading beads. A special thread was used in the art of jewellery making because it was more durable.

According to Nothando once she was able to identify the various items that she was going to use Nirvana then showed them how to make an AIDS badge. Initially it seemed difficult but Nirvana demonstrated step by step how it was done. When she was unable to get it right the first time around, Nirvana repeated the instructions and told them how many of each colour they would require for each row. She would count the number she required for each row and set them aside. Then she would thread the needle and begin her badge. By practising on her own she was able to get it right. She learnt by doing it herself. Nothando said it took her approximately one week to learn the skill.

She was also able to make other items of jewellery like necklaces and earrings. Susan also taught them to incorporate different designs when making jewellery. Nothando proudly showed me samples of jewellery that she made. This was the first time I saw her smile when she made eye contact with me. Nothando said that, although she was able to make different patterns, she was too lazy. Should she decide to sell jewellery to the public she would not be able to do it on her own. Nothando was quite insistent that she would need somebody to help her.

Although Nothando enjoyed working at Challenge, she wouldn't mind being employed elsewhere provided she was paid a better salary and her employer accepted her the way she was. Nothando felt that employers in the open labour market were hesitant to employ people that were disabled in some way. She was of the opinion that able-bodied people had a better chance of being employed.

INTRODUCTION

Nelisiwe was the last service user that I interviewed at the protected workshop in the Durban South region. The first time that I met her was in the craft room. When I was introduced to her she had a very sad expression on her face. We greeted each other but she did not smile. However, she was polite. She gave me the impression that she was someone who had lots of problems. Nelisiwe was interviewed on separate occasions in October 2009. Amanda sat in as interpreter and all questions posed were translated into IsiZulu. Nelisiwe responded in IsiZulu. She was very soft spoken. Throughout the interview she had her head bowed. She did not make eye contact with me. My first interview with Nelisiwe lasted about 45 minutes and the second approximately 30 minutes. The main focus of the first interview was on her family, her schooling, her daily routine. The second interview entailed some probing of themes from the first interview and also covered her experiences at Challenge and her skills training. The only time I saw her smile was at the end of the second interview when I gave her a gift and she hugged me to show her appreciation.

EARLY LIFE AND FAMILY

Nelisiwe was 24 years old. She was approximately 1, 65 meters tall. She lived in Umlazi with her four siblings. She had one brother and three sisters. Her sisters were younger than her. Her brother was older and he worked at MTN. Besides Nelisiwe her brother was the only one who was employed. Her sisters were still at school. Nelisiwe informed us that she was able to read the IsiZulu newspaper.

Nelisiwe had a very sad life. She had a morose look on her face. She had to take care of her siblings. Her parents were divorced. Her dad subsequently died and her mum lived on her own. She could not live with her mum because her mum was an alcoholic. Her mum used to steal their belongings and sell it just to buy alcohol. She and her mum constantly fought because she felt her mum was very irresponsible. The situation became unbearable and she left home. She went to live with her paternal grandmother. She had to take her siblings with her because her mum did

not care for them. In fact her mother neglected them and did not bother about whether they had food. Nelisiwe felt sorry for her younger siblings because they were very unkempt. Her granny had since passed on. Her mum did not keep in contact with her. Her mum had tenants in her home and, in order to feed her habit, she stole their belongings and sold them. Nelisiwe said that she was embarrassed by her mother's behaviour and felt that the best thing she did was to move out.

When she spoke about her paternal grandmother one could see the rare glint in her eye. She said she loved her grandmother dearly and sorely missed her. Her grandmother was a mother figure to her and displayed immense love for her which she did not receive from her mother. Nelisiwe said her grandmother was her role model rather than her mother. Her grandmother was very protective of her. She taught her about life and always gave good advice. Nelisiwe cited her grandmother's death as the saddest moment in her life. She said that if her grandmother was alive she would not have been saddled with so many responsibilities.

She also missed her grandmother's advice on how to handle her ex-boyfriend, Goodman. Goodman lives in Lamontville and was employed as a caretaker. He was extremely possessive and did not allow her to go anywhere. Sometimes he was violent towards her. Since he had paid the *lobola*, he thought he owned her. He used to take her disability grant and demand things from her. She had not returned the *lobola* although they broke up. She said her ex-boyfriend thought that she would come back to him.

Since she was the oldest female at home she had to ensure that the meals were cooked and clothes were washed. Sometimes her younger sister helped to cook but Nelisiwe had to clean the house before she left home. Nelisiwe woke up at 4:30 everyday to do her household chores, sorted out the breakfast and prepared everybody's lunch. She generally ironed the school uniforms the night before. She had to ensure that they had sufficient groceries to prepare meals for the week. Although her brother paid most of the bills, Nelisiwe contributed towards the electricity and groceries.

Nelisiwe mentioned that she would like to change her home circumstances. Her morose look can be attributed to the many roles she had to play. She was a caregiver, daughter, breadwinner and worker. At her age fulfilling these roles was not easy since she did not always have the resources to ensure they were carried out to the best of her ability. Nelisiwe said she came from a poor home and sometimes they were in need of food. She had many mouths to feed and it was not always easy to provide since the cost of living was very high. She would also like to renovate the house to make it better looking. With regard to her personal life she would like to have just one boyfriend who would take care of her. Her one wish was that someday she would be able to learn the skill of carpentry. She knew of some carpenters that worked in Jacobs and earned a good salary.

HER SCHOOLING CAREER

Nelisiwe first attended Mbonini Primary in Umlazi. She was uncertain whether she spent six or seven years there. She had problems coping at school so the educator referred her to psychological services. She was subsequently tested by a psychologist. Nelisiwe was diagnosed as being a slow learner. She was then referred to Khulangelwazi in Woodlands which was a remedial school. She was at Khulangelwazi from 1995-1999. Although Nelisiwe enjoyed her stay at this school, she said the educators showed no interest in the learners. According to her, the educators “spoke their own stories” and the learners were left to their own devices. They spent most of the school day putting their heads on the desk and sleeping. She said “the teachers didn’t care for us.” Her neighbours made cruel remarks to the effect that she was only attending a special school so that she could collect a disability grant. Fortunately her neighbours have moved to Pietermaritzburg so they are no longer there to taunt her.

