Game to work: The social capital of employees with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace

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Presented in fulfilment of

Doctor of Philosophy

October 2015

Declaration

I declare that:

This thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, is clearly acknowledged.

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Abstract

This South Australian study adds to the small but expanding body of literature and research about the employment experiences of workers with an intellectual disability and the relationships they develop to gain and maintain employment in a supported workplace, which is an important part of their transition to adulthood.

This research used small group interviews with 14 workers with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace to examine their relationships within the work environment. The interviews were video recorded to ensure that all the interview responses were documented in an appropriate context and allowed the responses of each participant to be acknowledged. Without parallel video and audio recordings the responses of participants who experienced communication difficulties may have been lost. Interviews with four trainer/supervisors from the same worksite assisted in deepening the data set and gaining a different perspective to issues raised in the small group interviews.

The relationships within the workplace are described throughout this study in terms of social capital and aspects of bonding, bridging and linking social capital to examine the relationships employees have with different groups in the workplace. The findings of this study indicate that the relationships formed by the participants appeared strongest with co-workers (*bonding* social capital) where the participants formed friendships with their fellow workers, but in this study these friendships were not generalised or carried over to self-initiated or self-managed interactions outside of the workplace. While the development of relationships with other workplace groups (*bridging* social capital) appeared to be functional, connected directly with work requirements, the relationships with those in power or authority (*linking* social capital) were not sufficiently developed to provide the incentive and support that is used by workers in the general community to seek advancement, either within the workplace or through changing organisations.

The study also found that the participants interviewed considered work to be an important part of their life. Productive work was seen by the participants to have a value that gave social status, contributed to a healthy lifestyle and provided an income which gave discretion and choice. However, it appears that the workplace and not the work was most important. It was the workplace not the work that was valued and provided the opportunity to build relationships and develop friendships. The workplace provided the reason that the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study wanted to work. It allowed them to be with friends and avoid the fear they had that they would become profoundly lonely if they stayed at home.

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
CDDH	Centre for Developmental Disability Health (Victoria)
DECD	Department of Education and Children's Development (South Australia)
DWEER	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
ICF	International Classification of Functioning
ID	Intellectual Disability
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Educational Research
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SASRAPID	South Australian Sport and Recreation Association for People with Integration Difficulties
SRV	Social Role Valorisation
TAFE	Technical And Further Education
UK	United Kingdom
UPIAS	Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organisation

Glossary

Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE)*:* (previously known as Australian Disability Business Services) are commercial businesses that provide employment for people with disability.

DECD Guidance Officer: a professional officer employed by the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Development (DECD) who holds dual qualification and registration as an educational psychologist and a teacher. This position is the major gatekeeper for additional educational programmes, resources and funding for students with disabilities in South Australia. Their major role is the identification of eligible students under the DECD Policy (2006) and the recommendations for additional educational services.

Disability (Special) Units in Schools: are located in Government and Private schools and cater for a diverse range of students with significant intellectual and/or physical disabilities. The Manager, Regional Support Services manages the approval process for all special options. Placement in a special option will be dependent on available vacancies and student priority. In all cases a DECD Guidance Officer (educational psychologist) recommendation is required.

Open employment: is where people with intellectual disabilities work alongside people without disabilities in integrated, meaningful employment in a community setting, supported by their employment agency.

Social Inclusion Board: A South Australian Government Board established by Premier Rann in 2002. The Board functioned as an influential factor in the Labor Government of South Australia's social justice policy for a decade. The Chair of the Social Inclusion Board (Monsignor Cappo) was appointed Social Inclusion Commissioner and an independent advisor to the Executive Cabinet and member of the South Australian Economic Board in 2006. Both were highly influential political positions in the South Australian Government. The Board's reports and documents influenced the South Australian Government's Social Inclusion Initiative and the

State's Strategic Plan, until being disbanded in 2012 on the change of Labor Premier. In particular the Board's *Strong voices: A blueprint to enhance life and claim the rights of people with disability in South Australia (2012-2020)* remains one of the most influential documents on social policy in South Australia.

Special Classes: are located in some Government schools, and have a smaller number of students than regular classes (up to 8 students in junior primary classes, up to 12 students in primary and secondary classes). The teacher is a specialist teacher and has additional support from a Support Services Officer (SSO). The curriculum is modified and adapted to meet the needs of all students. These students usually have an intellectual disability. The Manager, Regional Support Services manages the approval process for all special options. Placement in a special option is dependent on available vacancies and student priority. In all cases a DECD Guidance Officer (educational psychologist) recommendation is required.

Special School: separate Government education centres which cater for a diverse range of students with significant intellectual and/or physical disabilities. The Manager, Regional Support Services manages the approval process for all special options. Placement in a special option is dependent on available vacancies and student priority. In all cases a DECD Guidance Officer (educational psychologist) recommendation is required.

