THE EFFICACY OF LEARNERSHIPS FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
IN THE WESTERN CAPE

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THE EFFICACY OF LEARNERSHIPS FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WESTERN CAPE

by

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- My supervisor, Dr. A.J. Greyling, whose critique made this final treatise a much better product.
DECLARATION

I, Tamara Eve Merrill (208094560), hereby declare that the treatise titled THE EFFICACY OF LEARNERSHIPS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WESTERN CAPE is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment of completion of any postgraduate qualification to another University or for another qualification.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

24 DECEMBER 2011

I, I.D. Jacobson, have undertaken and completed the editing of the treatise entitled *The Efficacy of Learnerships for People with Disabilities in the Western Cape*, submitted by Tamara Merrill towards a Master of Arts degree in Development Studies, in the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Signed

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>DHET</td>
<td>Department of Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>DoL</td>
<td>Department of Labour</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>INDS</td>
<td>Integrated National Strategy on Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
</tr>
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<td>NSDS 3</td>
<td>National Skills Development Strategic plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>QCTO</td>
<td>Qualifications Council for Trades and Occupations</td>
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<td>SAQA</td>
<td>South African Qualifications Authority</td>
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<td>SETA</td>
<td>Sector Education Training Authority</td>
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<td>SSA</td>
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF LEARNERSHIPS, DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This researcher conducted a longitudinal study to determine the ability of Learnerships to facilitate employment of people with disabilities in South Africa. South Africa offers a rich and complex landscape for investigating the economic participation of people with disabilities. Employment and economic access intersects social and political issues presently and historically. Artefacts of segregation and marginalization remain in the social, political and economic fabric of South African life and continue to have an impact on people with disabilities. The research examined some of these aspects from the perspectives of learners with disabilities as well as from the perspectives of stakeholders. A brief background on policy and development with regard to disability provided a context for the research.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Individuals with disabilities in nearly every corner of the globe are poorer than their non-disabled counterparts (Swain, French and Cameron, 2003: 164; World Health Organization, 2011: 39). They tend to be isolated and segregated. Particularly in developing nations, people with disabilities are less likely to access education and obtain employment (World Health Organization, 2011: 39). These factors significantly obstruct human rights and impede on the individual’s development. The experiences of people with disabilities in South Africa are no different.

The South African government joined the international effort to support the human rights of those with disabilities by ratifying the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). Ratification obligates states to take a variety of actions that
support all people with disabilities to be able to experience to the fullest extent “human rights and fundamental freedoms”, including enacting legislation and policies that repeal all discriminatory practices (World Health Organization, 2011: 9). Since 1994, South Africa implemented various policies of redress in an effort to address racial inequities of the past and has integrated rights of persons with disabilities into many of those policies.

1.2.1 Political Context

Since South Africa became a democratic nation in 1994, the country has embraced a culture of human rights for all its citizens, including people with disabilities. In post-Apartheid South Africa, equity and redress has been the focus of the new nation-building efforts. The Bill of Rights within the new South African Constitution included provisions that declare people with disabilities a group protected against discrimination (108 of 1996). Provisions within the Constitution also require that pragmatic strategies be implemented to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the same opportunities as other citizens (108 of 1996). Furthermore, the South African Constitution provided a national framework to facilitate skills development and encourage the employment of people with disabilities.

Policies, such as the Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) and the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998), were created to support the Constitution’s efforts of redress. Each includes provisions that require accessible training and education for people with disabilities so as to promote their inclusion into the workforce. These Acts, in tandem with the Constitution, promote a human rights framework for economic empowerment through broader and deeper skills development.

The Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) created a framework necessary to advance the vast skills development needs in South Africa. The framework developed in the Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) played an important
role in the transformation towards a more equitable society, including promoting educational quality and access. The Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) also established the National Skills Authority, which advises, implements and liaises with other government bodies in an effort to monitor and ensure a coherent implementation of skills development policy.

The Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) also established a vital link between education and industry as it authorized the Minister of Labour to create Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). It is the SETAs’ responsibility to identify and address industry skills shortages and coordinate additional training and education required to meet the identified industry human resource needs. The Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) also established the National Skills Fund, which created the mechanism through which SETAs and other skills development bodies are funded. SETAs play an important role in Learnerships which will be discussed later in greater detail.

The Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) strengthened the imperative for firms to hire people from disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities. The Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) behests firms to ensure their workforce are diverse at all levels of the organization. It also required that barriers to employment be identified and eliminated and reasonable accommodations be made. Furthermore, this Act acknowledges the disparities in the labour market and mandates specific measures to promote employment equity and economic development.

1.2.2 Disability and Development

Despite progressive policies, people with disabilities in South Africa still live in considerable poverty, have the least education and are significantly under-represented in the workforce (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 36). A complex and problematic
relationship exists between poverty and disability, whereby research indicates that many people are poor due to their disabilities as well as that poverty is the cause of new or exacerbated disabilities (Yeo, 2001: 29). In South Africa, it is well documented that people with disabilities continue to be poor because of their disabilities (Office of the President, 1997: unpaginated; Emmett, 2006: 221). Furthermore, the implications of poverty for people with disabilities extend beyond the absence of wealth and resources and often include lack of access to basic human services, employment and education (Loeb, Eide, Jelsma, ka Toni and Maart, 2008: 311).

Access to education is a significant factor impacting on children and adults with disabilities. Low education rates of children with disabilities have long term consequences for their livelihoods as adults, particularity with regard to their ability to access employment. Research indicates that seventy per cent of individuals with disabilities have not received schooling compared to fifteen per cent of their non-disabled counterparts, in a comparison of all racial groups in South Africa (Statistics South Africa [SSA], 2005: 20). Race further complicates the educational attainment of individuals with disabilities. While less than seven per cent of white individuals with disabilities claimed to have no education at age twenty, nearly thirty-nine per cent of their African peers had no education (SSA, 2005: 20). Furthermore, African women continue to be at particular risk of being excluded from educational opportunities (SSA, 2005: 22).

Despite progressive policy, it seems that employment rates for people with disabilities have remained remarkably low. The 10th Commission on Employment Equity Annual Report states that people with disabilities comprise less than one per cent of the workforce (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 19). The current employment rate is less than half of the two per cent targeted by government, indicative of their status as the most underrepresented of all disadvantaged groups (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 34)
and 36). Furthermore, from Table 1.1 it is clear that there has been no real gain in employment rates for people with disabilities over the past eight years.

**TABLE 1.1 Employment Rates for People with Disabilities in South Africa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYMENT RATE</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
</tr>
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(Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 34)

Race and gender also appear to impact on employment for people with disabilities. Analogous to the general population, white males with disabilities are much more likely to obtain employment than other racial groups with disabilities (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 36). The Commission on Employment Equity 2009-2010 report further indicates that while white men and women comprise just over twelve per cent of people with disabilities who are economically active, over one quarter of the disabled workforce are white (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 19). The most under-represented group is African women with disabilities, who constitute only twenty per cent of employed people with disabilities (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 19).

The exclusion of people with disabilities has significantly impacted growth and economic development of the South African labour market. The Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa acknowledges that one of the reasons for slow economic growth is the inability to integrate marginalized people into the formal economy (Government Communication and Information System, 2009: 129). A study sponsored by the International Labour Organization (ILO) concluded that economic losses in South Africa related to the inactivity of people with disabilities, are seven per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is over one hundred million Rand (Buckup, 2009: 39). It is a fact that South Africa’s growth is dependent upon the participation as well as consumption of its entire population in order to ensure a sustainable and robust economy for generations to come.
(Jack, 2007: 17), yet people with disabilities continue to be denied their full participation. Their continued disenfranchisement imposes a life of poverty for many and often results in the denial of education and employment. The research examined some of these complex factors in order to improve access to education and employment for people with disabilities in South Africa.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In an effort to support the integration of disadvantaged groups into the formal economy the Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) as well as the Integrated National Disability Strategy White Paper (Office of the President, 1997) identified Learnerships as a preferred model of learning programme. Learnerships were deemed necessary to provide people with disabilities both the competitive skills and related experience required to effectively enter the labour market. However, although Learnerships had broad-based support as the best model of skills development, employment rates have not risen for people with disabilities. The ability of Learnerships to facilitate employment is therefore under question.

The obvious inability of current strategies to create employment for people with disabilities requires serious investigation as people with disabilities still account for less than one per cent of the workforce (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 19). The last ten years has demonstrated a tenuous pattern of employment that ranges from one-half of a per cent of the workforce in 2007 and a height of only one point eight per cent in 2005. It is not understood why the percentage of workers with disabilities declined by over one third in that specific two year period, but it indicates to the researcher the fragile status of employment for individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, while employment goals for some targeted groups
are narrowing, people with disabilities continue to be considerably under-represented (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 36).

Since the implementation of South Africa’s human resource development policies, comprehensive research could not be found on Learnerships with regard to its efficacy in facilitating employment for people with disabilities. Moreover, the limited information and statistics that are available offer little critical inquiry into the reasons behind their low unemployment rate. Furthermore, literature that examines skills development practices from the perspective of people with disabilities is noticeably absent. A lack of research therefore necessitates critical inquiry into the value of Learnerships for people with disabilities.

The research focused on a Western Cape Learnership that was developed for people with disabilities. This Learnership was chosen because of a partnership established between local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), a SETA and a training provider to implement Learnerships specifically for people with disabilities. These institutions, particularly the training provider, have taken a leadership role in the provision of education and training for people with disabilities. The implementation was in accordance with national policy and could serve as an appropriate demonstration model for analysis.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions guided the effort to collect the information necessary to more clearly identify the reasons for such low unemployment for people with disabilities within the South African context. The information from research participants were collected based upon the following research questions.
1.4.1 Primary Research Question

- Are Learnerships effective at facilitating employment for learners with disabilities in the Western Cape?

1.4.2 Secondary Research Questions

- What are the perceived strengths and shortcomings of the Learnership for learners with disabilities?
- What strategies can be implemented to improve the experiences of learners with disabilities in Learnerships?
- What strategies can be utilized to increase the number of learners with disabilities entering the workforce after participating in Learnerships?

These questions assisted in aligning the process of the research with its purpose. Pratt and Swann (2003: 178) confirm that a clear understanding of purpose is one of the elements of good research. Research questions also play an important role in addressing the overall objectives of research (Gleeson, 2010: 85). From the research questions the following research objectives have been derived.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research objective is to increase employment for people with disabilities. The research identified strengths and weaknesses of the Learnership model as examined through the experiences of learners with disabilities and other stakeholders in an effort to identify new or adapted strategies. These strategies can be integrated into learning programmes to improve their efficacy.
1.5.1 Primary Research Objective

The primary research objective is to:

- Determine the efficacy of Learnerships to facilitate employment for people with disabilities in the Western Cape.

1.5.2 Secondary Research Objectives

The secondary research objectives are to:

- Determine the perceived strengths and shortcomings of the Learnership for learners with disabilities.
- Identify strategies that can be implemented to improve the experiences of people with disabilities in Learnerships.
- Expose strategies that can be utilized to increase the number of learners with disabilities entering the workforce after participating in Learnerships.

1.5.3 Value of this Research

This research sought to understand the efficacy of Learnerships based upon the experiences of the research participants, particularly the learners, in order to provide a contextualized understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the learning programme model. The data provided meaningful insight and understanding about the challenges and perceived gaps that obstruct opportunities for sustainable employment for people with disabilities. Once the problems were identified, strategies could be adapted or designed to support the increase in employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

This research expanded the understanding of the most effective learning model to facilitate employment for people with disabilities, providing insight and understanding of the gap between skills development strategies and their ability to facilitate sustainable
employment for people with disabilities. The education system, disability advocacy organizations, private industry and government agencies interested in facilitating employment for people with disabilities can benefit from this research.

1.6 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

1.6.1 Disability

Article One of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) states that a person with a disability is any individual that experiences “long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. This definition succinctly differentiates the role of an individual’s impairment from the role of the environmental barriers. Because the researcher accepts the broad definition as stated above, the study included all disabilities and did not focus on a singular form or expression of disability. The abovementioned definition is within the Social Model of disability, which is discussed presently.

1.6.2 Models of Disability

1.6.2.1 Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of disability asserts that barriers to full participation exist distinctly within social and environmental conditions, which create barriers for full participation in political, social and economic life (Swain et al, 2003: 2). It maintains that there is a critical distinction between an impairment and a disability. An impairment limits one’s physical, sensory or mental acuity (Rieser, 2004: 135). Disability, however, describes the discrimination people encounter that exists within physical structures, inaccessible social and economic systems and attitudes that focus on people’s impairments rather than their strengths.
and abilities (Swain et al, 2003: 24). The Social Model furthermore denies that an individual with a disability is the sum of their impairment(s) and refutes the dependency and exclusion inherent in the out-dated Medical Model of classification. The Social Model is useful for this study because it provides a paradigmatic framework that acknowledges the inexorable link between the construct of “disability” and society’s role within it.

1.6.2.2 Medical Model of Disability

The Medical Model of disability’s approach is such that disability is considered to reside within the ‘abnormality’ of the individual; something is therefore ‘wrong’ with the individual. The Medical Model accepts medical science as the determining authority of what is normal and legitimizes the exclusion of those outside that boundary and is often associated with stereotypical identifications of the pitiful and dependent person, or of the “supercrip” who despite his/her disability manages to function in the existing environment. As the Medical Model is an orthodox view of disability, it has been challenged over the last few decades by alternate paradigms, particularly that of the Social Model of disability.

1.6.3 Learning Programme

A Learning Programme is defined by the South African Qualifications Authority as “a structured set of learning offerings and related assessment and attainment requirements”. It includes any “activities, methodologies, processes and other elements” that supports learners to “acquire the required knowledge, skills and attitudes” necessary for the completion of a standard or qualification (Rieser, 2004: 225). A Learnership is an example of one type of learning programme.
1.6.4 Learnership

According to the Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) Learnerships are characterized by a “structured learning component” as well as “practical work experience” as part of an integrated curriculum. Learnerships are supposed to conclude in a qualification that is registered with the South African Qualifications Authority. Learnerships differ from other models of on-the-job training because of the integration of practical workplace-based training with the specific theoretical content in the learning programme’s curriculum, and it includes an assessment of the learner in both the structured and practical components of the Learnership (Rieser, 2004: 225). In the South African context, a Learnership must involve a partnership on specified terms between the learner, a training provider and a Learnership employer.

1.6.5 Learnership Training Provider

The Learnership training provider is the institution or organization that delivers the structured learning component of the Learnership. The training provider is required to provide the relevant instruction for completion of the qualification for which the Learnership is registered. The training provider must partner with the Learnership employer to ensure that the classroom-based learning and the practical instruction is integrated.