One of the difficulties that she had to contend with while at school was her epileptic attacks. She was always afraid of getting these attacks because she would get it at any time and sometimes when she fell she injured herself. She was always afraid that other children might have been laughing at her. Nelisiwe did not like people making a noise and she would sit alone in a quiet place. She said her epileptic

attacks were more controlled with medication. She did not get these attacks as often as she used to.

She left school due to problems at home. From 1999-2002 she was at home. In 2002 her grandmother sought admission for her at Ningizimu which was a special school. She remained at Ningizimu until 2005. At Ningizimu she learnt art and crafts. Learning to weave baskets was part of their art and craft activities. She said she had only a few friends at school. Since she was an introvert it was not easy making friends. However, she still kept in contact with her friend Nobahle from Ningizimu. Nobahle was working in the kitchen at Ningizimu.

The only exciting incident of her schooling career that she could remember was when some staff members of ABSA Bank visited Ningizimu School. They visited their school as part of their community outreach programme. They spoke to them about the value of saving and the different accounts they could open. Nelisiwe clearly remembered singing for the guests and receiving a T-shirt at the end of talk. The talk motivated her to open up a savings account and she diligently saved R150, 00 a month. She normally withdrew a part of it during the festive period to purchase meat and a few other luxuries that they normally were not able to afford during the course of the year.

NELISIWE'S EXPERIENCES AT CHALLENGE

Nelisiwe heard about Challenge from her friend Nobahle from Ningizimu. She then made enquiries and started work at Challenge in 2008. She worked here for a few months and looked for employment in the open labour market. She found employment at a Wimpy outlet. Unfortunately the outlet closed down and she came back to Challenge in 2009.

She enjoyed working at Challenge and was involved mainly in contract work. Working at Challenge helped her to shift her focus away from her home circumstances. She was also happy being at Challenge because she had found a new boyfriend and unlike her ex-boyfriend he treated her well. She was involved in gluing tissue boxes and sticking velcro on envelopes. These envelopes were used in

hospitals and courts. Amanda informed me that the Government Services outsourced this task to a company called Silveray and they in turn outsourced it to Challenge. Nelisiwe enjoyed sticking velcro on envelopes and earned between R200, 00 to R300, 00 per forth-night depending on how many units she had completed for the month.

Nelisiwe said that, although she did not receive any prior training, it was easy learning the tasks that she was undertaking at Challenge. Her supervisor taught her what to do. After a few demonstrations she was able to do the tasks herself. Initially her supervisor was there to check that she was doing the task correctly. She said only by doing it yourself would you be able to know whether you could do it or not. Nelisiwe said that her supervisor was very patient and understood that she had a problem and whenever she made a mistake the supervisor corrected her without making a noise.

Besides doing contract work Nelisiwe was also learning dancing. Although she was shy, she participated in the lessons. She learnt line dancing and belonged to the B&R Dance Academy. She was not representing her club in the line dancing competition because she had a family wedding to attend. Her cousin was getting married on the same day. In fact she seemed relieved that she was not participating because she said she was shy to dance in public. She was also shy to give me a demonstration of what dance moves she was capable of performing.

Nelisiwe attended ABET classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She was au fait with IsiZulu and enjoyed the language. She was able to respond to questions in class. She was not afraid to make mistakes because the educator did not scold them. They were treated like adults who had problems. Nelisiwe said some of them in class learnt faster than others but they did not jeer each other. She was also learning English and Maths.

For the first time she was learning English. She had learnt the letters of the alphabet and was able to write her name. She said they learnt a lot through repetition. They were also not afraid to ask questions if they did not understand anything. The educator was patient and ever willing to repeat herself. The educator only moved

onto something new if they understood what was being taught. The educator had taught them the days of the week and months of the year. Nelisiwe said that if her previous educators cared about them and taught them she would have known these things by know. She said probably the educators at her remedial school felt the learners did not have a future therefore they did not bother to teach them anything. Nelisiwe felt that once she was able to speak and write English the chances of her getting a job in the open labour market would be better. The counting that she had learnt in her maths lessons helped her in performing her contract work. She was also able to count tissues and stack them in piles of twenty.

While she was at Ningizimu she learnt to make tray cloths and used beads to decorate the edges. When she arrived at Challenge and she was not busy with contract work, she learnt the skill of bead-making. She first learnt the skill from Nirvana who was an occupational therapist. Thereafter Susan, the supervisor, taught her the skill and how to make more complicated patterns. She said at first it was difficult because it was something new to her but gradually it became easier since they were being taught step by step how it should be done. Nelisiwe also had to know how many beads of different colours were needed. The first things that she learnt to make were earrings. Thereafter she made a necklace. Nelisiwe learnt the skill through a lot of demonstration. By practising to make items of jewellery herself, she was able to do it. She said she made a lot of mistakes but was able to do a better job now. She admitted that she was unable to make intricate patterns as she needed somebody to teach her. Nelisiwe could not see herself making jewellery using beads as a full time occupation. If she did decide to sell jewellery to the public, she would need somebody to help her as she felt that it would be impossible for her to do it own her own.

Nelisiwe said that, when people from the neighbourhood heard that she worked at Challenge, they laughed at her. They were very cruel towards her. However, her family was happy that she was employed at Challenge because they knew that she needed the money and finding a job elsewhere was difficult.

NELISIWE'S EXPERIENCES AT WIMPY

Regarding employment in the open labour market, Nelisiwe sought employment at a Wimpy outlet in 2008. Nelisiwe worked here for eight months. She heard about the vacancy from a friend and decided to apply for the job. Nelisiwe decided to leave Challenge because she was in search of better prospects. Nelisiwe got the job because she knew the manager through a friend of hers. She worked in the kitchen washing dishes. She did not come into contact with customers because she was unable to speak English. The fact that she was not literate in English resulted in other African colleagues at Wimpy making fun of her. They couldn't understand that she had a problem. She hoped now that she was attending ABET classes she would not experience this problem. When people made fun of her she cried but she had to stay on because she needed the money. When her neighbours found out that she worked at Wimpy they remarked that she was a slow learner and questioned how she could be employed at Wimpy. Nelisiwe was upset by their remarks but she tried to ignore them.