Student with a disability: students who are assessed by a DECD Guidance Officer (educational psychologist) as meeting the eligibility criteria (2007) under the South Australia Department for Education and Child Development's Policy (2006) and are recommended for additional educational services.

Supported employment: (previously and often referred to as sheltered employment) refers to the situation where people with intellectual disabilities work alongside other people with a disability in a segregated, specially tailored setting. Typically, in this setting, the only people without disabilities in the workplace with whom people with an intellectual disability would interact would be their supervisors. In Australia these services are currently referred to as Australian Disability Enterprises.

Supported wage system: the Australian Government scheme to promote employment for people who cannot work at full award wages because of a disability. The process

allows employers to pay less than the minimum wage by matching a person's productivity with a fair wage.

Trainer/supervisors: support personnel employed by Australian Disability Enterprises to support people with a disability in that supported workplace. Their role may include production supervision and support on the 'shop floor' through to personal support for the individual worker. Most fulfil a number of support roles for the worker at different times of need. Some may be the first and immediate contact for a personal or production problem on the 'shop floor', while others are more involved in the general management of the organisation, only becoming involved directly with the worker in times of crisis or transition.

Acknowledgements

It is often said ‘in jest’ that a PhD will only be read in its current form by five people, your examiners, your supervisors and your mother. In my case replace ‘mother’ with long suffering wife who read countless drafts, correcting spelling and grammar. To leave it at that would do a serious injustice to the unquestionable support and understanding Libby has shown me over the many years this journey has taken. Many weekends were overtaken by ‘work’ to the detriment of jobs around the house or places to go and people to see. Blithely saying I appreciate her unconditional support and encouragement does not even begin to cover my gratitude for her part in this journey and in my life.

This journey is bookended with Davids. The initial thrust and encouragement to undertake a PhD came from Dr David Snewin. David’s constant support very early in the journey kept me going despite some challenging early hurdles.

The matching bookend, Dr David Armstrong, came on board at a time when knowledge of the presentation process and demands of the University were paramount. His guidance has smoothed the process through the University maze and provided a sense of support from the University that was most welcomed.

In between these bookends, the constant rock has been Professor Kathryn Moyle whose unswerving support and encouragement has provided the sounding board, leadership and professional support without which this study would have just remained ‘a good idea’. Her support has been much more than academic, it has been about seeing the PhD process as a learning opportunity that very few people have the privilege of experiencing. The patience she showed to me as a novice writer and the confidence she had in my ideas is bearing fruit. The respect I have for her teaching ability has grown beyond measure. It would appear trite to say that without her this research would not have been completed, but the truth is often simple and underestimated. For Kathryn’s friendship during this journey I am forever grateful.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Individuals with an intellectual disability often have a range of associated difficulties which restrict employment options. Difficulties with learning, processing information and grasping concepts such as money, present barriers to employment (Timmons, Cohen-Hall, Bose, Wolfe & Winsor, 2011). As well, those with an intellectual disability may appear awkward or inappropriate in social situations (Schalock, Keith, Verdugo & Gómez, 2010) and depending on the severity this behaviour may have an impact on participation in employment (Luecking, 2011). Further, understanding, learning, and remembering new things are major challenges to those with an intellectual disability (World Health Organisation/The World Bank, 2011).There is an expectation amongst employers they lack the competence, confidence and capability to be part of the workforce, yet many prove to be valued, reliable, long-term employees (Foley, Dyke, Girdler, Bourke & Leonard, 2012).

This first chapter discusses the value of work as a social involvement that gives social status and provides some of the assets and accessories that are valued in society. Societal attitudes, policies and practices can be supportive or obstructive to employment for an individual with an intellectual disability (Verdonschot, de Witte, Reichrath, Buntinx & Curfs, 2009). The chapter sets the background and current context of the support and encouragement for people with intellectual disabilities to participate in the workforce in South Australia.

Research suggests that those with an intellectual disability seek many of the same aspirations as those with other forms of disability, including meaningful employment (Stewart et al., 2012). However, many young people with an intellectual disability

remain unemployed or underemployed despite having the capacity to be part of the workforce (Timmons et al., 2011).

This study set out to identify key factors which encourage people with an intellectual disability to gain and maintain employment: what made them 'game to work'? The study interviewed workers with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace examining their relationships at work using a theoretical framework informed by the concept of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986).Three aspects of relationships in the workplace were used to focus discussion: *bonding* with fellow workers; *bridging* with those they may come into contact with in the workplace; and *linking* with those in power or authority positions in the organisation (Woolcock, 2001).