1.6.6 Learnership Employer

The Learnership employer is the firm/firms registered with the Learnership to provide the practical instruction. The practical work experience occurs within the firm and the activities assist to fulfil the requirements of the qualification for which the Learnership is registered. The Learnership employer is required to employ learners in the Learnership for a specified duration of time in accordance with the Learnership agreement.
1.6.7 Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) refers to the integration of multiple and flexible teaching strategies, curriculum design and learning assessments in an effort to reduce any barriers to learning (CAST, 2011: 5; Edyburn, 2005: 17). The UDL is based upon neuroscience that has established that there are different ways that individuals understand obtain, organize and engage in learning. It encourages all learning materials and instruction methods in order to accommodate various learning styles. UDL addresses barriers to learning for all learners (CAST, 2011: 4).

1.6.8 Accessibility

Accessibility is a key factor with regard to the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workforce and refers to the removal of any barriers present within all aspects of the learning programme and subsequent processes to access employment. The terms “accessible” and “accessibility” are used to refer not only to physical or structural barriers that may impede a person’s ability to enter a building, utilize transportation, or communicate, but also in a broader sense of access that takes into account institutions and processes encountered in daily living such as hiring and recruiting procedures that exclude individuals with physical or sensory impairments.

1.6.9 Competitive Employment

The term competitive employment is used in an effort to differentiate the open labour market from sheltered or protective employment. The aim of sheltered or protective employment is to prepare people with disabilities to enter competitive employment. In contrast, competitive employment refers to the open labour market and compensation is at least the prevailing wage for that industry’s standard.
1.6.10 Special Schools

Educational facilities for children with disabilities are called Special Schools. These schools are administrated through the South African Department of Basic Education. Although there has been discussion about Inclusive Education, Special Schools continue to be operated separately from mainstream schools. Furthermore, Special Schools are often segregated according to disability and in many cases continue to be segregated by race as well (Western Cape Education Department, 2002: unpaginated).

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Methodology

The research utilized a qualitative methodology because of its focus on examining social phenomenon through the research participants’ perspectives (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 16), which is viewed by the researcher as crucial because of the lack in research from the perspective of learners with disabilities. The ability of a qualitative methodology to provide comprehensive data further supports the collection of detailed accounts in order to develop a generalized theory based upon highly contextualized data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 322). This approach allowed for the opportunity to learn inductively from the collected data and thus uncover themes and patterns that emerged.

Within a qualitative methodology, case studies could be a primary source of information-rich data and have been used increasingly in educational research (Tellis, 1997: unpaginated). In this research, case studies provided a detailed description of the Learnership model utilizing the voices and experiences of the learners and other stakeholders. The personal experiences and viewpoints of the learners are of paramount importance in order to best understand the Learnership model’s strengths and weaknesses in context. The research
provided the opportunity to analyse the perspective of multiple stakeholders, as well as the interaction between them.

An inductive style of theorizing complemented this approach by focusing on discovery and the solicitation of evidence that drives the need for a solution. This methodological approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem and supported the practical application of applied social science research. Research design and methodology is described in detail in Chapter Three.

1.7.2 Sample

The sample provided the representative base from which data was collected and analysed and was based upon the participation in the Learnership researched. Based upon the primary research objective to understand the efficacy of Learnerships for people with disabilities, the sample focused on a representative group of learners with disabilities who participated in a Learnership at a Western Cape Further Education and Training college during 2004 and 2005. The sample also included other stakeholders in the Learnership including training-provider staff and administration as well as employer staff. Although there were different employers, the group operated as a cohort. This sample provided a continuity of time and space through a shared learning environment both during the structured theoretical and the practical educational components.

1.7.3 Data Collection Instruments

Primary data was collected through a pre-interview questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with learners, training-provider staff and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Learnership project. In addition, information from existing documents made available
by the training provider and/or the employer were also utilized to gather additional or corroborating information.

Each research participant was requested to complete a written questionnaire. The written questionnaire contained basic administrative and classification questions and solicited information regarding the individual’s general overall experience. This information was used to both corroborate and facilitate a dialogue in the oral interview.

Interviews were used to access comprehensive information from participants about their individual experiences. Semi-structured interviews were utilized, which offered structured questions and opportunity for open-ended responses. This interview technique provided flexibility within the dialogue as well as opportunity for follow-up questions and probing. Interviews were conducted individually to allow for personal reflection and response. Notes written by the researcher as well as a full transcription of the digital recording of each interview were used in the final analysis.

1.7.4 Data Analysis and Ethics

A strict adherence to ethical research principles, designed to protect participants’ rights and interests (Flick, 2009: 36), were utilized during the research process and data analysis. The planning process and initial gathering of data included efforts to ensure that access to all information had explicit consent, and included providing information in a variety of forms to ensure research participants understood the study purpose, process and their role within it. Each participant was presented information about their rights to remain anonymous and the researcher’s obligation to confidentiality of data. Written and verbal consent was obtained from each research participant after expressing a full understanding of their rights throughout the research process. Properly contextualized information and direct quotes were
used to most accurately represent the research participants’ intended meaning in order to “do justice” to the participants’ statements (Flick, 2009: 41).

Information was collected from each participant and involved examining the data within the context of the research problem (Gibson, 2010: 55). Data was interpreted in order to identify emerging themes or patterns. Multiple source sampling as well as the utilization of multiple methodological tools assisted in accurately interpreting and verifying information, as well as providing the mechanism for triangulation. Aggregated data was then integrated to provide a summary of findings on which recommendations were based.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review provided the framework with regard to “theoretical and methodological” foundation for the research (Hartas, 2010: 96). Within the context of skills development in the Global South, there exists very little literature specific to people with disabilities that compares contributing and causal factors to continued low employment (Priestley, 2006: 26). Despite significant data gathered by the government to analyse employment equity, statistics regarding disability and employment have been described as “limited, or at worst irrelevant” (SSA, 2005: 5).

The discourse surrounding skills development in South Africa varies, but it includes much information on an adaptation of the High Skills thesis, which looks at development variances within highly industrialized nations as the product of existing social and historical “foundations” that are inexorably linked and impact labour market dynamics (Kraak, 2004: 1). The High Skills debate in South Africa challenges several theoretical underpinnings, but has been adapted in an effort to bolster attempts to view development as a holistic process that requires alignment of policy, social and political institutions and national strategies. However valuable, this on-going macro-level debate does not provide sufficient applicable
theory specific to learners with disabilities, thus literature regarding disability and employment was explored.

Various disability theories were also explored, which revealed two primary paradigmatic positions in regard to disability, particularly the Medical Model and the Social Model of disability. The Social Model was chosen because it provided the conceptual framework from which it can be argued that the exclusion that people with disabilities experience is the result of socially constructed prejudices. Disability is then the result of social processes, institutions and behavioural expectations that are placed upon individuals whose medical labels have deemed them disabled. Therefore, in an effort to remove or minimize barriers to employment, the social, political and economic environment must be examined. The Social Model thus provided the ideal theory to examine the complexities involved in skills development for people with disabilities.

A Critical Theory paradigm was chosen to supplement the Disability Theory because of its complementary conceptual focus on framing social issues within the realm of social justice. It supported the analysis of power structures to identify strategies for social change. Furthermore, a critical research is a suitable conceptual application to experiential education and assists in examining social issues of race and gender that are deeply connected with disability within this context.

The South African policy framework, as it relates to Learnerships, was examined to provide a political and social context within which new strategies must conform. This is particularly important as South Africa continues to experience massive transformational changes in the skills development sector. The linkage of current policy with the conceptual framework provided the foundation from which a practical critique could be ascertained to provide valuable information for the improvement of Learnerships for people with disabilities.
1.9 SUMMARY

South Africa’s albeit recent but progressive policies in support of facilitating employment for people with disabilities appears to be ineffective, perpetuating isolation, segregation and poverty. The current employment rate is less than one per cent for people with disabilities and warrants evaluation of the efficacy of Learnerships, the flagship learning model. In order to determine the efficacy of Learnerships and uncover potential strategies to improve employment, longitudinal research was conducted that utilized the experiences of people with disabilities as well as other stakeholders. The following chapter describes the theoretical framework within which this research was placed.
CHAPTER TWO
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF LEARNERSHIPS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Theory can be understood as the lens or paradigm the researcher utilizes to examine a chosen research design (Gleeson, 2010: 94). Perceptions of the world around us are informed by particular frameworks that become the primary foundation for understanding our relationships with others and the surrounding environment (Swain at al, 2003: 20). Therefore, articulating the research theory is important because it provides the underlying basis from which information can be organized, patterns recognized and explanations can be derived from specific phenomena (Delport and Fouche, 2005: 262).

This research utilized Disability Theory alongside Critical Theory to provide the theoretical framework for the research. The examination of the lived experience of learners with disabilities and the perspective of stakeholders in the Learnership provided contextual information and opportunity to corroborate experiences. The research examined the data collected from research participants within the context of the existing social and political structures.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Disability Theory

The lens through which disability is understood is an important component within the conceptual framework of the research. It is important to explore this framework as part of a paradigmatic foundation for the research. This section explores this topic further by describing two established schools of thought on disability; namely the Social Model and the Medical Model, and the impact of each on the conceptual framework of this research. The research favours the Social Model of disability because it provides a foundation for
understanding the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace within a human rights framework. In an effort to provide context for these two models, the Medical Model of disability will be explained, followed by an explanation of the Social Model.

The significant impact of what is presently understood as the Medical Model of disability is most evident when placed in historical context. The origin of this paradigm can be traced back to ancient times and was significantly influenced by the belief that disability was the effect of immorality on the part of oneself or one’s family. This stigma was the impetus for the isolation and segregation of people with disabilities through institutionalization throughout much of the world, primarily beginning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 14; Rieser, 2006: 147).

The twentieth century brought the medicalization of disability, whereby medical diagnoses served as the classification of difference (DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 21). The Enlightenment began an era where anomalies or difference in the body or mind could be explained within the framework of the physical world, rather than the supernatural or religious context (DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 14). The increasing advancement of medical science and technology throughout the twentieth century legitimized a medicalized description of what was ‘normal’ versus the ‘abnormal’. The medical labelling of the body and its functions continues to advance a pejorative understanding of disability (DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 42). It is important to understand that disability is a term used to describe “atypicalities” based upon the observations and perceptions of others (DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 60), primarily within the context of a medical problem (Linton, 1998 in DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 3).

The belief that people with disabilities are unfit or unable to participate in typical activities of civil life due to a medicalized label became a primary tenant of the Medical Model of disability. These beliefs became an established construct that infiltrated every facet
of life, including the development of institutions, current-day power structures, and values (Swain et al, 2003: 2). The Medical Model asserts that individuals with disabilities are in need of being ‘fixed’ resulting in ascribing a label of “abnormality” upon the individual and designating the person as the source of the problem (Swain et al, 2003: 22 and 23). It places the person with a disability in a position of pity and dependence; as the perpetual child.

The acknowledgement of the ubiquity of this orthodoxy is the first premise upon which the theoretical framework for the research rests upon. The researcher suggests that contrary to the Medical Model the source of disability actually rests in external and environmental factors. While today bodily functions and environment are sometimes viewed as interrelating factors within the experience of disability (World Health Organization, 2011: 4), the researcher did not find it instructive in this research to examine this aspect. The research rather focused on environmental, institutional and systems barriers that manifest in a particular social order and under specific power hierarchies. This deliberate focus created opportunities to reveal solutions to the ubiquitous unemployment that people with disabilities are facing. The Social Model provides a conceptual framework that allows for critical analysis of disability and provides a departure point for the analysis of unemployment among people with disabilities in South Africa.

The Social Model understands disability to be both “relative and interactive” and defines disability as a socially constructed phenomenon that is the result of “social, cultural, and other environmental factors” (DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 4 and 75). The paradigm of the Social Model frames disability within the context of an environment designed for the exclusion of those with variations of mobility, cognition, and/or sensory use. Therefore disability is seen as the result of social processes, institutions and behavioural expectations that are placed upon individuals whose medical labels have deemed them disabled. It is this
comprehensive system of oppression that impedes the full participation in civic life of people with disabilities (Swain et al, 2003: 24).

On the other hand, the Social Model examines external factors such as social structures, relationships of power and other barriers that limit full participation in economic, social and political life (Priestley, 2006: 25). The political explanation focuses on how disability, as understood as a social construct, impedes or prevents people from accessing opportunities to reach full productive capacity and therefore limits access to political participation and resources (DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 79). Explanations from a social perspective turn to such issues as attitudinal barriers, or misinformation about disability and how these manifest in social situations. As part of the Social Model, cultural explanations examine aspects within the cultural realm that impact the ability to participate in social life of individuals with disabilities. This research drew upon on each of these aspects, as the researcher maintains that education and employment are in many ways the culmination of political, social and cultural life insofar as employment is often the most highly valued form of contribution of current society.

The Social Model demands that full access to education and work be permitted on the basis that denial of any kind is inherently discriminatory. This model’s focus is therefore on the removal of environmental barriers that prevent full access and participation (DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 77). It is in an effort to identify and provide strategies to remove barriers to employment that the Social Model of disability provides the best theoretical model. The Social Model also is particularly instructive because it supports that the research be held within the context of human rights, which bolsters the ability to examine the South African context and the links between disability, race and gender.

Priestley (2006: 26) asserts that South Africa is a rich place to consider disability within this paradigm because of the active post-Apartheid discourse surrounding race and
diversity. Therefore, such information may enable a productive discourse which may assist the rest of the world in further development of models and practices embracing the full breadth and scope of diversity. Watermeyer (2006: 42) provides an instructive analogy of the unconscious response one has to race due to South Africa’s historical segregation, isolation and subjugation of non-whites and psychological responses to disability. Unfortunately, the link between shared marginalization between gender, race, class and disability has largely gone unnoticed in research and literature (Priestley, 2006: 26).

This researcher agrees that the focus on a human rights culture and strong government support of policies of redress in South Africa provide a context that may offer profound lessons regarding the repression of individuals with disabilities around the globe. South Africa also provides a rich multi-cultural environment in which to begin examining the inexorable links between race, gender and disability, while Critical Theory was used to provide an additional theoretical framework to understand and examine these connections.

2.2.2 Critical Theory

Critical Theory is useful because it encourages a pluralistic approach (Hartas, 2010: 45), and it complements the previously discussed Disability Theory through its acknowledgement of power structures and its subsequent influence on the lived experiences of individuals, in this case, people with disabilities. The acknowledgment of different power dynamics is an important component of both Critical Theory (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2002: 93) and disability theory (DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 4; Swain et al, 2003: 24).