Unfortunately, the outlet closed down because it was not very profitable. She tried finding another job but to no avail and then she decided to come back to Challenge. She would love finding employment in the open labour market providing it paid well but she said business people were not very willing to employ somebody that had attended a special or remedial school. For the moment she was happy being at Challenge.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Since data analysis is about making sense of the data collected, I used content analysis to analyse the data. The data that I collected was looked at in conjunction with the observation notes. I used a set of codes to ascribe to the data that I collected. The list of codes generated was based on the data collected. The codes were then used to categorise the data into themes. Some of the codes were generated from the key research questions as well as from the conceptual framework. Other codes like stigma, work opportunities and confidence which emerged from the data were also generated as well. These codes have been used as sub-headings in the discussion of findings. This chapter highlights and examines the key themes that emerged from the interviews and observation of the six service users from the protected workshops who participated in the research study. It must be borne in mind that these findings pertain only to those participants that I interviewed and may not be applicable to all people with intellectual disabilities employed at protected workshops. These themes were then looked at in conjunction with the key research questions in relation to the conceptual framework. The key research questions were:

- ❖ What are the experiences of the mildly intellectually disabled adults at protected workshops with regard to skills training?
- ❖ What are their perceptions of skills training at these workshops?

There were other themes that emerged besides the ones that were linked to the key research questions which will also be discussed.

5.1 What are the experiences of the mildly intellectually disabled adults at protected workshops with regard to skills training?

Service users at protected workshops are engaged in labour intensive, unskilled repetitive work such as gluing of boxes, sticking velcro on envelopes, sticking labels on bottles, assembling ear-plugs and co-traps, counting tissues and envelopes as

well as other contract work. Although this is regarded as unskilled work, service users are taught by their supervisors how to perform these tasks. They do not receive any prior training before being employed at protected workshops. However, my main focus was on the skills training they received in block-making and bead-making at these protected workshops.

Block-making and bead-making were two skills taught at protected workshops managed by Durban and Coastal Mental Health Society. Approximately four to six service users are trained in block-making over a three month period and there is no specific criteria in selecting the service users except that they must be “able-bodied” according to the supervisor, and be able to travel to the site where the skills training is taking place. All consumables required for block-making are provided by the workshop and service users do not pay a fee to learn this skill. The supervisor is instrumental in teaching this skill to the service users. The aim of this project is to curb unemployment by addressing the skills shortage in South Africa.

Block-making is an activity involving manual labour. Because the service users transport the consumables from the workshop to the spot where the blocks were being made, they need to have the physical capability to perform this activity. There is no theoretical component to learning this skill and the supervisor is motivating for certificates to be issued as he thinks this would stand service users in better stead to get a job. Of the approximately 75 service users that have been trained in the past few years, the supervisor knew of only one that was employed in the open labour market. The others continued working at Challenge. This challenges the views of Powers (2008), views who conducted research in Geneva, that those who have acquired marketable skills have been able to earn a living and make a contribution to the world of work. The same cannot be said about the service users that I interviewed because, although they acquired skills, they are unable to find employment in the open labour market. Job availability and awareness of employers, which Schneider (2006) mentioned were facilitators to finding work; seem to be lacking in the South African context.

Bead-making is taught at the Durban South protected workshop. This protected workshop relies on sponsorships from companies for the consumables that are

required in bead-making. The service users are either taught by an occupational therapist, other service users or the supervisors. Service users have learnt to make AIDS badges, earrings and neck-chains. They have not been taught to make bracelets as yet. This skill is taught only when the service users do not have other contract work. Service users do not receive a certificate once they have acquired the skill. There is no time frame in terms of learning this skill. Service users have not sold any of the items of jewellery that they have made as yet as would-be customers want a full set of products-that is earrings, neck-chain and a bracelet. Those that have learnt bead-work previously found the skill easier to learn.

In terms of teaching the skills the service providers are *au fait* with the procedures of how to teach mildly intellectually disabled people. Service users learn skills either through demonstration, learning by doing or through trial and error. According to the service users they are taught through “practical demonstration” ; “in a language we understand” , “a lot of demonstration is done” ; “a lot of repetition” ; “one step at a time” ; “learn by doing it ourselves” ; “simple instructions are given” therefore some service users did not experience difficulty learning these skills as these were some of their responses “nope it is easy to do” , “it was easy to learn” . “By practising on my own I was able to get it right.” Thus, since many of them learnt these skills by actually doing the component tasks by themselves one can refer to this as experiential learning.

The manner in which the service users were taught is in keeping with the way people with intellectual disabilities learn skills as it was highlighted by Mental Help.net (2009). It states that when tasks are taught to people with intellectual disabilities these tasks must be broken down into small parts and taught sequentially; the learning must be hands-on and visual rather than merely lecturing and feedback on things learnt must be immediate. At the protected workshops skills were also taught in the same way whereby the service users were introduced to it in small steps systematically. When one skill was mastered then the next skill was introduced. According to Cape Mental Health (2007, p.1) “People with intellectual disability may be slower in learning, but have the potential to become proficient in tasks not requiring major intellectual skills.”

Learning among the disabled is also highlighted by JobAccess, an Australian Government initiative (2009, p.2) where it is mentioned that people with an intellectual disability are capable of learning; however their learning is highly dependent on the competence and quality of instruction. The person's learning will often take longer and require systematic teaching methods and extra help. Some skills or knowledge may be too demanding or complex, or require constant reinforcement. Thus one service user's response to learning the skill of bead-making was "at first it was difficult because it was something new but it became easier because we were taught step by step." This affirms my view that mildly intellectually disabled people are capable of learning most skills provided the skills are taught sequentially, step by step and there must be a lot of demonstration and hands-on learning. However, their learning will take longer.

None of the service users that I interviewed pursued the hobby of jewellery making although they had acquired the skill. Neither have they made items of jewellery for themselves. Some of the responses for not doing so were "I don't have money to buy beads" and "I don't know where to buy the beads...somebody told me where to get it but I forgot the name." The inability to pursue the skill of bead-making challenges my view about the intellectually disabled has the ability to become self-determined individuals. Self-determination is when a person takes charge of his life and makes decisions regarding his life. Although the service users have become empowered by acquiring the skill, they are not motivated sufficiently to do something with the skill. Powers, Sowers, Turner, Nesbitt, Knowles & Ellison (1996, p.292 as cited in Wehmeyer and Bolding, 2001) mention that the learned helplessness is reinforced by environmental factors that encourage passivity. According to Powers (1996), other factors such as overprotection, academic, economic and social deprivation, cause learned helplessness. Wehmeyer and Bolding (2001) believe that, by addressing issues pertaining to environment and opportunity, and if adequate support and accommodations are provided, people with intellectual disabilities can enhance their self-determination and assume greater control of their lives.