Critical Theory is also useful in examining the interconnectedness of disability, race and gender as these three concepts are inexorably linked to the human experience and often intersect at shared points of the social experience (Emmett, 2006: 207). Furthermore, while these intersections occur virtually everywhere on the globe, there is particular relevance
within the historical South African context. Critical Theory therefore provided a conceptual framework from which the experience of disability can be examined against a robust historical perspective.

Critical Theory is also concerned with bringing to light the positions of domination that shape our social world by adopting a decisive connection between the lived experience and public social issues of power, democracy and justice (Kinchenloe and McLaren, 2002: 102). As Critical Theory investigates the use of hegemons (Kinchenloe and McLaren, 2002: 93), institutions and cultural capital (Fenwick, 2001: 40) as mechanisms of power and domination; it also seeks to explore how various scenarios involving human existence came to be and whose interests are advantaged by existing structures (Kinchenloe and McLaren, 2002: 124).

Fenwick (2001: 39) proposes that by unveiling existing power structures, new and untold opportunities for “work, life and development” may be identified that may produce unimagined practical solutions to oppressive power structures. This theoretical framework is particularly useful for this study because the researcher holds the view that learning is an inherently politicized process (Collins, 2003: 68; Fenwick, 2001: 39). Critical Theory supports the effort to uncover existing power structures in an effort to identify new opportunities to influence positive social change.

Key to both Critical Theory and this research is the investigation of barriers to social change to identify strategies for improvement (Kinchenloe and McLaren, 2002: 92). Thus, the research from a critical paradigm ascertains information within a conceptual framework that can be directly applicable to improving the human experience (Howard, 1991: 78). Within an educational context, then, the objective is to gain insight and knowledge about the process in an effort to challenge social or political obstacles to learning (Fenwick, 2001: 5).
Central to Critical Theory is the acknowledgement of the social constructiveness of the human experience (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2002: 88), which is also key in understanding the prescribed role of disability, race and gender in social life (DePoy and Gilson, 2004: 4; Rieser, 2006: 136; Swain et al, 2003: 3). Critical Theory supports the concept that the lived experience is relative in the sense that one’s identity, one’s role in society and even its institutions, are created by and through the lived experiences of others, presently and in the past. Therefore, there is no single or static response to social research because each lived experience offers valuable information, not despite its relativity, but because of it (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2002: 101).

Critical Theory posits that the ‘objectivity’ of the scientific method as a mechanism to ascertain ‘legitimized’ knowledge is conceptually obstructive because the lived human experience is inherently subjective. It asserts that positivist methods impede the ability to critically analyse or employ “valuations and judgments” that impact on the facets of daily life, without which any knowledge ascertained is considered impractical in the real world (Howard, 1991: 76). Critical Theory, however, denounces the false axiom of absolute truths and neutrality in social research and embraces the human experience as an evolving construct, informed by hegemony and existing power structures (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2002: 106). Critical theorists insist that positivism itself is a mechanism that ensures the maintenance of existing power relations (Collins, 2003: 73).

Because of the fact that Critical Theory can be emancipatory, it is a useful approach that can be utilized to provide voice for, or exposure of, those marginalized in society. People with disabilities are significantly disenfranchised and the researcher finds considerable value in liberating their ideas and opinions. By providing a platform from which those who are marginalized have opportunity to speak openly about their experiences, Critical Theory can
play an important role in shedding light on systems and practices of discrimination (Hartas, 2010: 46). In this way Critical Theory can be an effective vehicle of empowerment.

2.3 GOVERNMENT AND POLICY

South Africa’s transformation into a democracy in 1994 was not only a significant ideological departure from the former state of governance, but also one that required considerable institutional and operational restructuring. This included the reconfiguration of the country’s education system in an effort to develop adequate infrastructure to support skills development, eradicate the racially segmented labour market and stimulate the economy (Ashton, 2004: 116). In addition, the newly instituted democratic administration pledged to take considerable and immediate action to redress the discriminatory actions of the former regime. These factors influenced the rapid influx of policies leading up to the liberation of South Africa in 1994 and to the present. Below is a brief account of policy implementation that has had the greatest effect on the development of Learnerships.

2.3.1 Historical context

The South African Qualifications Authority Act (Office of the President, 1995), gazetted in 1995, is the first piece of legislation implemented in order to create the institutional and funding mechanisms responsible for developing a new national educational framework. The Act (Office of the President, 1995), which created the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), is responsible for the development of educational standards that aim to fulfil the needs of the economy and address issues of redress required by the Constitution. SAQA’s primary function came to fruition with the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). An Executive Director of SAQA, Isaacs, stated that the new NQF served as “a vision, a moral purpose, a basis for systematic change”
SAQA’s responsibility was extended to include not only development of the NQF, but also ongoing quality assurance of learning programs, including Learnerships.

SAQA’s vision for Learnerships was multifaceted. Learnerships were to facilitate improved skills development for South African workers, who were left largely unskilled during the Apartheid regime. Another task of SAQA was to look at Learnerships as a method to assist in balancing the tenuous labour market supply by facilitating an intentional link between education and industry to ensure that skills which learners acquire through the education system meet the demands of business. Providing “diverse” and “flexible” access to education and training that provides various career options and encourage regular liaising among government agencies would also be considered an objective of SAQA (Rieser, 2004: 234).

To further support an integrated and comprehensive human resource development initiative, the Skills Development Act was created in 1998. The Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) provided the structural and financial framework through which the large pool of under-skilled workers could have access to new skills development opportunities. The framework prescribed in the Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) provided the Minister of the Department of Labour with a new advisory body. It also allocated the Minister the authority to establish Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), which are primarily funded through the National Skills Fund and Skills Development Levy. Through the creation of SETAs an infrastructure was provided for the implementation of Learnerships.

SETAs serve as the pivotal link between traditional, structured education and industry (Kraak, 2004: 119), as they are required to identify industry’s education and training needs and “develop a sector skills plan” that should include the establishment, facilitation, and promotion of Learnerships. They also coordinate the workplace learning opportunities
characteristic to Learnerships (Rieser, 2004: 245), and are therefore responsible for ensuring that the skills taught to learners meet the needs of their business sector. They are also required to promote access to NSF funds for priority groups, which include prioritizing people with disabilities in their skills development plans (Rieser, 2004: 229).

2.3.2 Integrated National Disability Strategy White Paper

In 1997 the government published the Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) White Paper (Office of the President, 1997) as part of a national effort to highlight the inequities of South Africans with disabilities and to acknowledge the significant contribution they can offer towards the development of the country. Documenting the fact that people with disabilities have experienced profound discriminations in the past, this legislation implores the country to move away from the Medical Model of disability toward a Social Model of disability that is grounded in human rights. In this regard, the INDS White Paper (Office of the President, 1997) identified broad strategies to address the complex and multifaceted barriers that have excluded the ability to participate in much of civil life of people with disabilities.

This White Paper identified education and employment as key factors in the strategy to ensure that people with disabilities can access their rights within a democratic nation and specified lack of education as a primary reason for the lack of basic and technical skills required for employment of people with disabilities. It furthermore identifies access to economic participation as an important strategy for the prevention disability as well as for the promotion of independence and community participation of those with disabilities. The White Paper also suggested that progressive employment policies are required to properly redress discriminatory practices of the past and effectively advance employment for people with disabilities. The Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998), discussed next, was
passed a year later in an attempt to address systemic unemployment of marginalized communities, including people with disabilities.

2.3.3 Employment Equity Act

The Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) was created to address the profound challenge of employment equity in South Africa as a result of the discriminatory policies of Apartheid and acknowledge that the damages to justice and equity cannot be rectified by repealing laws alone. The Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) enacted a system of redress in order to facilitate a workforce that demographically represents the country's diversity by, amongst other things, identifying people with disabilities as a group that had been categorically disadvantaged and therefore qualifies for redress.

The Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) required all designated employers to be responsible for ensuring their workforce is diverse at all levels of the organization by expecting employers to conduct an analysis of their workforce demographics and develop an equity plan that identifies strategies to reach employment equity goals. Employers should be willing to make reasonable accommodations and barriers to employment should be identified and minimized. It also requires employers to retain employees from the designated groups and provide skills training as necessary and appropriate. Learnerships are one such skills development strategy.

2.3.4 Learnerships

Learnerships are an example of the South African government’s efforts to create a comprehensive, integrated skills development system. Learnerships require collaboration between the Department of Education (DoE), the Department of Labour (DoL), the business
community and the learners themselves. Learnerships epitomize the level of integration envisioned by SAQA (Bellis, 2003: 3). It is this “unique partnership framework” of South African policy that characterizes Learnerships as a recommended vehicle for skills development (Theron, 2003: 81).

2.3.5 Challenges

Although Learnerships receive broad support, concerns regarding Learnerships’ ability to facilitate increased employment in South Africa emerged as early as 1997, when it was expressed that an increase in the number of skilled workers has not led to a decrease in unemployment in industrialized countries worldwide and has the potential effects of putting downward pressure on wages for skilled positions (Motala and Pampallis, 2001: 28). This argument has received considerable attention within the last several years, particularly with regard to the High-Skills Theory. However, this worthy debate is well outside the scope of this research and will not be addressed directly.

There have also been concerns regarding the alignment of policies. McGrath (2004: 158) recognized significant policy incoherence within the FET structure. Maile (2008: 3) maintains that such incoherence originates from an “historical and ideological neglect of democratic principles” and can be attributed to the complex challenge of creating a system of integrated policies. While policy incoherence per se will not be addressed in this research, some issues of government policy that have direct influence on Learnerships were investigated.

Another challenge of the Learnership model is the necessity for full integration and cooperation between the training provider and the business sector (Theron, 2003: 81). There has been an historical disconnect between the education and business sectors that contributed to an unbalanced and inadequate labour market (Kraak, 2004: 139; Kraak, Lauder, Brown
and Ashton, 2006: 11). This legacy created major challenges to fully realize the partnership envisaged to ensure training quality and relevance to the needs of industry.

The researcher also notes that Learnerships have failed people with disabilities. This raises many questions regarding Learnerships’ ability to facilitate employment for people with disabilities, as has become apparent from considerable anecdotal evidence and the very low employment rates.

2.3.6 Future Policy Implications

The recently released National Skills Development Strategic Plan (NSDS 3) for 2010-2015 (2011) illuminated some of the challenges that skills development has encountered over the last five years. It also identified some new strategies that the government will undertake to address those challenges. The NSDS 3 institutes a variety of structural changes in an effort to alleviate some of the challenges and failures of the previous National Skills Development Strategic Plans.

The NSDS 3 established a new government body, called the Qualifications Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). The QCTO transfers responsibility of provisions in the Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 1998) to the new Director-General of Higher Education and Training (DHET). QCTO is responsible for occupational qualifications, and is expected to work closely together with the SETAs. The DHET acknowledges that the restructuring is an effort to address the disjointed education system and create stronger and more effective links between education and industry (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010: 13).

The NSDS 3 restructured education and training under the DHET. This change is significant because previously Further Education and Training was under the Department of Labour while Higher Education was operating under the Department of Education, which
fragmented efforts of collaboration and cooperation. The alignment of these government departments may better facilitate skills development goals.

The above mentioned structural changes may have far-reaching implications for skills development and for the provision of education and, in particular, Learnerships. While the full ramifications are yet unknown, it is important to frame new information gained from the research within an appropriate policy context that addresses the demands of the future. Research conclusions and recommendations considered these policy changes in order to ensure the relevance and suitable application of the research findings.

The next chapter examines the research design and methodology by outlining the methodological approach. It also states the research objective and presents information about the research sample and data collection procedures.

2.4 SUMMARY

The Social Model of disability in conjunction with Critical Theory was chosen as the conceptual framework in order to enable the examination of a Learnership for people with disabilities within South Africa’s rich historical, social and political context. The theoretical framework highlights the importance of environmental factors such as social structures, power hierarchies and other barriers that limit full participation in civic life, allowing a robust examination of disability and employment within the context of a Learnership as well as broader society. This is particularly significant within the context of the newly developed democracy and its policies and institutions, which have deeply integrated actions of redress and a culture of human rights and provides an important background for the research. The chosen methodological process and research design is described in the following chapter.
3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a well-designed research plan is to assert the research problem and objective and explain the methodological process by which the research was conducted. A good research plan ensures information generated through research is valid scientific knowledge, by making certain the process through which data is gathered and interpreted is empirically generated and trustworthy. How information was gathered, analysed and validated to demonstrate a transparent and trustworthy research process and product is therefore detailed in this section.

This chapter discusses a qualitative research approach and justifies why it was chosen as the best fit for the purpose by explaining how qualitative research supported the research objectives and theoretical framework described in the previous chapter. This chapter also describes the sample and data collection instruments and procedures followed by an outline for data analysis. In conclusion, the ethical considerations adhered to will be described.

3.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Within the human development agenda, Learnerships were identified as a preferred model to provide people with disabilities the skills and training required to facilitate their entrance into the open labour market. Recognized for its unique blend of structured, theoretical curriculum with practical on-the-job training, Learnerships were purported to provide a direct link between the supply and demand sides of the market, bridging an historical gap between education and industry. Thus the model was developed to ensure that training was current and skills obtained were in need in the industry sector. Although
Learnerships initially had broad-based support, its ability to facilitate employment for people with disabilities is under question.

Despite targeted equity legislation and the implementation of Learnerships, people with disabilities are considered the “most under-represented” of all groups targeted by the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 36). In fact, they account for less than one per cent of the workforce, and most of their representation is in lower levels positions (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 19). The total percentage of employees with a disability in government in 2009 was three-fifths of a per cent despite a targeted goal of two per cent employment within government ranks (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 19). Employment for people with disabilities is disproportionately low when compared to other targeted groups and is tenuously characterized by several periods of decline over the last decade.

Furthermore, the unrelenting connection between the subjugation of black people, women and people with disabilities continues to plague South Africa. Of all those with disabilities who are employed, white males continue to comprise a disproportionately higher level of employment (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010: 19). Statistics indicate that African and Coloured females with disabilities have benefited the least from efforts to facilitate employment, leaving black women with disabilities particularly exposed to marginalization and poverty.

Chronic and extreme poverty for people with disabilities is a national and international problem, resulting in the facilitation of a “vicious cycle” that perpetuates poverty and increasing disabilities (Yeo, 2001: 26). Poverty is experienced by most individuals with disabilities, who continue to be the “poorest of the poor”, as indicated by the INDS White Paper (Office of the President, 1997). However, women are at particular risk of
being excluded from opportunities to work, exacerbating isolation, exclusion and poverty (Yeo, 2001: 28).

The exclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market poses a significant barrier to the economic and social development of South Africa. Statistics demonstrate that at least five per cent, or nearly two and a half million South Africans, have a disability (SSA, 2005: 1), however this figure is contested and is presumed to be much higher (Buckup, 2009: 39; Graham, Selipsky, Moodley, Maina and Rowland, 2010: 9). Therefore, people with disabilities comprise a significant number of citizens whose contributions must be integrated into the formal economy. The exclusion of people with disabilities costs the national government over one hundred million Rands a year (Buckup, 2009: 39); at the same time, 2005 data indicates the nation provided disability grants to nearly one and a half million individuals (Jelsma, Maart, Eide, ka Toni and Loeb, 2008: 1139). South Africa’s growth is dependent upon the full economic participation of its entire population (Jack, 2007: 17).

A lack of research necessitates critical inquiry into the efficacy of Learnerships for people with disabilities. The limited information and statistics that are available offer little critical inquiry into the reasons behind low unemployment. Therefore, research is required to investigate the low unemployment of people with disabilities. The research investigated Learnerships in an effort to identify the efficacy of Learnerships to facilitate employment and uncover potential strategies for improvement.

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions guided the effort to collect the information necessary to more clearly identify the reasons for such low unemployment for people with disabilities within the South African context. The information from research participants were collected based upon the following research questions.
3.3.1 Primary Research Question

- *Are Learnerships effective at facilitating employment for learners with disabilities in the Western Cape?*

3.3.2 Secondary Research Questions

- *What are the perceived strengths and shortcomings of the Learnership for learners with disabilities?*
- *What strategies that can be implemented to improve the experiences of learners with disabilities in Learnerships?*
- *What strategies can be utilized to increase the number of learners with disabilities entering the workforce after participating in Learnerships?*

These questions assisted in aligning the process of the research with its purpose. Pratt and Swann (2003: 178) confirm that a clear understanding of purpose is one of the elements of good research. Research questions also play an important role in addressing the overall objectives of research (Gleeson, 2010: 85). From the research questions the following research objectives have been derived.

3.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The research objective was to provide scientifically based evidence that identifies strategies to improve the ability of Learnership’s to facilitate employment for learners with disabilities. The research aimed to do this by advancing the qualitative understanding of Learnerships through the examination of the experiences of learners with disabilities, and other stakeholders, in order to identify factors that impact the outcome and experience of the learners. Identified strategies to improve the model’s ability to provide relevant skills and
meaningful experiences may then be integrated into Learnerships’ programming to enhance its overall efficacy.

3.4.1 Primary Research Aim and Objective

The primary research objective is to:

- *Determine the efficacy of Learnerships to facilitate employment for people with disabilities in the Western Cape.*

3.4.2 Secondary Research Objectives

The secondary research objectives are to:

- *Determine the perceived strengths and shortcomings of the Learnership for learners with disabilities.*
- *Identify strategies can be implemented to improve the experiences of people with disabilities in Learnerships.*
- *Expose strategies that can be utilized to increase the number of learners with disabilities prepared to enter the workforce after participating in Learnerships.*

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the specific strategy and correlating steps adopted from widely accepted qualitative approaches and was chosen for this research based upon its most suitable applicability to achieving the specific research objective (Fouche, 2005: 268). Its value lies in its ability to provide the blueprint from which the process of research is conducted from the earliest stages of research participant selection to ensuring the validity of the data and data analysis. A carefully thought out and implemented design can minimize
errors and increase accuracy to ensure the research is credible (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 102).

3.6 METHODOLOGY

Methodology describes the strategies used in order to obtain information to better understand ourselves and the world around us (Hartas, 2010: 17). This section details the rationale behind choosing a qualitative methodology. It will also provide information about the data sample and detail the data collection procedures, including the data collection tools. In conclusion, this section will explain the process through which data analysis was conducted.

3.6.1 Qualitative Research

A qualitative methodology was chosen because of its focus on providing comprehensive information explaining the social phenomena under investigation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 461). Characteristics of this methodology include utilizing personal narratives within specific contexts in order to illuminate why or how a scenario evolved (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 121). Information gathered utilizing this methodology provided information that highlighted the complexities of systems and processes which could then be analysed based upon emerging patterns within each research participant’s experiences. In this way, a qualitative methodological approach facilitates large quantities of information in an effort to reveal possible solutions to the research problem.

Disability Theory and Critical Theory are supported by a qualitative approach because of its focused effort on utilizing information drawn from the experiences of individuals around a certain topic, theme, or situation (Cohen et al, 2007: 461), which acknowledges the fact that how an individual perceives his or her experience is a valuable source of information.
(Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998: 97). The experiences of people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, are often unheard and/or discredited. Therefore, by exploring this social phenomenon through lived experience, perspectives and opinions of people with disabilities were obtained and legitimized. This research utilized a case study approach.

3.6.1.1 Case Study

A case study investigates social phenomenon through the in-depth examination of a specifically determined time and space chosen by the researcher in an effort to increase understanding and facilitate positive social change (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 344). This research utilized a case study as a primary method because of its particular applicability to facilitate comprehensive information within a specific context and provided detailed accounts of the experiences of a specific group of learners with disabilities. A case study therefore was ideal to illuminate the complex issues surrounding the efficacy of Learnerships to facilitate employment for the specific group of individuals with disabilities as an example for others in a similar situation. Although case studies have been increasingly utilized for educational research (Tellis, 1997: unpaginated), there are critiques about its use.

Arguably, the greatest critique of case study research regards the generalization of information. Bassey (2003: 119) cautions against generalizations, but he asserts that case study research should be interpreted with varying contexts in mind so as to ensure the greatest potential to be generalized in other settings. Although critiques against case study research are well documented, this methodological approach was adopted because a case study offered opportunity to conduct a deep exploration into the efficacy of Learnerships for a specifically selected group of individuals. As such, this case study provided a thorough and comprehensive account of the gathered information. The identification of the individuals in this case took place in the following way.
3.6.2 Sample

Each research participant selected to be part of the sample was identified by the training provider as participants in the selected Learnership that targeted training learners with disabilities. Utilizing information provided by the training provider, the researcher attempted to contact each learner via phone, written letter and through an internet search. Nine learners were reached directly and the family of a tenth learner notified the researcher that the learner was deceased. Of the nine learners contacted seven agreed to participate in the study.

Although there were three different employers and several different departments in which the learners did their practical work experience, the groups operated in cohorts. The learners convened regularly both on shared employment sites and as a full group in the classroom. The fact that learners operated as a cohort during the Learnership offered opportunity to examine a single Learnership through many experiences.

The Learnership project included seventeen learners. The average age at the time of admittance into the Learnership was just over 24 years. The age range varied from 20 to 34 years old. All learners were required to also fit within the Employment Equity Act’s (Department of Labour, 1998) definition as having a black racial identity. Of the seventeen learners, four identified Afrikaans as their native language, five isiXhosa, and eight identified English as their native tongue. All instruction was provided in English.

The learners’ disabilities varied, however sixteen of the seventeen learners’ impairments included limited mobility. Three learners identified mobility impairments due to poliomyelitis, three due to Cerebral Palsy and two learners incurred spinal cord injuries. Other learners identified mobility impairments due to spastic diplegia, hemiplegia, and chronic arthritis or otherwise did not have documented causes. Six learners use various walking aids, for example crutches or walking sticks, one uses a wheelchair and one utilizes a
prosthetic leg. The learner who doesn’t experience a mobility impairment has a prosthetic eye, but did not require additional visual accommodations.

There were a total of three Learnership employers for the seventeen learners. Each employer was a large financial institution. Eleven learners shared one employer, five learners were with another at two different locations, and one learner was with the third employer. Positions at the employer sites varied, but all focused on general secretarial work.

In addition to the learners, other stakeholders identified by learners and the training provider were asked to participate, including lecturers and administrators who were involved with the training provider as well as employer staff. In addition, staffs from the SETA and other private sector partners were also invited to participate in the interviews. In a deliberate attempt to ensure that the learners’ experiences maintained their position as the primary source, learners were interviewed, as much as possible, before any other stakeholders were interviewed. This allowed the research to be developed from the learner’s experiences and utilized stakeholders as a resource to answer questions posed from learners and/or provide additional contextual information.

3.6.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The data collection procedures included semi-structured interviews, a written questionnaire and records reviews. Qualitative data is often collected through observations and/or interviews (Gibson, 2010: 61). These procedures, which are described in detail below, provided the depth and breadth of information necessary to ensure that the personal experiences of individuals with disabilities were captured correctly as the focus of the research.
3.6.3.1 Interviews

Interviews are often understood as the most common method of gaining information for qualitative research (Greeff, 2005: 287), and are particularly applicable to this research because interviews facilitate a “discourse” through which information regarding the research problem is uncovered (Gibson, 2010: 61). A unique opportunity to understand the experiences of the research participants through dialogue was developed via the interviewing process. Furthermore, data obtained from personal accounts provided unique and rich data not attainable through other methodological strategies (Hobson and Townsend, 2010: 227; Lieblich et al, 1998: 9).

Semi-structured interview questions were determined to be ideal for this research because of their ability to obtain insight and knowledge about the individual’s perceptions, beliefs and accounts regarding the specific research topic (Greeff, 2005: 296). Semi-structured questions provided both structure and flexibility insofar as questions were developed around the specific research topic but also allowed for probing and follow-up questions to produce even more information rich data (Greeff, 2005: 292). Probing also ensured the researcher of immediate clarification or elaboration if needed.

Interviews were conducted individually as often as possible in an effort to solicit each research participant’s own personal story to the fullest extent (Greeff, 2005: 287). It is through each individual story that patterns and anomalies were identified and analysed. Individual interviews also offered time and opportunity for the research participants to reflect on his or her personal experiences throughout the interview without disruptions.

The interview content and important non-verbal communication through body language, tone, and inflection was documented using research notes as well as a digital recorder to ensure accuracy and integrity of the data collected. Personal notes with regard to
observation were also documented. The research utilized a written questionnaire for additional data.

3.6.3.2 Written Questionnaire

A written questionnaire supplemented the research by providing a means through which additional information could be gathered to bolster or corroborate other research data. Identical questions provided a basis from which the data provided by research participants could be easily identified and categorized. The questionnaire also offered opportunity for research related questions to be answered at a pace convenient for the participant.

A written questionnaire was requested of all learners identified to participate in the study. The questionnaire solicited information regarding each individual’s overall Learnership experience and contained basic administrative questions to identify research participant demographics.

3.6.3.3 Record Review

A review of primary sources in the form of documents from the training provider, employer and other relevant sources was conducted to provide additional information and/or corroborate other data collected. The training provider provided some records to assist with demographic information as well as limited material regarding the learning programme curriculum. When possible, the author of documentation was sought to verify or provide additional clarification when required.

3.6.4 Data Analysis

Gibson (2010: 55) asserts that analyzing data is a process whereby a “conceptual problem” is explored through the examination of its relationship with actual data. The
process through which data was analysed is critical because it framed the findings of the research. Although data analysis was an on-going part of the research process, important steps were utilized to ensure the accuracy and legitimacy of the findings discovered.

Data analysis involved examining the data on the research participants’ experiences and identifying and categorizing themes and important issues to explain the phenomenon (Cohen et al, 2007: 461). Broad themes and recurrent patterns as well as variances were identified to cautiously generalize the information gathered in an effort to identify the efficacy of Learnerships for people with disabilities.

Transcription played an important role in the data analysis by ensuring an accurate depiction of the facts and opinions expressed by the research participants. It also played a useful role in the analysis process itself as explained by Gibson (2010: 296). Transcription involved the detailed written representation of the interviews with participants, which the researcher analysed later in order to give meaning to the relevant information.

3.6.5 Data Validity, Reliability and Triangulation

In order to ensure that the research findings and interpretation provided quality scientific information, data validity and reliability had to be taken into consideration throughout the research process. Valid data ensures that the explanations of the research data coincide with the facts of the real world while reliability refers to the consistency of data findings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 330). Making certain the researcher and the participants share a mutual understanding of the interpretation of the data is an important component of valid data and can be ensured in many ways.

This research incorporated a variety of strategies to ensure the validity and reliability of the data and its interpretation. Misrepresentation was minimized throughout the research findings and interpretation through the use of direct quotes, as well as concrete descriptions
from the researcher. All interviews were recorded digitally when possible and on the one occasion when a digital recording was prohibited a detailed transcript of the conversation was sent to the participant for review and confirmation that the researcher understood the information the way in which it was intended.

The use of multiple methods was utilized to access rich and in-depth information as well as to ensure opportunities for triangulation. Triangulation was utilized in an effort to gain different perspectives of the research problem and improve credibility by providing supportive and corroborative information. The use of multiple research participants as well as several methods of collecting data, including a questionnaire, interview and record review, also was employed to facilitate triangulation.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical propriety is an important component of good research (Pratt and Swann, 2003: 178-191) and, for this research, entailed ensuring the integrity of the research process through informed consent and strict confidentiality practices. Each participant was provided a written letter as well as a verbal explanation of the full purpose and process of the research. Participants were contacted telephonically in order to ensure that each had access to multiple methods of obtaining accurate and detailed information regarding their role. Upon consent, a Study Participant Request Letter and Agreement was signed by each participant and a date and location for the interview was established.

The research participant’s anonymity was protected by ensuring all information was kept in a secure location and that each participant’s identity was coded. The researcher stored the data collected as a digital recording as well as one hard copy transcription. Personal information was transcribed and coded in the research report to protect each participant’s
anonymity. All responses, or lack of response, were fully respected and documented in the research findings.

This data will be kept until the research is complete and approved as required for the completion of a Master of Arts degree. Data will be maintained in order to fulfil research obligations as well as verify and justify research findings as required by the research supervisor and the university.

3.8 SUMMARY

Chapter Three motivated the use of a qualitative research and outlined the problem statement and methodological processes for this research. A collective case study was identified as an ideal primary methodology because it provided comprehensive information and acknowledged the lived social experience of the participants as a valuable source of knowledge. It also supported the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two. Data was collected through documentation review, interviews and a questionnaire with which the research problem could be analysed in context, which is discussed in detail presently.
CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the final findings of the field research. In an effort to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the information provided, the researcher included many direct responses and quotations. This is particularly true regarding the learners, who were generous enough to share their stories and whose full accounts unfortunately could not be included. It is worth noting that most of the learners do not speak English as their home language, therefore some grammatical errors exist within quoted text.

In an effort to create coherency with the significant volume of data collected, the findings are categorized into four main themes. Focusing on design and implementation of the Learnership, the first theme examined the strengths and weaknesses of the learning program, including the influence of societal factors. This is followed by findings regarding how the connection between disability, race and poverty impacted the experiences of participants. The third theme considers the policy context and the effect of government on the experiences of the research participants. The final theme measures the general efficacy of the Learnership through the examination of immediate and long-term employment outcomes. Firstly a brief profile of the research participants is presented.