The perception of the supervisor who taught block-making was that the service users needed constant supervision whilst learning the skill. He mentioned that he had to

constantly check on the service users to ensure they were placing the moulds properly because failure to do so would result in the blocks being rejected. Constant supervision was also necessary when cleaning the block-making equipment. If the service users were left unsupervised the machines were not properly cleaned as a lot of the cement mix got left behind. The service users cannot be left unsupervised for long periods of time as they resort to name calling and get into fights. Therefore the supervisor has to be on hand to sort out such issues. The supervisor's perception is that the service users are dependent on them to keep them out of trouble and therefore incapable of autonomy. Part of the 'ideology' of protected workshops whereby the clients need to be protected from the outside world and from themselves is in keeping with a statement by Molamu (2008, p.13) that:

The notion exists in most workshops- The primary motivation of the majority of management in the workshops appeared to be "occupying, protecting, giving some purpose to and social integration of disabled people.

5.2 What are their perceptions of skills training at these workshops?

The service users were in favour of skills training. Some of the responses were "it is fun...joy" , "I love learning new things". They saw skills training as improving their chances of seeking employment in the open labour market. They also enjoyed the manner in which it was taught. The service users were happy to learn new skills. There was no pressure for them to learn the skill within a time frame especially with regard to bead-making. They learnt at their own pace and instructions were given to them in a simple, easy- to- understand language. Some learnt through trial and error and were not afraid to make mistakes. When they made mistakes they were not jeered at and the supervisors were patient with them. There were no rewards for learning the skill quickly therefore the service users that were slower at learning the skill were not reprimanded or pressurised. A variety of teaching techniques were used to suit the different service users. Those that did bead work as part of their art and craft lessons at school found learning the skill of bead-making much easier.

All the service users interviewed preferred being employed at Challenge to being employed elsewhere. They found contract work interesting. They had made many friends and were among people who were experiencing the same problems as them

and shared similar interests. They understood each other and were not subjected to insults. Some felt leaving the protected workshop was not an option as one remarked “I like to work at Challenge...work here for many more years until retirement.” The service user went on further to say “I enjoy it here...I love the staff, supervisor, friends and everybody.” The supervisors understood that the service users were different to them and were very patient with them. The supervisors often checked on the service users to ensure that they performed the tasks as instructed. When they made mistakes the supervisors corrected them politely without being harsh. The service users also enjoyed the parties hosted by Challenge and the outings arranged by them. For some this was the only time they went out to places of interest.

Even their families are happy that they are employed at Challenge. As one service user mentioned, her family is protective of her and would not like her to find employment elsewhere. Another service user remarked that her family is happy that she is employed at Challenge as she is occupied otherwise her neighbours would take advantage of her. “My family is not putting any pressure on me to find another job as they are happy I am at Challenge” and “working at Challenge helps me not to think about my problems at home” were the other responses on this issue. One service user said that, although she enjoyed working at Challenge, she would only leave if she was able to find a better paying job and if her employer accepted her the way she is since she had many financial commitments.

The response from service users indicated that there was mixed reaction from other people when they found out that they work at Challenge. One response was “you are so lucky that although you got the disability, you got the opportunity to do something...you work at Challenge.” Other responses were “when people from the neighbourhood hear I work at Challenge they laugh at me” ; “people from the neighbourhood don’t know I work at Challenge” ; “I say to them I am in Challenge...they say only mad people are there.”

At Challenge the service users are fortunate in that they attended ABET classes twice a week. The service users were compelled to attend all three learning areas, namely Maths, English and IsiZulu. From the service users’ responses, they were immensely enjoying these classes. For the first time many of them were learning to

write their names and read in English and hoped to be proficient enough to one day communicate orally and in writing in this language. Learning English had also helped them in understanding instructions given to them by their supervisors whereas maths helped improve their counting skills. A few service users viewed proficiency in English as improving their employment opportunities in the open labour market. Having basic education is one of the core skills needed when seeking employment as Korpinen (2006) identified basic education, technical skills and core skills as the most important skills that are important for employment at a Tripartite Workshop held in Pretoria.

The service users enjoyed these classes because the educators that conducted these classes were patient with them and were willing to repeat things taught if they did not understand it. They did not move onto something new if the service users did not understand what was presently taught. The service users were at liberty to ask questions to verify things that they were not sure of. They were also not afraid to make mistakes as the educators did not chide them. One responded by saying “we are treated like adults who have problems.” The benefits of attending these classes were immense as they were learning to do simple computations, how to use the ATM and communicate with their colleagues amongst others. Basically the ABET classes had, in their view, improved their verbal and computational skills.

5.3 OTHER THEMES THAT EMERGED

5.3.1 STIGMA

All the service users expressed that they were exposed to some form of negative stereotyping and labelling. They felt that members of the community treated them differently because they are intellectually disabled people. The response of family members was more positive compared to that of the greater community. Whilst most family members understood their children or siblings, members of the community did not share the same compassion. One service user responded by saying “I got families that understand me...my aunty understands me...everybody knows me.” However her response about the reaction of the community towards her was:

They say I am mad... I am in a special school... I say to them I am in Challenge... they say only mad people...I am like normal...I have a problem that they don't understand.

The hearing-impaired service user also holds the view that some family members are more sympathetic as her husband understands her disability and has accepted her the way she is and has even over the years learnt Sign Language. She regrets her parents attitude in not getting a hearing aid for her as they probably felt there was a stigma in having a disabled child therefore she was forced to stay at home. She felt that, if she had had a hearing aid, she would have been able to pursue her studies and found better employment. However, her neighbours gossip about her but they do not realise that, although she is hearing-impaired, she can lip read.