4.2 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

There were a total of seven Learners who agreed to participate in the research, ranging in age from twenty-two to thirty years old and each experienced a physical and/or mobility impairment. Although all Learners fit within the Employment Equity Act’s (Department of Labour, 1998) definition as having a black racial identity, their home
The research participants also included five stakeholders who played a significant role in the provision of the Learnership. Four stakeholders were employed by the training provider and the final stakeholder represented one of the Learnership employers, Alpha. Details about their roles and responsibilities in regard to the Learnership are listed on the following page in Table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNER</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>DISABILITY</th>
<th>LEARNERSHIP EMPLOYER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>isiXhosa</td>
<td>Mobility impairment due to polio</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Paralysis of right leg due to spinal cord injury</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Limited mobility due to Cerebral Palsy</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Mobility impairment requiring the aid of crutches</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Limited range of motion due to arthritis</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Mobility impairment requiring wheelchair for mobility due to polio</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>isiXhosa</td>
<td>Prosthesis due to amputated leg</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 4.2 Research Participants: Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAKEHOLDER</th>
<th>REPRESENTED</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ROLE IN LEARNERSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Training provider</td>
<td>Disability Coordinator</td>
<td>Identify and coordinate accommodations for learners; communicate with lecturers; liaise with Learnership employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Training provider</td>
<td>Student Support Services Manager</td>
<td>Direct oversight of the Disability Coordinator and functions of the Office of Disability for Inclusive Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Training provider</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Provide classroom-based instruction to all Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Training provider</td>
<td>Campus Head</td>
<td>Oversee all aspects of Learnership implementation including develop necessary organizational support and infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Learnership Employer Alpha</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Manage the team who directly supervised Learners' worksite performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3 THEME ONE: LEARNERSHIP DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **General**

  Details about the Learnership model’s unique design and its implementation provide the first theme for analysis. Strengths and weaknesses of the learning programme’s ability to effectively produce work-ready learners were often highlighted by the participants. The implementation of the Learnership programme also presented many learning opportunities exposed by the research participants. The information illuminated a variety of factors that impacted the efficacy of the Learnership, which is discussed presently.
• **Findings**

The Learnership was noted by many participants to be a rare opportunity for people with disabilities to access education and employment. People with disabilities were often “hidden away” and unable to access typical community resources and activities, described Stakeholders V and W. Although specific reasons for their exclusion weren’t expressed, participants acknowledged that learners confronted a variety of obstacles within the community, including during their participation in the Learnership.

**Logistical barriers and physical accessibility** were lamented by several participants as having impeded the ability to access mandatory activities of the Learnership. Learners A and F and Stakeholder V described physical accessibility as a significant barrier for people with disabilities in all aspects of community life; transportation was highlighted as a particular challenge. One learner reported that the accessible public transport system, Dial-a-Ride, was oversubscribed and inaccessible public transportation prevented him from attending class on occasion. Learner A recalled several occasions when he “had fallen” or “been pushed by people” while attempting to board public trains.

**Stigma** was also expressed as a significant barrier; however the Learnership was viewed by several participants as an opportunity to educate the community about the capabilities and contributions of people with disabilities. Learners, in particular, perceived the Learnership as a mechanism through which negative perceptions were challenged. The Learnership provided the opportunity “to see what a disabled person's mind can do”, said Learner B. The Learnership, noted Learner C, provided an opportunity to show “other people... you’re not one that can’t do specific things.” Learner A described the Learnership as a “platform” from which people with disabilities can demonstrate “what you can do” rather than “concentrating on what you cannot do”.

55
Indeed, several research participants, including the staff involved in the Learnership, noted a significant **lack of understanding about disability**. Stakeholders V and Y remembered resistance on the part of the lecturers to instruct and provide accommodations for learners with disabilities as one of the “biggest challenges” to implementing the Learnership. Lecturers reportedly complained about not knowing “how to deal with” learners with disabilities and often claimed that the learners were “extra work” for which they didn’t have time, according to Stakeholder V. Lecturers were also noted to have the general perception that people with disabilities “can’t cope” with the requirements of tertiary education.

**Negative perceptions** about disability were also discovered in the Learnership workplace, according to several learners. “There was a lack of people knowing what to expect” at the worksite, commented Learner E. Several learners reported confusion regarding the learners’ role as both co-workers and ‘trainees’ on the job, which included a lack of understanding about disability and accommodation. Learner A thought his workplace experience would have been better if “they equip the people from the workplace of what is expected from the Learnership”.

As a result of the Learnership, and other diversity initiatives, stakeholders from both the training provider and the employer implemented **disability awareness trainings**. The campaign launched by the training provider included a variety of activities, including a quiz competition, guest lecturers and an art show aimed at educating staff and learners. Stakeholder V observed that after the disability awareness campaign was launched, the negative attitudes towards learners with disabilities “were a bit more positive”. Other stakeholders concurred. As time went on, remarked Stakeholder Y, lecturers began to acknowledge the similarities rather than the differences between traditional learners and learners with disabilities.
Several stakeholders representing the training provider noted that one of the biggest successes was a transformation of institutional culture regarding attitudes of staff and other learners towards disability. Stakeholder Y reflected that after the training provider started to include learners with disabilities, the “whole attitude towards disability... changed dramatically”. The inclusion of people with disabilities had a dramatic and long-lasting impact on the culture of the training provider by shifting the campus culture towards an increased understanding and acceptance of disability.

The Learnership employer Alpha, according to Stakeholder Z, also integrated disability into the firm’s diversity training programmes after the implementation of the Learnership. He added that they often used learners to assist in presenting the capabilities of people with disabilities and “to drive that message through” the organization. Furthermore, “line manager/supervisor briefing sessions” were implemented to identify strategies to manage some of the challenges. Stakeholder Z acknowledged the importance of ensuring “the [workplace] environment, in terms of people’s engagement and interaction... is conducive” to the inclusion of the people with disabilities.

The Learnership also introduced a variety of institutional impacts at the employer site, including increased numbers of individuals with disabilities in the firm. He said the number of people with disabilities in the firm increased eight-fold following the Learnership. According to Stakeholder Z, the Learnership also significantly increased racial diversity among employees with disabilities. The Learnership prepared the organization to be “aware of all these potential challenges” and improve their ability to support learners and employees with disabilities.

As a defining characteristic of Learnerships, the integration of a structured learning curriculum with practical work experience was emphasized by several research participants. Several of the learners described the classroom as a source of theoretical knowledge and the
worksite as a place to put that knowledge into practice. As Learner B commented, the worksite offered opportunity to “put...to action” what was learned in the classroom. Learner E recalled the worksite as the place to “implement what you learned” in the classroom. The classroom, commented Learner A, “prepared you for...what you are going to do” at work. “At college you get your theory” and in the work environment, added Learner E, “you get to implement what you learned”. Learner B summed it up thus, “the classroom and the worksite were complementing each another”.

While the function of the two model components appeared properly understood, disarticulation between the curriculum content and the workplace learning was noted by nearly half of the participants, including three learners. A common remark was that of Learner F, who said “the classroom did not always relate to the type of work I was doing in the workplace”. Learner D, in a statement similar to Learner A, added that “the training we got at school didn’t work with the job that I did”.

A lack of uniformity and relevance in the learning material content was also observed by Stakeholder Z, who commented that the training provider had difficulty integrating their curriculum with the current standards and expectations of industry. He insisted that the Learnership should be “customized to the employer’s circumstances, in terms of the [learning] material... and the schedule”. Stakeholder Z maintained that “a more collaborative approach” with direct engagement with the Learnership employer could lead to more relevant training and an improved experience.

Training curriculum that was lauded by training provider and employer staff as well as learners was the addition of generic employment skills training. Learner E noted the importance of receiving information about general workplace social norms and expectations by praising his workplace mentor for always telling him “it’s nice to smile, it’s nice to be polite and that”. Many learners echoed his comments about the value of learning generic
employment skills. Research participants used a variety of terms to describe the various skills that allowed them to fit in with the social expectations of the job, including effective communication skills, conflict resolution and work ethic.

Learner D specified that the most important skill learned in the classroom addressed issues such as “how do you work in an office environment [and] how do you address someone in an office environment?” Learning “how to behave in workplace” was noted by Learner G as one of the most valuable skills obtained from the Learnership.

Learner G also highlighted the importance of conflict resolution skills and she shared her experience through the following comment:

“at the classroom we had a session on how to resolve conflict which was great because we had a conflict at the workplace and I knew how to behave due to theory part I did at the college”.

She added that her workplace mentor praised her for her ability to proficiently manage the conflict.

Work ethics and interpersonal skills were also noted to have been valuable generic skills learned during the Learnership. Learner E said “it is always the work ethics… [and] people skills you can apply” to any job. Learner A noted that improving the ability to get along with others through effective “communication skills” was a benefit of the Learnership. Learner E also added that “dealing with people” was an important skill he learned, which improved his capacity to work with others in a variety of environments.

Stakeholder V corroborated the fact that the learners both required and benefited from the provision of generic employment skills, which was eventually built into the Learnership curriculum. Stakeholder V recalled that early into the Learnership implementation, an employer requested that general employment skills be taught as part of the learning programme because the “students weren’t coping as they should in the [workplace]
environment”. It was soon identified that learners at most employment sites were in need of these basic skills, which were later integrated into the curriculum through additional training “once a week”. Stakeholder V recalled that the curriculum was designed to provide “education in terms of what you wear, and how do you dress, and hygiene”, as well as problem solving strategies where learners had the opportunity to “talk about things they found difficult and then brainstorm ways around it.”

- Interpretation

As the general community was perceived by many participants to be unwelcoming and inaccessible, the Learnership provided a rare opportunity to participate in education and the workplace as well as offer persons with disabilities the opportunity to showcase their skills, abilities and contributions. The existence of significant physical barriers and pervasive stigma in a multitude of community settings were perceived by many as an irrefutable fact in the lives of people with disabilities. The impacts thereof were nearly as significant for Learnership staff as for those with disabilities themselves.

The resistance of Learnership staff underscored the challenge of stigma and misconceptions about disability. Resistance by lecturers to provide instruction and accommodations was a significant challenge. Similarly, stigma was a barrier noted by participants in the Learnership workplace. Although this response may not be surprising, it points to the ubiquity of negative perceptions about disability in the community.

Fortunately, the findings also support the positive effect education and training can have on the stigma of the disabled in many different contexts. Disability awareness training implemented by the training provider had a significant institutional impact on staff attitudes. Ongoing training and management collaboration also had a meaningful impact at the workplace in regard to effectively integrating people with disabilities. The fact that many
participants noted not only a positive impact but a sustainable transformation of attitudes towards disability in various contexts is significant.

Although several participant reports indicated an understanding of the different roles of the classroom and workplace, the applicable link between the Learnership’s theoretical content and practical application in the workplace was questioned. The combination of specific theoretical curriculum with direct application in the working world is an integral part of the Learnership design and an existing fracture could be indicative of a failing learning programme model.

The importance of integrating generic employment skills into the Learnership curriculum also became evident. The research discovered the learners lacked understanding of behavioural expectations and social norms in the work environment. This finding is particularly important when understood within the full context of the government imperative to integrate people with disabilities into the formal economy. The success rate of people with disabilities entering and maintaining competitive employment beyond the boundaries of a Learnership requires the knowledge and application of such skills.

4.4 THEME TWO: DISABILITY, RACE AND POVERTY

• General

The influence of race and poverty on the experiences of the learners with disabilities, as well as stakeholders, had distinct impacts on research participants. The relationship between disability, race and poverty, particularly in the Global South, are often excluded from educational research (Priestley, 2006: 26), and the inexorable link was highlighted by many participants. Therefore, this section is dedicated to the findings that focus on that complex relationship.

• Findings
It is worth reiterating that race, as well as disability, was a qualifying factor with regard to the acceptance of learners. This was determined, at least in part, by the Learnership employer. As Stakeholder Z confirmed, the employer was “very clear as who we need to bring [in], it was black people at a particular [academic] level”. All learners were required to be considered black, according to the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998), as well as have a disability. A racial bias was therefore inherent to the design of this Learnership.

Varying racial, cultural and language differences between the learners and the lecturers were mentioned by a couple of learners as a weakness with regard to their classroom experience. Learners A and E, whose native tongues and cultural backgrounds are different from one another, both noted challenges addressing issues because of perceived cultural differences between them and the Learnership staff. Different “racial” backgrounds, explained Learner E, created challenges in the classroom. Owing to a lack of confidence when articulating in a language other than his native tongue, Learner A said he was reluctant to confront a problem during the Learnership. He added that “when you are in a certain background, now, you have that fear…they will think they understood…whereas that is not what you are trying to say”.

Interestingly, several stakeholders from the training provider noted challenges between the learners and lecturers, but offered a very different perspective in regard to reasons for the tension. The stakeholders asserted that the challenges were attributed specifically to fears about disability rather than race or culture. The staff and lecturers were noted by both Stakeholders V and Y as exhibiting “resistance” towards the learners. However, from their perspective, race was not an influencing factor on their behaviour. There was never any reference to racial or cultural differences by training provider stakeholders with regard to the Learnership.
Race and culture also had an impact on staff at the Learnership employment site. The fact that the learners were black as well as disabled created internal “tensions” for managers and generated fear about “failing” marginalized communities. Stakeholder Z observed that several managers struggled to handle behavioural or performance issues because they didn’t want to appear “insensitive” to the plight of those from varying racial and cultural backgrounds.

It was evident from the findings that poverty, or the “disability of poverty”, as described by Stakeholder V, compounded the existing challenges. Stakeholder V stated that, for example, the learners “were coming to work not smelling good” or “they didn’t have the money to dress properly”. Stakeholder Z stressed the difference between his experiences working with “white affluent” people with disabilities in contrast to “bringing in a black [person]… who has nothing”. Stakeholder Z stated that the introduction of learners having different racial and cultural backgrounds as well as being socio-economically disadvantaged, “was another challenge”.

The lack of financial resources further complicated existing challenges for learners with disabilities to enter the working world. Stakeholder Z observed at the workplace that many learners didn’t have money for transportation, proper clothing or lunch. One learner in particular, who experienced difficulty walking, had to walk a great distance to access transportation which caused hygiene issues that were interpreted in the workplace as lack of sanitation. Stakeholder Z claimed that these were unanticipated issues that were totally foreign to managers and many struggled to deal with them.

Furthermore, even if a learner understood accepted dress and hygiene standards, many didn’t have the financial resources to afford suitable attire, observed Stakeholders V and Z. All learners were from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, which impacted their ability to access financial resources required for the learnership, such as to pay
education fees, purchase books or other learning necessities. Stakeholder V attempted to address those issues by finding sponsors to provide financial support, however, the cost of transportation, books and other necessities was considerable. She did note that accommodations for academic participation, such as scribes, were paid for by the training provider itself.

- **Interpretation**

  **Perceived differences of race, culture and language** impacted several participants. With regard to the lecturing staff, perceived differences negatively impacted the learners’ ability or willingness to fully express concerns during the Learnership. Also of particular note was the divergent perspectives of stakeholders and learners, whereby learners purported bias based upon race and culture but stakeholders consistently framed the resistance of lecturers as a resistance toward teaching individuals with disabilities.

  **Poverty** continues to deeply affect people with disabilities and its impacts were noted by several stakeholders. The lack of available financial resources made basic participation in the Learnership a challenge for many learners. In addition, the socio-economic status of the learners was marked by an absence of general knowledge about social norms in the workplace, compounding learners’ challenges to succeed in the workplace.

4.5 **THEME THREE: GOVERNMENT AND POLICY**

- **General**

  The government systems and policies under which education, training and employment are subordinate had an influence on the experience of the learners and stakeholders. The policy context provided some motivation with regard to the conception of the Learnership as a whole and was also mentioned by the participants as having a variety of influences on its provision. In addition, there was a significant focus on the educational
system currently in place for people with disabilities, which was mentioned by learners as well as stakeholders.

- Findings

The adequacy of **Special Schools** to provide the preparatory level of education required for learners with disabilities to enter tertiary training was questioned by multiple participants. It was reported that a pervasive belief existed that Special Schools provide a “lower level” of education, admitted Stakeholder Y. As a part of the recruitment process, Stakeholder V visited a variety of schools and noted that learners from Special Schools were “not at the level of the general public schools”. Stakeholder V noted that acceptance was denied several learners, however their dismissal was not because “they had an intellectual disability, but the level of their school had just not been very... adequate”. Furthermore, Stakeholder V said, learners from Special Schools that were accepted, “struggled enormously”.

Moreover, the value of a **separate educational system** for people with disabilities was also put under question. Learner A criticized the entire structure of the Special School by suggesting that the “government has affected everything about disability... putting us into different, separate schools”. He maintained that increased integration in education is required to facilitate the empowerment of people with disabilities. Similarly, Stakeholders W and Y noted the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream activities, facilitated awareness and acceptance and they considered it best practice. Furthermore, while Learner D stated that he appreciated that his cohorts all experienced disability, he and five other participants expressed a preference for inclusive learning programmes. Stakeholder Z also admitted that many of the learners had told him they preferred to be integrated at the worksite.
The influence of **policy** was highlighted by Stakeholder Z, who stated a primary reason for his firm’s participation in the Learnership was in response to national equity legislation and the related government incentives to employ people with disabilities. Stakeholder Z remarked that the firm wanted “to fully embrace [equity legislation] and make sure that we employ people with disabilities”, adding that their involvement was “the right thing to do, but...there also was some sort of incentive”. Although he also cited other reasons, he made it clear that the policy context facilitated the decision for the firm to invest in developing the infrastructure for the Learnership and the subsequent integration of employees with disabilities.

- **Interpretation**

Many participants expressed concern that **Special Schools** provided inadequate education for learners to enter tertiary education. Without proper education to access post-secondary education, opportunity to enter an increasingly competitive labour force diminishes. The implications of an ineffectual primary and secondary education system are exceptionally broad because basic education provides the foundation from which the skills development agenda builds upon.

The fundamental structure of a **separate education system** for learners with disabilities was also questioned. Inclusive education was considered by several stakeholders as a best practice method and most learners said they prefer integrated learning and working environments. The participants, therefore, advocated for an inclusive education system and many presumed that this would improve the educational standards and opportunities for adults with disabilities.

Existing **policy**, such as the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) was credited as providing impetus for one of the firms to participant in the Learnership. Stakeholder Z, from Learnership employer Alpha, noted that policy and existing skills
development incentive programs provided motivation for the firm to engage in the Learnership. In that regard, the policy appeared to have had a positive impact on promoting the integration of people with disabilities in the workplace.

4.6 THEME FOUR: OVERALL LEARNERSHIP EFFICACY

• General

The research allowed for a variety of interpretations of efficacy, which is therefore focused on short and long term employment outcomes as well as individual perceptions of the Learnership’s success. The final findings below provide an account of the employment status of each learner over the last five years as well as overall outcomes of the Learnership.

• Findings

After not being offered a position with the Learnership employer, Learner A convened his own job search. He subsequently accepted the first opportunity to make an income, which led him to participate in another Learnership. After completion, he continued his job search and concentrated on employment positions that utilized the general office administration skills learned in the original Learnership. He remained unemployed until January 2011, when he obtained a position at a large financial firm with the assistance of a national disability advocacy organization. The position is currently temporary, but he was told it will become permanent after July 2011. His job tasks closely reflect what was learned while in the Learnership which is being researched.

The Learnership employer offered a six month employment contract to Learner B, but although he enjoyed the work, he recalled that he didn’t take the probationary period seriously and his contract was not renewed. He said it was the “ignorance” of youth that caused him to lose the job and claimed that “if I was the person I am today I would still be there”. He later worked at a local butchery for about three years, where he eventually
obtained a management position. He is currently unemployed and admits he is “struggling to get a job”. His employment goal includes working “in the corporate world” again.

Learner C was not offered employment at the conclusion of the Learnership and has subsequently not been employed. She currently creates various arts and crafts at a day program for people with disabilities, which is coordinated by a national disability service organization. She’s “more into knitting”, she said, as she showed off some of her work. According to her best recollection, she has been attending this programme since 2006. She said her dream job would be secretarial or bookkeeping work.

Learner D explained the series of events that led to his employment. At the conclusion of the Learnership, he said, the person who had to resume his duties “complained, complained, complained” until “eventually they [Learnership employer] called me to come back” to work. At that time he was offered employment doing the same job tasks he performed during the Learnership. He continues to be employed in the same position to present day as a full time contracted employee, but does not have any benefits. His employment aspirations are to stay with the same company but to expand his skills and gain permanent employment.

Upon the conclusion of the Learnership, Learner E pursued an unrelated entrepreneurship venture. After opportunities there waned, he again tried to enter “the corporate world” by applying for office positions, but did not have any success. Three years ago Learner E became seriously ill and was confined to his bed for approximately a year and a half. He continues to recover from his illness, but is optimistic that he is “getting stronger now” and will soon attempt to enter the workforce again. He said his dream job would be to work in information technology or computer programming because he enjoys figuring out how things work.
At the conclusion of the Learnership, Learner F was offered a full time, temporary position with the Learnership employer, where he worked for two years until he was offered a promotion that included permanent status. He continues to be employed in that position. Although he mentioned he has an interest in pursuing a vocation in psychology, an area in which he has a bachelor degree, he is happy with his current employment “because so far every year there is a new challenge... and that’s keeping me motivated”.

Learner G was offered a contract job with the Learnership employer at the conclusion of the Learnership, where she worked for a year before accepting a permanent position, where she remained for another three and a half years. Each employment position utilized skills obtained in the Learnership. She left that position in search of greater career opportunities, which led her to employment as a production assistant, receptionist and personal assistant. However, she is currently unemployed after an injury prevented her from working four months ago.

- **Interpretation**

Upon conclusion of the Learnership, four of the seven learners were offered employment by the Learnership employer. Two learners, Learners D and F, continue to work for the same firm to present date. Learner D is in a contracted, non-benefitted position doing the same work he was doing in the Learnership. Learner F has been promoted and is currently a permanent employee of the firm. Learner B was relieved of his position after a six month probation period and is currently unemployed. Learner G voluntarily left the firm after four years of service in pursuit of greater career opportunities. Subsequently, Learner G has worked in a variety of related positions but is currently unemployed and seeking work in a related field.

Of the three learners who were not offered employment, only Learner A is currently employed in a related position. Learner A began work at a large financial firm in
January 2011. Learner E obtained employment after the completion of the Learnership, but not in a field related to the Learnership. Learner E is currently unemployed and interested in gaining employment in the corporate sector where he can use the skills gained from the Learnership. Learner C never obtained employment and is not currently looking for employment.

An important aspect of Learnership success is if the skills gained in the Learnership are effectively employed in the long term. In this regard, three of the seven learners are currently employed in a position related to the skills acquired from the Learnership. A fourth learner has a consistent history of employment in a related field, however is currently unemployed. Of the four unemployed learners, two are actively looking for work in fields related to the Learnership qualification.

Also of importance is the value that the learners themselves placed on their experience. Six of the seven learners said that they believed the Learnership did prepare them for employment. Three of the seven learners emphatically encouraged others with disabilities to participate in Learnerships. When asked what advice they would offer perspective learners with disabilities, none discouraged their participation.

The employment of people with disabilities is the heart of the research. About half of the learners are working, or have a recent work history of employment, in a field related to the Learnership qualification. However, a couple of learners are still struggling to find employment. One learner is not utilizing the skills learned in the Learnership nor is she looking for employment.

4.7 SUMMARY

The research participants provided vast amounts of information that provided a glimpse into the experiences of learners and stakeholders in the Learnership. There are
aspects of the Learnership that were noted to have had very positive impacts on the Learnership experiences and subsequent employment outcomes. Conversely, the participants identified adaptations that may improve outcomes in the future. The data collected provided the foundation from which recommendations and conclusions are presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Five provides implications, conclusions and recommendations based upon the research findings and interpretation, which are again organized in the same four themes as the previous chapter. The research participants also offered a variety of recommendations, which are included in the final section. The research limitations and suggestions for further study are followed by a final conclusion.

5.2 PROFILE OF LEARNER RECOMMENDATIONS TO OTHER LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

Each Learner was asked to provide “information or advice” to other learners with disabilities interested in participating in a Learnership. Their responses provided insight into the Learners’ experiences and supplement the demographic profile provided in Chapter Four. The advice is often rich in wisdom and could also serve as a general recommendation worthy of an audience broader than learners with disabilities.

Any person with a disability interested in participating in a Learnership should “be confident of him/herself”, suggested Learner A. He added that confidence is important because a person with a disability needs “to always prove yourself” because “people just judge you by sight not giving you a platform to give what you can do” as opposed to focusing on what one can do. However, when asked if the Learnership prepared Learner A for employment, he said “Yes, a lot because it has empowered me to understand [a specified technical task]”.

Learner B’s advice to a person with a disability who may be considering participation in a Learnership is to “think carefully before you go into a Learnership”. “You should know
where you [are] going, what you [are] going to do and how you gonna do it”, he added. Learner A suggested it is important to “get your priorities straight; don’t go for the fun of it, but make sure you know that your hard work can benefit you in the future”. When asked if the Learnership prepared him for employment he responded “yes, everything I know today plus more I got from the Learnership. Today I can go into any workplace apply for any office management position and show what I’m worth”.

Learner C encouraged persons with disabilities who may be interested in Learnerships “not to give up on everything and if they needed help or advice they could also ask me”.

If one has the opportunity to participate in a Learnership, just “do it”, advised Learner D, adding “you will not regret it”. “If you don’t have anything else to do, what do you have to lose if you do it”, he commented. However, when asked if the Learnership prepared him for employment he responded “not really, because what I learnt in the Learnership I’m not using now”.

Learner E’s advice was to “not expect [Learnership staff] to kiss your feet!” and he offered encouragement to “earn respect”. He advised interested learners to “raise your voice... if you have an issue”. He also suggested that incoming learners “not use your disability as [a] scape goat; give it your best”. With regard to the question of whether or not the Learnership prepared him for employment, he responded “yes! Living up to the standards of [Alpha] prepares you for any working environment”.

Learner F said that the Learnership “is an incredible opportunity to learn new skills and behaviour from the team you are assigned to as well as to show others the skills you can add to the team”. When asked if the Learnership prepared him for employment he stated “I think it did because it allowed me the space to develop my own voice in the environment I found myself”.


Learner G advised any persons with disabilities interested in participating in a Learnership to “ask for the qualification certificate” once they were done. When asked if the Learnership prepared her for employment she commented “yes, it did”.

5.3 THEME ONE: LEARNERSHIP DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Implications

Significant logistical barriers to the full participation of people with disabilities in a variety of environs were exposed. The research supported the fact that people with disabilities are often isolated and segregated from many aspects of community life. While only Learner A explicitly denounced his community as being a difficult environment for persons with disabilities, several other conversations were laden with comments that revealed a perception that the community in general has little tolerance for disability. The systemic exclusion of persons with disabilities both created and perpetuated a lack of understanding about disability.

Evidence of stigma, lack of understanding and ‘resistance’ towards disability were noted by several stakeholders and proved to be a significant barrier to the full implementation of the Learnership. These challenges were pervasive, and were noted to have occurred in the general community, Learnership training provider sites and employer worksites. Although attitudinal barriers were anticipated by some of the stakeholders, it remained a significant challenge to overcome.

Despite the pervasive lack of understanding and negative perceptions about disability, several participants had a cognisant interest to change those attitudes. Furthermore, the Learnership itself was perceived as a mechanism to challenge stigma and negative attitudes and to demonstrate the contributions that people with disabilities can offer. The intention to use the Learnership as a learning tool proved apropos.
The Learnership training provider and employer both implemented successful disability awareness trainings and education campaigns to reduce the stigma surrounding disability and provide information to staff to become more familiar with disability within their respective contexts. The success rate that stakeholders ascribed to their respective environs speaks to both the absence of a productive disability discourse in typical community settings as well as the transformative influence of education.

Furthermore, several stakeholders commented that the Learnership had a positive impact on their institution’s culture and/or operations. The stakeholders from the training provider remarked that exposure to learners with disabilities had a profound impact on the executive leadership and staff. Several of them noted that it created a ‘shift’ in the culture of the institution as a whole. Stakeholder Z, from a Learnership employer, said it also had lasting institutional impacts.

The findings point to a disconnection between the theoretical and the practical application of learning curriculum content. Although three of the seven learners recalled the employment site was a place to apply and practice the theory acquired from the classroom, many of the other stakeholders noted that the workplace tasks did not match the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom. This is concerning because SAQA envisaged Learnerships as a mechanism to facilitate a direct connection between education and industry to ensure that skills learned meet the demands of business (Rieser, 2004: 234). Therefore, if disarticulation has continued then Learnerships are not achieving one of its fundamental goals.

The most important learning content in the Learnership, according to participants, pertained to generic employment skills. Over two-thirds of the learners identified the need for basic skills development regarding conflict resolution, communication and other generic workplace skills. Stakeholders corroborated the fact that learners were in need of direct and
explicit instruction; the fact that a Learnership employer requested that additional training be integrated into the curriculum also points to its importance. These findings demonstrate that people with disabilities may require generic skills training in addition to technical skills training for them to be accepted in the workplace.