Another was aggrieved by the cruel comments made by members of the public when she was dressed in school uniform and they would jeer her and refer to her as being mad. She understood what they said as they spoke in IsiZulu. She felt that people should look at her as a person and not somebody with a disability. Yet another service user endured cruel remarks from her neighbours when they remarked that she was only attending a special school so that she could collect a disability grant. She said that even the educators at the special school she attended showed no interest in them as "they spoke their own stories" and told the learners to put their heads on the desk and sleep. She felt that these educators were of the opinion that learners at Special Schools did not have a future therefore they were ignored. This is indicative of educators labelling intellectually disabled learners as having no future therefore they found no need in educating them.

Whilst some service users were not treated differently, others were not as fortunate. Since some service users had a poor concept of money they reportedly fall prey to conniving business people. Even some food outlets were reported to take advantage of these intellectually disabled people and give them incorrect change. Stigma is also prevalent in the work place as one service user had to endure insults from colleagues because she was not able to speak English and they made fun of her. They did not understand that she had a problem.

Service users in the study are also of the opinion that employers discriminate against them. One responded by saying employers “wouldn’t understand me...wouldn’t take me...sometimes they laugh at me.” Another service user felt that, since she was at a special school and was not literate in English as yet, employers would be weary about employing her. Two service users remarked by saying that able-bodied people stand a better chance of being employed as employers are hesitant to employ disabled people who have attended Special or Remedial Schools.

Stigma acts as a negative social construct that impedes people with disabilities from participating in society. According to the social model of disability, stigma forms part of an attitudinal barrier to participation in the open labour market. Seirlis and Swartz (2006) mention that not only structural barriers but also attitudinal barriers exist to disabled people finding employment. This is in keeping with the view that people with intellectual disabilities hold. They perceive that employers would treat them differently. Therefore many of them are not willing to venture into the open labour market.

Stigma is viewed as part of the social aspect of the biopsychosocial model of disability. The negative attitude of the employers towards employing people with intellectual disabilities affects them psychologically and negatively influences their self esteem and confidence as they view themselves inferior to able-bodied people. They also have internalised perceptions about work such as incompetence in performing tasks.

Research conducted by Schneider(2006) who found that lack of jobs, lack of awareness from employers, lack of skills training, negative attitudes from employers who see workers as less productive, and costs incurred by providing reasonable accommodation and assistive devices were barriers to finding employment. Edmonds (2005) and Briggs (2005) who also conducted research found that the attitude of private sector employers was a barrier to finding employment as they perceive people with disabilities as economically weak and non-productive.

A service user was also subjected to negative comments from her neighbours when she was employed in the open labour market. They had labelled her a slow learner

and they wondered how someone like her could be employed in the open labour market. It is not only employers that label people with intellectual disabilities but members of the community do the same. They cannot envisage people with intellectual disabilities as successfully holding down a job and being in full time employment.

The service users were of the opinion that the attitude of customers would affect their chances of getting a job as one participant felt that they would not understand them and make fun of them. The stigma of employing disabled people is also echoed by a supervisor who mentioned that employers outsource contract work to protected workshops rather than employing them.

5.3.2 CONFIDENCE

The issue of confidence is another common thread that emerged during the interviews. During the interviews I found that many of the service users had their heads bowed and were shy to respond. They were generally soft-spoken and when they spoke of things that appealed to them they spoke in a hurried, excited tone. Hand gestures were used and their faces lit up when they spoke about familiar things. When the service users spoke about bead-making, they spoke with confidence about the process of threading beads and were proud to show off pieces of jewellery that they made.

I found that once the service users were used to a particular way of doing things a change in the routine brought about confusion. Any variation to the normal routine left them in a quandary. Once when the supervisor asked the service users to reduce the amount of stones normally used due to a shortage of cement mix the service users were confused and did not know what to do. When the service user that was trained in block-making was asked whether he would like to open his own business his reply was he would like to use the same kind of mould as he was used to it. He indicated that he might not be able to use another kind of mould for the blocks.

Although the service users have acquired the skill of bead-making, some are not confident enough to try out different patterns. They are able to replicate pieces of

jewellery that they made but some indicated that they would need other people to teach them new patterns as some may not possess the cognitive and creative abilities to do so. They are afraid to experiment and try out different things and some indicated they are just lazy. When asked whether they would be able to make jewellery and sell to the public, the general consensus was that they would not be able to do it on their own. Instead they would need somebody to help them. “It would be impossible for me to do it on my own” , “I would need somebody to help me” , “I need somebody to teach me other styles” , “I can’t do this as a full time job” are responses that indicate they lack confidence in themselves. In my view, if the intellectually disabled are able to find employment in the open labour market, it would boost their self-esteem and confidence.

Confidence can be viewed in terms of the psychological aspect of the biopsychosocial model of disability. The participants’ experiences and lack of success in seeking employment in the open labour market has negatively impacted on their confidence. They would feel worthwhile if they are successful in seeking employment because they would be making a contribution to society. There aren’t many work opportunities available for them in the open labour market. Whilst being employed at the protected workshops, the service users tend to display a sense of dependency and lack of autonomy.

Due to a lack of confidence, decision making is also a problem. Very often they cannot make important decisions without assistance. When a service user had to decide whether he wanted to continue with block-making or go back to doing contract work, he had difficulty arriving at a decision and asked the project manager for advice. Once again, the notion of dependency on the supervisors of protected workshops is evident. I am of the opinion that a lack of confidence will not lead them to becoming self-determined individuals.

5.3.3 TYPES OF INTELLIGENCES

Being mildly intellectually disabled, the service users in my research are involved in unskilled, labour intensive contract work at the protected workshops. According to DSM-1V, their IQ’s ranged from 50-55 to approximately 70. IQ’S tests a person’s

computational and verbal intelligence. Although my service users may not score highly on IQ tests, they do excel in another type of intelligence which, according to Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, is referred to as body-kinaesthetic intelligence. Body-kinaesthetic intelligence "entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. It is the ability to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. Howard Gardner sees mental and physical activity as related" (Smith, 2002, 2008, p.4). Although they do not perform well in linguistic and mathematical intelligence, their body-kinaesthetic intelligence of some service users seems to be highly developed since they excel in dancing. Our schooling system emphasises mathematical and linguistic intelligence to the detriment of other intelligences and people who have well developed body-kinaesthetic intelligence or any other intelligences are not considered gifted.

People with intellectual disabilities do possess well developed body-kinaesthetic intelligence which is revealed in their ability to excel in dancing. In terms of the biopsychosocial model this type of intelligence can be viewed in terms of the psychological aspect of the model. They may lack mathematical and linguistic intelligence but their achievements in other types of intelligences are evident.