- Conclusion

It was revealed that significant **logistical barriers** exist that prevent or impede people with disabilities’ ability to access education and employment, transportation was identified as a primary barrier. Although Cape Town does have an accessible transit system, it was often unavailable and the public transport system was reported by some to put people with disabilities in peril. Major logistical barriers impede the full participation of people with disabilities in a variety of contexts. The lack of physical accessibility, transportation in particular, is likely one reason for the isolation of people with disabilities.

While further details were not disclosed by participants about the challenges of the physical environment, a recent study sheds light on some of the challenges people with disabilities experience in urban South Africa. Coulson, Napier and Matsebe (2006: 12) found that narrow doorways as well as impassable roadways and trails limited the movement of people with disabilities. Their research also revealed that many public services were inaccessible due to stairs, high counters, and doorways. Their research corroborates frustrations with public transportation expressed by participants and further demonstrates that the Western Cape presents a variety of barriers to participation.

Pervasive **stigma and lack of understanding about disability** plagued the Learnership. The perception of incapability and difference triggered ‘resistance’ and fear by lecturers. The perception of frailty and helplessness incapacitated employer managers to effectively handle the professional behaviour of their subordinates. Stereotypes contribute to how people respond to difference (Rieser, 2006: 134), and most stereotypes portray disability
as an ailment complicit of incompetence and unworthy of full civic participation. Although the research only offered a small sample, it continued to support the fact that negative perceptions about disability are persistent and continue to constitute an obstruction to the ability to fully participate and contribute in aspects of the formal economy.

The learners utilized the Learnership to showcase their skills and abilities in an effort to overcome the stigma around disability. As suggested by Learner A, the Learnership provided the space and opportunity for people with disabilities themselves to educate the general public through exposure. The Learnership provided opportunity for individuals to demonstrate talents and skills as well as display similarities rather than differences that individuals with disabilities share with other peers.

The significant degree to which exposure, education and training mitigated negative perceptions of disability demonstrated the efficacy and sustainability of education. Disability education campaigns implemented by the training provider and the employer resulted in successful transformation of attitudes towards disability. Indeed, reports indicated significant institutional changes as a result. As many factors that impede the access to opportunities for people with disabilities are highly influenced by pervasive stigma, the successful results of targeted disability awareness campaigns are very encouraging.

The alleged fracture between the structured learning and practical application is cause for concern, based upon the intent of the learning programme design to address an historic disarticulation between education and industry. The findings of the research demonstrate a possible disconnection; however the longitudinal study of a small sample of learners with disabilities does not provide sufficient evidence to determine if there is a systemic problem. Furthermore, the inconsistent reports may indicate that either learners are not fully aware of the intended structure of the Learnership or are only echoing
unsubstantiated information. The scope of this research is limited and is thus unable to provide conclusive evidence that this problem remains.

The overwhelming support for **generic employment skills** provided significant evidence of the value of integrating these skills into Learnerships for people with disabilities. The fact that learners expressed high regard for the tools that helped them navigate the unfamiliar social context of the corporate work environment is likely indicative of a variety of social factors that impact people with disabilities. Furthermore, recent research on youth with disabilities transitioning into the working world corroborates this conclusion through its assertion that lack or loss of work is often the result of poor interpersonal skills and behaviour as well as lack of support and resources (Nel, van der Westhuysen and Uys, 2007: 13).

Without adequate socialization, the culture of the workplace is an unfamiliar and intimidating environment with varying social norms, behavioural expectations and etiquette requirements. The findings indicate that learners with disabilities require practical information about behavioural expectations in the workplace in an effort to effectively integrate into the workplace; however it is worth noting that poverty and cultural differences, rather than disability, are significant factors.

- **Recommendations**

  **Physical accessibility**, particularly in public spaces, must be given priority as a strategy to improve Learnerships. Transportation and public services should adopt stronger regulations that mandate Universal Design be employed. The government developed progressive policies to encourage people with disabilities to enter the workforce. However, without an accessible public service system and appropriate infrastructure, the intention of full citizenship continues to be denied individuals with disabilities. Addressing physical barriers in the Western Cape was also a recommendation of several participants.
In order to minimize or eradicate the pervasive lack of understanding, stigma and negative perceptions about disability, a **community education campaign** is imperative. Learner A and Stakeholders V and Y advocated for increased disability awareness training in all community settings. The training should span the breadth of community from local centres to education institutions and should target people of all ages. A general community education campaign should be targeted at providing awareness about misconceptions about disability and support reforms that reduces logistical barriers and encourages physical and social accessibility.

A targeted, on-going and intensive **education campaign in the public and private sectors** of all industries should also be implemented. Training should focus on the legal, social and economic imperatives to promote individuals with disabilities in the workplace. It should also develop capacity within firms to understand and apply Universal Design theory, identify barriers, implement accommodations and utilize a knowledge base on how to support individuals with disabilities within the work place, thus supporting the full intent of the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998). This training should also provide information on increasing physical accessibility for people with various disabilities. The researcher concurs with Learner A that people with disabilities “**must play a major role**” in the development and delivery of the training.

With regard to Learnership design, the **disarticulation between the classroom curriculum and the practical application** should be investigated and aligned if necessary. Improving articulation requires on-going communication and collaboration between the training provider and Learnership employer, as recommended by Stakeholder Y and Learner A. Should a fracture continue to exist between these two key components, steps, including the ones recommended by participants, should be taken immediately to ensure the entire
curriculum is aligned and relevant and that historical imbalances between the education and business sectors are corrected.

**Generic employment skills** should also be integrated into all Learnerships that include people with disabilities, so as to bolster opportunity for long term employment success. Generic skills were identified by most learners as the most important skill learned for successful integration into competitive employment; stakeholders also noted its value. Skills training should focus on communication and interpersonal skills, conflict management and employment etiquette. These generic skills should, as with other curriculum components, be aligned with the generic and, when possible, specific organizational cultural norms and values of the Learnership employer.

5.4 **THEME TWO: DISABILITY, RACE AND POVERTY**

- **Implications**

Although the relationship is complex, it is important to acknowledge the influence of *race and poverty* on the experiences of learners with disabilities and Learnership stakeholders. Considering this phenomenon assists in the effort to better learn about how these factors impact learners with disabilities in a diverse and multicultural environment. South Africa’s highly differentiated social context continued to demonstrate its impacts on Learnership participants, particularly learners. Furthermore, in an effort to capitalize on current policies of redress, particularly skills development policies and economic empowerment, it is important to investigate how race and poverty manifest within the context of the research.

The *differing racial and cultural backgrounds* of lecturers were mentioned by two learners to have impacted their experiences. The two learners identified cultural differences as a factor that made it difficult for them to address important issues during the Learnership.
However, while three of the four stakeholders from the training provider discussed varying degrees of resistance by lecturers to teach learners with disabilities, neither race nor culture was discussed as a factor from their point of view. Although details about the specific scenarios are unknown, what is significant is the divergence in perspective and how it shaped the participants’ experiences.

**Disability and race** also had a direct impact on supervisors and managers at the Learnership employer site. Racial differences, together with disability, were noted by Stakeholder Z to invoke a sense of guilt in managers if learners were unsuccessful. However, none of the learners remarked on any tension in the workplace based upon race or cultural differences. Again, individual roles and personal perspective played a significant part in how race interacted with disability. Varying perspectives provide convoluted implications; however, it is significant that race and culture complicated the perspectives of Learnership employer managers.

The effects of **poverty** had significant implications on the provision of education and training and the successful employment of people with disabilities. Within the Learnership worksite, the effects of poverty were found challenging by employer managers. Learners with disabilities encountered a variety of obstacles, including not having money to pay for learning materials and transportation costs to and from Learnership activities. Although many learners were unfamiliar with appropriate work attire in a corporate setting, even those who were aware didn’t have the resources to purchase new clothing. Furthermore, while the isolation that is often inherent within the experiences of people with disabilities significantly encumbered their ability to understand the norms and expectations of the corporate world, poverty compounded those issues.

- Conclusion
The connection between race and disability is obscured by complexity and subjectivity. However, the fact that participants directly pointed to race-related issues warrants acknowledgement. The historical legacy of racial discrimination continued to leave its imprint on the experiences of the participants and, therefore, it would be remiss not to acknowledge the interconnectedness between the social construction of disability and race. Indeed, race and disability are categories of diversity that fall under the same “analytic lens” and thus require the acknowledgement of the ways in which they influenced the results of this research (DePoy & Gilson, 2004: 31). Although the research was not developed to disentangle the complex dimensions of power relations, there are some conclusions that can be drawn.

The most important conclusion regarding the intersection of race and disability during the Learnership is the role of perception. It is unknown if resistance by lecturers was exclusively based upon disability or if resistance was also influenced by race or culture as expressed by learners. Furthermore, it is also not possible to empirically analyse from the evidence in the research how the fear of ‘failing’ the learners impacted the final efficacy of employment outcomes. However, the impression of those differences had a lasting impact on how the learners viewed their experiences. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that perception can vary and have an impact on the impression of the learning experience as a whole.

Intermingled with issues of race, poverty also impacted the experiences of participants in a variety of ways. Poverty is the social space where race, gender and disability often intersect and there exists a complex connection between them. Yeo (2001: 26) asserts that “disability and poverty are often manifestations of the same processes”, which makes it difficult to separate each factor to determine individual effects on one’s experience. Although the research pool was representative of only a small group of learners, the
researcher believes it credible to heed the experiences of the stakeholders regarding the impacts of poverty because of the overwhelming research that people with disabilities are the poorest of the poor. Lack of resources strained Learnership staff and learners and lack of exposure to the world of work resulted in a lack of understanding of workplace norms. Issues related to poverty further compounded existing challenges integrating people with disabilities into both the structured and the practical learning environments. Furthermore, because many South Africans live in poverty some of the findings may have relevance to a broader population beyond those who experience disabilities.

- **Recommendations**

  The research supported the fact that **race and culture can have an impact on staff and learners**. The direct implications of how disability and race collide to create various world views are not discernable from the research. However, the results warrant a heightened awareness of Learnership staff that perceptions of racial and cultural differences may significantly impact learners’ experiences.

  The incorporation of **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** is a recommendation due to its particular usefulness in multicultural contexts. While UDL is recommended to address barriers to learning for those with disabilities, it also addresses many intersecting issues with regard to race, gender and poverty. UDL takes into account the fact that language, culture and background influences learning and may address some of the concerns that learners in this research expressed.

  Evidence points to the fact that **poverty exacerbated the lack of understanding about social expectations** in the workplace. Furthermore, evidence indicated that poverty is pervasive among people with disabilities. Some of the abovementioned challenges caused by poverty would be addressed by integrating generic employment skills into Learnership
curriculum, as discussed previously. Therefore, the research again supports the importance of including training on behavioural norms and expectations within all Learnerships.

5.5 THEME THREE: GOVERNMENT AND POLICY

- Implications

The research put under question how effectively Special Schools adequately prepare learners with disabilities for post-secondary education and training. If the experiences of the participants accurately reflect the regional or national Special School system, it would be indicative of a major systemic failure to the youth and adults with disabilities. In essence the system would be condemning most individuals with disabilities to low-skills jobs, or more likely chronic unemployment.

Furthermore, the segregation of people with disabilities that occurs within the Special School system was highly criticized and inclusive education practices were advocated by several research participants. One learner felt particularly strongly that segregating learners with disabilities had broad negative impacts on learners. While one learner expressed an appreciation for the fact that all learners had the shared experience of disability, there was an overwhelming preference by learners and stakeholders for integration into mainstream programmes and activities. This provides additional support for the value of inclusive education.

The fact that Alpha’s decision was greatly influenced by national equity legislation and the desire to capitalize on government incentives to employ people with disabilities, implies that the policy had an influence on the firm. Although Stakeholder Z also cited other reasons, he made it clear that the policy context did impact the decision for the firm to invest in providing the staff resources and developing the infrastructure for the Learnership. The participation in the Learnership thus supported the policies agenda to increase the numbers of people with disabilities into the workplace.
• **Conclusion**

Additional research is required to support or deny the claims of inadequate education at **Special Schools**. However, the implications of the anecdotal evidence warrant that the allegation be taken seriously. Basic education provides the foundation from which further education and training builds. As indicated by participants during the research, inadequate education standards prohibited many youth and young adults with disabilities from being able to access the Learnership. If this is indeed a systemic issue, most people with disabilities would be unable to access the training needed to successfully enter the workplace, resulting in a massive government failure to provide for South Africans with disabilities.

National statistics do not necessarily support the claim against Special Schools, but it does provide additional data that give cause for concern regarding the school system. Seventy per cent of individuals with disabilities have not received schooling compared to fifteen per cent of their non-disabled counterparts who were without an education in 2001, in a comparison of all racial groups in South Africa (SSA, 2005: 20). Race also played a significant role in the education levels attained by individuals with disabilities. While more than six and one half per cent of white individuals with disabilities claimed to have no education at age twenty, nearly forty per cent of their African peers had no education (SSA, 2005: 20). African women continue to be at particular risk of being excluded from educational opportunities (SSA, 2005: 22). Inadequate educational provision, particularly for black African learners, ensures future exclusion to higher education (Howell, 2006: 165). These statistics indicate existing disparities and should be analysed within the context of the allegations against the Special School system.

The fact that so many participants openly advocated for **inclusive education**, rather than a separate system, is likely indicative of South Africa’s past, but it also corroborates national and international best practice. Segregation has a long and sour history in South
Africa; furthermore, the legacy of isolation and segregation of people with disabilities around the world extends for centuries. Inclusive education was advocated in the Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001) and is also considered by many educational experts as an important next step in the provision of education for all people with disabilities (Rieser, 2006: 158).

Inclusive education may also bridge the gaps between people with disabilities from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds. Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) asserts that “... special needs education is the sector where the ravages of apartheid remain most evident”. This again underscores the direct relationship between race and disability. Inclusion has been an effective approach with learners with disabilities as well as other disenfranchised groups, and can thus be of particular value in a diverse and multicultural nation (Swain et al, 2003: 111).

Although this report does not provide conclusive results, it did indicate that policy can, indeed, encourage private sector firms to engage in employment equity projects. The limited scope of the study prevents generalisations; however, the response from the Learnership employer indicates that existing policy was a primary reason for their participation. Therefore, if only in this one case, the policy and government incentives had the desired effect of motivating the firm to increase employment equity.