Many of my service users belong to the B&R Dance Academy. Their lessons last an hour and it takes place on a Friday. In October they participated in a dance competition hosted by The South African Line Dance Association. Two of the service users had excelled in the competition and took top honours. Dancing is seen as a form of stimulation for them and even the supervisors noted that dancing had brought about a transformation in some of the service users. Those that were shy had no inhibitions while they performed their fancy footwork. Although reserved during the interview, some service users' faces lit up when the topic of dancing emerged and they were prepared to do a demonstration. While at school the service users also played sport, learnt to dance and sang in the choir. They participated in art, dance and choir singing competitions. One of the service users was also part of the dance troupe that represented her school in Cape Town in a dance competition. The troupe won a trophy for the school. Thus it is evident that people do possess other types of intelligences which can be developed. However, these types of intelligences are not tested when administering the normal IQ tests.

In terms of the biopsychosocial model of disability as a conceptual lens dancing is viewed in relation to the biological aspect of this model. Through this medium they were able to discover the ability of their bodies to move to the rhythm and beat of music. Dancing gives them an opportunity to interact and socialise with others. It enables them to be more integrated into society and allows greater inclusion. Even their families are able to recognise their talents and they are proud to perform in their presence. Possessing this ability of moving to the beat of music has boosted their self-esteem because they are aware that they have the capability of doing something worthwhile which they are proud of.

5.3.4 WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Many of the service users have never sought employment in the open labour market as they are quite content being employed at the protected workshops. A service user that attempted to seek employment experienced difficulty filling in an application form. She was unable to read and comprehend some questions and the other employees could not assist her with filling in the application form. She was told that it was against company policy to do so. This is in keeping with what Illeris (2006) stated that the intellectually disabled are part of a vulnerable category of people who are marginalised in society and in the labour market. They are unable to get employment because they lack competencies like the inability to read and comprehend English thus filling in application forms which may be a pre-requisite to being interviewed for a job poses a problem.

Employers are reluctant to provide opportunities for people with disabilities in the open labour market as Census 2001 indicates only 19% of people with disabilities in South Africa are employed. When the unemployment rate is high the able-bodied people are prepared to do unskilled work, as Illeris maintains that when unemployment is relatively high the better educated look for jobs that are below their level of qualifications. Thus the opportunities for intellectually disabled acquiring employment are reduced.

A service user that was successful in seeking employment had her services terminated because the food outlet closed down. Whilst being employed she was jeered by her colleagues because she was not fluent in English. Very often their comments left her in tears but she continued working because she needed the money. Once she was out of a job she sought employment once again at the protected workshop. Obtaining access to training and jobs is a struggle for many disabled people and many of them only achieve this through the help of families and the support of communities as was discussed at the Tripartite Workshop held in Pretoria, 2006.

5.4 SUMMARY

Like industries some protected workshops offer skills training to their service users. Those that have undergone skills training have enjoyed it and felt that it improved their chances of finding employment in the open labour market. With the exception of one service user, the rest that I interviewed have never ventured into the open labour market after having acquired these skills. The general consensus amongst these service users was that people without disabilities stood a better chance of being employed because employers are hesitant about employing people with disabilities. Most are quite content remaining at Challenge as it provides a shelter away from the harsh reality of the working world.

The conclusions reached in the study and the recommendations with regard to skills training at protected workshops and areas for further research will be presented in chapter six.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Due to the competitiveness and increasing demands of the workplace, there is a constant need for one to learn and expand one's skills. Acquiring marketable skills places one at an advantage in seeking employment. Powers (2008) and Schneider (2006) allude to the importance of skills acquisition in securing employment in the open labour market. Skills training heightens one's confidence and makes one a valuable asset to the labour market. To empower employees, most companies make provision for skills training and development. In South Africa legislation and policies like The Skills Development Act, 1998 (SDA) were passed in order to transform skills development in South Africa. This act was passed in order to empower and improve employment opportunities for the previously disadvantaged including disabled people. However, many companies are weary about providing skills training opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities as they do not perceive them as making a valuable contribution to the economy.

Although conclusions and recommendations with regard to areas for further research follow, it must be borne in mind that, since purposive sampling was done and this research was on a small scale, these conclusions and recommendations may not be applicable to other situations.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions arrived at in the study are:

6.2.1 Service Users

The service users are quite content being employed at protected workshops. Many of them are not prepared to seek employment elsewhere. The supervisors are patient with them and treat them with respect. They find the supervisors approachable and if they do not understand anything they are not afraid to ask them. The service users display good work habits in that they are punctual, their attendance is good, they are

committed to their work and they are respectful. Their sense of commitment is evident in that during the recent bus strike they used alternate means of transport to get to work. They value the opinion of the supervisors greatly. They don't seem to possess long term goals.

6.2.2 Skills training at protected workshops

Judging from the responses of the service users that I interviewed I found that, although they received skills training in block-making and bead-making, none of them put their skills to use in finding employment in the open labour market. The service users were apprehensive to venture into the open labour market. With regard to bead-making, the supervisors or other service providers should teach the service users to make bracelets as this was the only item of jewellery they had not learnt to make. When they learn to make this item of jewellery they would be able to make the full set of products and this could then be sold to the general public. At the moment the skills they have acquired are not being put to use to earn extra income.

The consumables required for jewellery-making can be purchased by the workshops with the monies they earn doing contract work. The completed sets can then be sold to the public by advertising their wares and taking orders as there is a big demand for costume jewellery.

6.2.3 Employment opportunities

The service users are quite happy being employed at Challenge and they are not under any pressure to find employment in the open labour market. Of the two that attempted to seek employment in the open labour market, only one was successful in securing employment for a short period of time. The service users view the negative attitude of the employers as a barrier to them finding employment. This reaffirms the findings of Edmonds (2005), Briggs (2005) and Seirlis and Swartz (2006) with regard to attitudinal barriers that prevent disabled people finding employment. The service users that I interviewed have not made concerted efforts to seek employment. Without making an attempt they assume that their chances of finding employment are very limited.

It must also be borne in mind that not all skills training will lead to employment in the open labour market. As in the case of my participants there may not be available opportunities for bead-making and block-making. Therefore skills training need to be done in areas where there is a niche market.