- **Recommendations**

In agreement with several research participants, there is significant value in including learners with and without disabilities in learning programmes, therefore, implementing inclusive education practices within Learnerships is recommended. Inclusion refers to adopting systems to acknowledge and accommodate all learners. It acknowledges that learning barriers derive from many things including language and cultural barriers, negative
attitudes and stigma, and lack of accessibility with regard to physical structures and support systems (Department of Education, 2001: 18). Inclusion also fulfils the Constitution’s envisaged access to education and training as well as the ideals put forth in Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001). It also may begin to address some of the concerns outlined by research participants with regard to allegations of inadequate provision of education in the existing Special School system.

UDL could bolster the efficacy of education programmes and **UDL should be employed** in all learning programmes. UDL refers to the integration of multiple and flexible teaching strategies, curriculum design and learning assessment in an effort to reduce barriers to learning. It acknowledges the various ways that learners perceive, understand and engage in the learning process and expands instructional methods to reach varying learning styles. UDL principles can be applied in the classroom as well as in the workplace, particularly as the workplace is noted as a site of learning.

There are **no recommendations regarding the impact of policy** as a motivational tool for firms to improve employment equity because of the limited scope of the research. Its inclusion is to ensure that the full accounts of participants are recorded and to support the fact that policy has the potential to positively influence firms toward a more diverse workforce.

5.6 THEME FOUR: OVERALL EFFICACY

- Implications

Although not all the learners had been able to effectively access long term employment, **nearly three quarters, five of the seven learners, had at some point been employed in a related field**. Three of the seven learners are currently employed and a fourth has a consistent work history in a related field. The overwhelming majority of learners also
agreed that the experience was valuable. Furthermore, six of the seven learners said they believed the Learnership prepared them for employment.

However, the result that three learners were not offered work at the conclusion of the Learnership and two of those three have not obtained work in a related field within the past five years is concerning. It appears from this research that if learners do not immediately enter employment after the Learnership, chances of obtaining employment are slim.

Fortunately, Learner A proved that although obtaining employment is difficult, even after years of being unemployed it is possible. He undertook a lengthy and vigorous job search for many years, but eventually was able to find related employment. His current position directly utilizes skills learned in the Learnership and he concurred that the Learnership effectively prepared him for employment.

• Conclusion

The researcher concludes that the Learnership model can be an effective training model for people with disabilities. Although some learners have experienced chronic unemployment, the Learnership facilitated sustainable and long term employment for most of the learners. Those employed said they were content with their jobs and felt optimistic about career opportunities in the future. Furthermore, the learners themselves believed the Learnership was a positive experience that prepared them for the working world.

The Learnership model showed promise and there are indications that it fulfilled, or has the potential to fulfil, some of its main objectives of facilitating employment for people with disabilities. There are many factors which seem to impede the model from being as effective as possible, however. Implementing the recommendations below should dramatically improve the general efficacy.

• Recommendations
The integration of generic employment skills and incorporation of UDL into curriculum will significantly bolster the skills learners require and will improve learning. It will also improve the cultural competency of Learnerships through the adaptation of methods that meet the learning needs of all learners. These two recommendations will produce learners that are better prepared to engage in work place environs that are dynamic and require continual learning and on-going engagement with various personnel. In effect this will improve the marketability of learners with disabilities.

The development of an infrastructure to support inclusive programmes and on-going follow up that monitors learners’ progress should improve basic education outcomes and reduce the isolation the people with disabilities often experience. This includes the full implementation of inclusive education as discussed in Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001). It should also include a mechanism to offer opportunities to network with other workers and learners with and without disabilities to further strengthen communication skills and provide a needed support network.

Finally, the ubiquitous need for education and disability awareness must be comprehensively addressed through community and public and private sector campaigns. Without better understanding of the rights and contributions of people with disabilities, any learning model will fail to be fully effective. The education campaigns must explain disability within a human rights framework and include relevant policy and legislation that supports individuals as full productive members of society. It must also include information about accessibility and promote physical structures, processes and attitudes that take into consideration the needs of individuals with disabilities.
LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research satisfied a partial requirement for the fulfilment of a Master of Arts degree, therefore was limited in scope. The research obtained data from stakeholders over a period of time to identify the long term implications of the Learnership on the ability of people with disabilities to access employment; however the data may eclipse recent innovations in Learnership implementation. Furthermore, while the research sample was representative of the learners in the Learnership, the sample was nevertheless small and generalisations are cautioned.

The research produced many unanswered questions that could become suitable topics for further research, including the relationship between disability, race and poverty with regard to accessing employment. The research did not address issues relating to gender and disability because gender was never discussed by participants in terms of impacting the project. However, education and employment statistics indicate disparities that also warrant research. Research that examines these relationships would inform training providers, employers and policy makers as to more effective strategies to facilitate employment for people with disabilities within a multi-racial, multi-cultural social context.

Claims made by the research participants indicate that an examination of Special Schools would be useful. Special Schools were alleged to provide inadequate education which impacted learners’ ability to access post-secondary education and training. Some participants also questioned the value of a separate education system for learners with disabilities. Both of these issues have serious implications for people with disabilities and the current government systems.

The disarticulation between the structured learning curriculum and the practical application of the Learnership employer is a concern that was expressed by learners and well as stakeholders and warrants further research, particularly because the Learnership model was
designed to mitigate the chasm between industry and training and education. Effective and relevant curriculum that is both theoretically understood and applied practically is a key component of the programme model. More research investigating the current efficacy of the important partnership between business and the education sectors in Learnerships should be considered.

5.8 CONCLUSION

People with disabilities have enormous contributions to make to the South African social, political and economic landscape, and it is unfortunate that remarkably low employment rates continue despite government efforts to bolster their economic participation. Many factors contribute to less than one per cent employment rate, including some of the barriers identified in the research. Furthermore, the findings indicated that many obstacles were not a result of disability per se, but would be experienced by many persons without a disability who come from a poverty stricken background; however, disability further complicated the learners’ with disabilities ability to fully participant in the Learnership. It was in order to improve the tragic failure to effectively integrate people with disabilities into the workplace that motivated the research.

Considering the above it is clear that this study answered the primary research question, confirming that Learnerships were demonstrated to have the potential to effectively facilitate employment for people with disabilities. However, this conclusion must be tempered against the fact that the research did not take into account every possible variable which, if possible, would have been beyond the scope and resources of the research. Furthermore many social, structural and governmental barriers continue to exist that undermine Learnerships’ ability to be a more effective tool in reducing chronic unemployment of people with disabilities. Therefore, although the research demonstrated
that a Learnership can produce the skills necessary for people with disabilities to enjoy sustainable employment, generalizations are cautioned.

The secondary research questions, designed to highlight the subjective experiences of the research participants, were also addressed. Strengths and weaknesses of the Learnership were identified by the research participants, as were several strategies that could improve both the experience of learners with disabilities as well as facilitate employment. Taking these experiences into consideration during the implementation of Learnerships, and the subsequent recommendations, would advance employment opportunities as well as the independence of and contribution from people with disabilities, fulfilling promises of redress from the government, strengthening the economy and reducing poverty.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


You are invited to participate in a research study designed to increase understanding about the effectiveness of learnerships at supporting people with disabilities to gain access to competitive employment. You were identified as a participant or stakeholder in a learnership in 2004 or 2005 in which False Bay Further Education and Training institution was the training provider. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions before agreeing to participate in the study. Alternative formats of this information can be made available upon request at the contact information listed below.

The study is being conducted by Tamara Merrill, a student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. This study is a partial requirement for a Master of Arts degree in Development Studies.

STUDY PURPOSE

The research objective is to determine if the current learnership model has effectively facilitated sustainable employment for people with disabilities and to identify opportunities for improvement. This research seeks to understand the challenges and successes experienced by the learners and other stakeholders in effort to explore ways to design, implement or instruct a learning programme that can most effectively fulfill the commitment of full access to education and training for people with disabilities. It will inform the education system, disability advocacy organizations, private industry and government agencies of strategies that may improve employment outcomes in effort to support the increase the number of individuals with disabilities participating in the workforce.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

If you agree, you will be one of approximately 20 research participants who will be participating in this research.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to do the following:

You will be asked to participate in a written questionnaire and a personal interview with the researcher. The questions seek to obtain information about the personal experiences of those who had a significant role in learnerships with disabilities. This information will assist in understanding the successes, challenges and potential opportunities to advance people with disabilities into the workforce. A written questionnaire will be administered prior to a personal interview. All personal interview questions will be semi-structured which will offer for research participants add any additional information important for the purposes of this study. All information will be recorded to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the information. The written questionnaire and interview are expected to take about 90 minutes in total. Interviews will be scheduled at a time and location that is agreed upon by the research participant and researcher.
CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to keep your personal information confidential. The survey information will not include any identifying information (e.g., names, addresses, personal information) to help ensure anonymity. All research information will be stored in a password-protected personal computer and will only be accessed for data analysis by the researcher. Research information will only be available by university staff and their designees for purposes to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the research.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with the investigator(s).

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

For questions about the study or information about the study in an alternate format, contact the researcher, Tamara Merrill, by email at tamara.merrill@live.nmmu.ac.za or by phone at 071-757-2580. You will be contacted by the researcher within ten days to confirm your decision regarding participation.

☐ I voluntarily agree to participate in the study

☐ I do not wish to participate in this study

__________
Printed Name

______________________________
Signature

______________________________
Date
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this written questionnaire as a part of your voluntary participation in a research study to increase understanding about the effectiveness of learnerships in supporting people with disabilities to gain access to competitive employment. This is a preliminary questionnaire that will assist in proving information prior to a personal interview. Alternative formats of this information can be made available upon request at the contact information listed below.

RESEARCH PROJECT NAME

The Efficacy of Learnerships for People with Disabilities in the Western Cape

STUDY PURPOSE

The research objective is to determine if learnerships have facilitated sustainable employment for people with disabilities and identify opportunities for improvement. This research seeks to understand the support, challenges and the successes experienced by the learners and other stakeholders. This information will be used in effort to explore ways to design, implement or instruct a learning programme that can most effectively fulfill the commitment of full access to education and training for people with disabilities. It will inform the education system, disability advocacy organizations, private industry and government agencies of strategies that may improve employment outcomes in effort to support the increase of individuals with disabilities participating in the workforce.

NAME: ________________________________________
DATE: _________________________________________
EMAIL: ___________________ ______________________
PHONE: _______________________________________
AGE: __________________________________________
GENDER:
Male □
Female □
DISABILITY: ____________________________________
Please complete each question thoroughly. Your detailed information will help to identify improved methods of implementing learnerships and other learning programmes. Each question refers specifically to the learnership in which you participated in 2004 and/or 2005.

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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Did you participate in a learnership programme designed for people with disabilities in 2004/05?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>COMMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did you complete the learnership?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>COMMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did you receive a qualification? If so, which one?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>COMMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Were you offered paid employment at the conclusion of your learnership?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>COMMENT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What were the top three reasons that you choose to participate in this particular learnership?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

6. What would you consider the strengths of the classroom component of the learnership?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B

7. What would you consider the weaknesses of the classroom component of the learnership?
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______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
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8. What would you consider the strengths of the employment component of the learnership?
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9. What would you consider the weaknesses of the employment component of the learnership?
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______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
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______________________________________________________________________________
10. What information or advice would you provide to a person with a disability who was interested in participating in a learnership?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

11. Do you feel the learnership prepared you for employment? Why or why not?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

If you have questions or would like assistance to be able to complete this questionnaire please contact the researcher, Tamara Merrill, at tamara.merrill@live.nmmu.ac.za or 071-757-2580.

Your participation is crucial in understanding how learnerships can be improved to create better employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Your time and participation is much appreciated.
Thank you for participating in this research study to increase understanding about learnerships and what can be done to increase their effectiveness at supporting people with disabilities to gain access to competitive employment. Your participation is completely voluntary and your time is appreciated. The information you provide will offer important insights that will be used solely for the purpose of this study. This interview will be recorded to ensure that the information you provide in this interview is accurately reflected in the research.

Research Participant Information:

Name:_______________________________________________
Age:_____________________
Role in the learnerships:___________________________________
Learnership Dates:_____________________________________
Learnership Employment Site:___________________________

FOR LEARNERS ONLY

1. What were the primary reasons that you chose to participate in this learnership?
2. How did you initially find out about this learnership opportunity?

FOR OTHER STAKEHOLDERS ONLY

1. What was your role in the learnership?

FOR ALL RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

1. What do you consider to be the greatest achievement(s) of the learnership as a whole?
2. Describe the process you experienced during the admittance stage of the learnership.
3. What were the strengths about a combined learning programme that included both classroom and on the job employment training?
4. What were the challenges about a combined learning programme that included both classroom and on the job employment training?
5. What learning structure or schedule do you think would be the most beneficial for learners with disabilities?
6. What challenges did you experience prior to the beginning of the on-site learning?
7. What support was available prior to the beginning of the on-site learning?
8. What challenges did you experience during the classroom component of the learnership?
9. What strategies were used, by you or others involved in the learnership, to address those challenges?
10. What strategies would you suggest be used to address those challenges today?
11. What challenges did you experience during the practical, or on the job site, component of the learnership?
12. What strategies were used, by you or others involved in the learnership, to address those challenges?
13. What strategies would you suggest be used to address those challenges today?
14. What information or advice would you provide upcoming learners with disabilities who are interested in learnerships?
15. What information or advice would you provide other stakeholders who may be interested in participating in a learnership?
16. What other factors influenced the experience and outcome of the learnership?

FOR LEARNERS ONLY

1. What skills, knowledge and abilities did you obtain from the learnership?
2. What, if any, skills, knowledge or abilities had you hoped to obtain from the learnership but did not?
3. Were you offered employed within six months of receiving your qualification?
4. If so, was the job related to the qualification earned from the learnership?
5. What was the employment position or title? Who is the employer?
6. Was a paid job offer made to you by the employer that you worked with as a part of your learnership?
7. Are you currently employed? If so, where? How many hours per week?
8. What is your wage?
9. Is your current position within the same sector in which you received your qualification?
10. What other factors in the learnership influenced its ability to facilitate employment for the learners involved?
11. What is your dream job?
12. How does it relate to the learnership in which you participated?
13. How does it relate to your current employment or employment for which you are currently seeking?

That concludes the interview. Thank you for your time and for sharing your experiences. The information you provided will assist in better understanding learnerships through the experiences of learners and other stakeholders.
ETHICS CLEARANCE INFORMATION

Faculty of Business & Economic Sciences  
*Managing tomorrow*

School of Economics, Development and Tourism

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**Module Code: EDS 510**

Lecturer Name: Dr. A.J. Greyling

Title: The Efficacy of Learnerships for People with Disabilities in the Western Cape

Ethics Clearance Number: H 2011 BUS DTS 03