6.2.4 Confidence

I found that the service users I interviewed lacked confidence in most instances. This lack of confidence prevents them from being self-determined individuals. Although they have acquired skills in bead-making, they are not confident enough to start making their own jewellery for resale purposes or even for themselves. They are not putting this skill to use. In some instances their lack of confidence in their ability is preventing them from trying out new patterns or styles. Others may lack the creative ability to do so. Their lack of confidence in their ability is also evident when they indicated that they would not be able to make jewellery for resale purposes on their own as they would need other people to assist. None of them have even pursued this skill as a hobby. Although some are able to afford the consumables required for bead-making they made no effort in purchasing these items. Transport is also not a problem as they are able to travel to central Durban using public transport therefore, if they really wanted to purchase these consumables, they could have. Their lack of autonomy and their dependency on the workshop supervisors seem quite evident.

6.2.5 Protected Workshops

There are nine protected workshops run by the Durban and Coastal Mental Health Society. They provide employment for people with psychiatric illnesses and intellectual disabilities. Service users are engaged in contract work and at certain workshops they learn skills like bead-making and block-making. These skills are not taught at all workshops. Service users enjoy being employed at these workshops. Rather than the open labour market these workshops are seen as alternate places of employment. The service users are shielded from the harsh realities like

competitiveness, deadlines and pressures of the open labour market. Work at protected workshops is seen as an occupation rather than as a vocation.

6.2.6 Workshop Supervisors

The workshop supervisors are friendly, helpful and patient. Most of them have been employed at these protected workshops for many years. They obviously enjoy what they are doing and have over the years realised that the service users are different to them. When teaching the service users they use a lot of demonstration, speak in a language that the service users understand and demonstrate to them step by step how an activity should be done. The supervisors have shown a lot of initiative in that they were able to arrange ABET and dance lessons for the service users. In many instances the supervisors have been responsible for teaching the service users skills.

The methods used in teaching these skills made it easy for the service users to grasp and understand. However, with regard to bead-making, the supervisors did not encourage the service users to pursue the skill and experiment with new patterns or to attempt to sell the completed items of jewellery. They need to make the service users aware that this skill could generate additional income for them as there is a niche-market for costume jewellery. Once the service users have made sufficient items of jewellery the supervisors could encourage them to advertise the products through the media. The supervisors see their role as being protective of the service users and perceive them to be dependent on them and as lacking autonomy.

6.2.7 Stigma

The respondents in this study reported experiences of stigma and discrimination. People through their ignorance still regard people with intellectual disabilities as belonging in the same category as those afflicted with mental illnesses. They do not realise that these people are capable of leading independent lives. I also found that some respondents in my study had an internalised stigma about themselves regarding their disability. Many of them believe that their employment opportunities in the labour market are limited and therefore are not prepared to apply for another job. Without attempting to seek employment they believe employers are not prepared to

employ them. This stigma could be the result of self-fulfilling prophecy and internalised oppression.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

The following recommendations are made based on the data collected and in conjunction with the literature reviewed:

6.3.1 PROVISION OF MARKETABLE SKILLS

While it is important for people to undergo skills training, it is more important for them to acquire marketable skills. This holds true more so for people with intellectual disabilities as it would place them at an advantage in the open labour market since they would have to compete with able-bodied counterparts for jobs. In many instances people with intellectual disabilities will be able to trade their marketable skills for an income. It must also be borne in mind that not all intellectually disabled people will be able to seek employment in the open labour market, as Molamu (2008) mentioned. A task team needs to be set up by the Government to investigate skills that are considered marketable as this will depend on supply and demand. Powers (2008) states that, although skills acquisition increases productivity, one must also equip the disabled with skills that will enable them to secure formal sector jobs or increase their income-generating capacity in the informal sector. It would be of little benefit to provide skills training no matter how good in sectors where there are no employment opportunities.

Once these skills have been identified, then intellectually disabled people should be trained in these skills. To some extent they will be able to fill the void with regard to skills shortage as the Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities (Dube, 2005) mentions that, when people with disabilities are given opportunities and provided with reasonable accommodation, they can contribute valuable skills and abilities to every workplace as well as contribute to the economy of any society

6.3.2 PROTECTED WORKSHOPS

Protected workshop supervisors need to change their attitude in terms of how work is perceived. Instead of treating work as an occupation it must be treated as a vocation. Supervisors need to empower the service users on how to generate an income using the skills they have acquired. By not teaching the service users how to make certain items of jewellery, the notion of dependence is perpetuated. Those that have learnt the skill of bead-making can make items of jewellery for resale purposes. Besides using beads to make jewellery service users can be exposed to other uses of beads. Beads can be used on shoes, tray cloths, crockery, linen and items of clothing, amongst other things. Service users should be engaged in activities such as marketing the items they have made to obviate the problem of dependency. They can look at avenues where these products can be sold. The service providers could help purchase the consumables required for bead-making using the money the service users earned doing contract work. They must strive towards making service users more independent and autonomous rather than perpetuate the notion of dependence. The confidence and self-esteem of the service users will be boosted if they become independent individuals.

6.3.3 SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Provision of supported employment for people with intellectual disabilities is another suggested area for further research. Protected workshops have already embarked on a partnership with companies to place suitably qualified people in the open labour market and provided supportive services. However, according to the 2007/8 annual review report of protected workshops, of the 698 service users employed by protected workshops in 2007/2008, only 19 service users were placed in supportive employment in factories, and, of these 19, only three have been successful in gaining permanent employment (Durban and Coastal Mental Health Annual Review, 2007/2008). In my opinion more needs to be done to place service users in supportive employment.

6.3.4 SELF-INITIATED PROJECTS AND MICRO-ENTERPRISES

Since people with disabilities are reluctant to find employment in the open labour market, the development of micro-enterprises and entrepreneurship projects are seen as alternative strategies for employment of disabled people. These projects are run by disabled people, as mentioned by Priestly (2003). Walls, Dowler, Cordingly, Orslene and Greer (2001 as cited in Priestly, 2003) state that these initiatives have enabled disabled people not only to achieve success in terms of income generation but also in terms of exercising control over their management of workloads and workplace environments.

The Therapeutic Mushroom growing project in India and, closer to home, the recycling and waste management project run by The Oasis Association based in Cape Town, are two success stories of intellectually disabled people being able to attain personal satisfaction and growth. It has also enabled people with disabilities to maintain their dignity of work opportunity and, by interacting with business supporters; it has helped change their attitude and break down barriers of stereotyping. Finding a niche-market for products and thereafter establishing self-initiated projects or micro-enterprises to gainfully employ intellectually disabled people is another area for further research.

6.4 SUMMARY

The service users that I interviewed were exposed to skills training in bead and block-making. They thoroughly enjoyed the skills training and the way in which it was taught. They learnt through experiential learning and were taught step by step how to perform these skills. Their learning was very much hand-on. The instructors engaged in a lot of repetition and only moved onto the next step if the previous steps were understood. The manner in which these skills were taught was easy for the service users to grasp. Those that were exposed to the skill before found it easier to learn bead-making.

Although the service users have acquired the skill of bead-making, they are not confident enough to experiment with new patterns. However, they are able to

replicate patterns taught to them easily. They are not even prepared to make jewellery for resale purposes in order to generate an income. The service users that I interviewed see skills training as a means of improving their employment opportunities but many have not made an attempt to seek employment in the open labour market. They prefer being employed at the protected workshops and seem to lack autonomy. Many find it difficult making decisions regarding their lives and are dependent on their supervisors. They don't seem to possess self-determination in wanting to bring about a change in their lives. However, learning the skill has boosted their self confidence although they are not employed in the open labour market. Obtaining this sense of self worth contributes to the social and relational dimensions of the conceptual framework of the biopsychosocial model of disabilities.

Skills training have not impacted too much in changing the routine of their lives at the workshop. However, it has exposed these service users to know that they can do more with a little effort and a lot of patience by the service providers.

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28 October 2009

Mrs M Singh
Faculty of Adult and Higher Education
PIETERMARITZBURG CAMPUS

Dear Mrs Singh

PROTOCOL: Skills Training and Disability: a life history study of adults with intellectual disabilities at protected workshops
ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0745/2009: Faculty of Education

In response to your application dated 15 October 2009, Student Number: **8218610** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Collings", is written over a white background.

Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

SC/sn

cc: Dr P N Rule
cc: Ms R Govender

Appendix 2

Request for Permission to Conduct Research

P.O. Box 74124
Rochdale Park
4034

28th May 2009

THE DIRECTOR: DURBAN AND COASTAL MENTAL HEALTH SOCIETY
HATTON AVENUE
SHERWOOD
4000

For attention: Mrs Gita Harie

Request for permission to undertake study on Skills Training and Disability: a life history of adults with intellectual disabilities at protected workshops

I am a Masters in Education student currently enrolled in my second year of study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The study entails interviews of mildly intellectually disabled adults at protected workshops in the Durban area namely Challenge Unlimited in the Sherwood and Durban North Areas.

Please find enclosed a copy of the research proposal which includes my contact details as well as those of my supervisor.

Your co-operation in granting permission will be appreciated. A copy of the final dissertation will be made available to your organisation.

Yours truly,

M. Singh



Durban & Coastal
Mental Health

02 July 2009

Att : Mrs Mala Singh

c/o : University Of KZN

RE : Research undertaken for Masters in Adult Education

Kindly be informed that permission is granted to conduct research at Challenge Sherwood and Challenge Merebank. You will be expected to provide us with a copy of your research findings.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING

1. All information regarding the service users is **"strictly confidential"**
2. No photograph of the service user is allowed.
3. The organization is indemnified against any injury incurred by yourself on the premises.

Thanking You

**Carmel Murugen
Protective Workshop
Co-ordinator**

"We actively work with the community to achieve the highest possible level of mental health for all"

The Executive Director, P.O. Box 70669, Overport, 4067. 3 Hatton Avenue, Sherwood, Durban, 4091
Tel: (031) 2072717 Fax: (031) 2074215 E-mail: dmhmail@dmh.co.za

MEMBER OF UBUNTU COMMUNITY CHEST. CONSTITUENT BODY OF S.A. FEDERATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH
Reg. No. 002-158 NPO

Appendix 4:

INSTRUMENT: INTERVIEW

For the interview the following questions will be asked:

1. Everybody has a life story. Tell me about yours in approximately 20 minutes.
You can begin wherever you like and tell me whatever you are comfortable to share.
2. What were the happiest moments in your life?
3. Now tell me what were the saddest moments in your life?
4. Who has influenced your life the most?
5. Tell me about your schooling life. What did you enjoy at school? What are some of the more pleasant memories that you have of your school? What kind of training did you receive? Has the training been of any use to you in this workshop? What did you learn at school?
6. What were some of the highlights during your schooling career?
7. For how long have you been working at this workshop?
8. What kind of work do you do at this workshop?
9. What kind of training did you receive and how has it helped you in your work?
How did you learn to do your job?
10. Is there anything that you would like to change in your life?
11. Everybody has a daily routine. Can you tell me about your daily routine? What are some of the exciting / unpleasant things that happen during your day?

Appendix 5: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

RESEARCH PROJECT - MASTER'S IN ADULT EDUCATION DISSERTATION

PROJECT TITLE: 'Skills Training and Disability: a life history study of adults with intellectual disabilities at protective workshops'.

PROJECT AIM: To explore the experience and perceptions of adults with intellectual disabilities regarding skills training at protected workshops.

RESEARCHER: M.SINGH (presently an M.ED student at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal)

CONTACT DETAILS: 031 8113992 (H)
0844033100 (CELL)

031 8113992 @ neomail.co.za (e-mail)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. P.N. RULE

CONTACT DETAILS: 033 260 6187 / 084 331 3329

CHOICE OF PARTICIPANTS: I am selecting intellectually disabled adults that have undergone skills training at protective workshops.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION: Should you agree to participate the following will apply:

- a) You will be interviewed on two separate occasions each lasting approximately 1 hour
- b) An audio-tape will be used to record information during the interview.
- c) Photographs of your workplace may be taken with your permission.
- d) Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained at all times.
- e) Your participation is voluntary and you will be allowed to withdraw at any stage from the study
- f) No financial expenses will be borne by the participants.
- g) All information will be stored at the University for safe- keeping.
- h) Interviews will be conducted at the protected workshops.

DECLARATION

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

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

.....
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....
DATE