This research set out to discover why workers with an intellectual disability in South Australia have the confidence, competence and capacity to be part of the workforce. By investigating the factors that make the participants of this study have an active interest in the pursuit of employment the study examines the key workplace relationships that encourage those with an intellectual disability to actively seek to gain and maintain employment.

In this study, three questions about employee's confidence, competence and capacity to develop bonding, bridging and linking social capital in the workplace were asked:

1. *What relationships are formed by workers with an intellectual disability in the workplace?*
2. *How important is work for individuals with an intellectual disability?*
3. *What relationship do workers with a disability form with the employing organisation?*

Workers with an intellectual disability were asked about their networks and relationships in the workplace in small group interviews. The small group interviews used in this study allowed the examination of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in the workplace. Throughout this study social capital is used to describe the shared spirit of social networks, where reciprocity and trust is built as critical foundations to provide connections between individuals (Putnam, 2000). The small group interviews addressed the three aspects of social capital identified by Woolcock (2001): bonding, bridging and linking to analyse the development of social capital in

the workplace by workers with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace. In particular this study examined: bonding with fellow workers, bridging with others, and linking with those in positions of power or authority.

Woolcock's (2001) three aspects of social capital guided the questioning and organisation of the data collected, to build a picture of the relationships and networks developed by the workers with an intellectual disability in their workplace. The methodology aimed to capture the experience of a group of workers with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace through their own stories, collected in their own workplace. Interviews with the trainer/supervisors from the same worksite provided a depth of knowledge of the organisational culture and a contextual background. The trainer/supervisors also provided additional data that enabled the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the issues raised by employees with an intellectual disability, expanding areas that the workers may not have been able to communicate because of their disability.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this study was to expand the knowledge about how and why workers with an intellectual disability actively seek to gain and maintain employment and subsequently to provide further guidance and support for others with intellectual disabilities.

Numerous Australian and South Australian Government reports (Social Inclusion Board, 2009, 2011; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2005, 2009) have suggested that the aging workforce and changing community expectations about employment for people with disabilities will see a rise in the number of people with an intellectual disability in South Australia considering employment, and an associated growing demand for support services.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data currently suggests that individuals with an intellectual disability continue to be underrepresented in the workforce with many being unemployed or remaining underemployed when they are seeking full time employment (ABS, 2011). This study adds to the small but expanding body of literature and research about the transition to adulthood by young people with an intellectual disability. According to Mill, Mayes and McConnell, research in this

field is growing, however the "voices of young people with intellectual disabilities are under-represented" (2010, p. 194). This study aimed to collect the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability working in a supported workplace using their own 'voice' by listening to them tell their stories in small group discussions.

While the notion of 'voice' has many meanings in research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, the concept of 'voice' is used throughout this research as the process of allowing the participants to speak for themselves, explaining how they locate themselves in their experiences, so that a "more nuanced, complicated, and productive story may be told" (Mazzei & Jackson, 2012, p. 746).

This study used small group interviews to collect the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace in gaining and maintaining employment. Drawing together the stories of these workers, has led to the conclusions drawn in Chapter 6 that provide an insight into why workers with an intellectual disability may choose to gain and maintain employment.

While research and statistics in many countries about the levels of employment for workers with intellectual disabilities are similar (Luecking, 2011), specific Australian information is currently sparse when compared to employment for other disability groups (ABS, 2011). The lack of specific data suggests that much of the statistical data produced by governments and organisations about the employment of people with an intellectual disability is affected by difficulties of collecting data in an ethical way from a group of respondents who have communication difficulties. As such questions asked may be prone to misunderstanding or be answered in a way that made the data collection unreliable (ABS, 2010).

Using employment data collected almost a decade ago Dempsey and Ford (2009) found that the majority of those with disabilities of working age in South Australia are at worst unemployed and at best underemployed. This finding is supported by the ABS (2011) employment statistics discussed later in this chapter indicating little change. This is further reinforced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) 2011 finding that despite changes in community attitudes to disability, government policy initiatives and increased government funding, only a

small proportion of the Australian population with any form of disability access the funded services available to support their transition into the workforce and employment rates remained static (NCVER, 2011). The NCVER (2011) report did not however, address the reasons why those with a disability were not accessing the available funding. This finding reflects much of the available literature (Simonsen & Neubert, 2012; Wehman, 2011; Edwards, Rentschler, Fujimoto & Le, 2011), that focuses on the description, availability and conditions of employment (Mortimer, 2012), and does not examine the relationship between participation in employment and the outcomes from being a worker (Maddison & Beresford, 2012). While Shogren and Plotner (2012) report a lack of research specifically about those with an intellectual disability and their employment experiences, even less is written about their participation in decisions about seeking employment (Timmons et al., 2011). This study used small group interviews to collect the experiences of gaining and maintaining employment of workers with an intellectual disability and has used their trainer/supervisors to add depth and expand the stories of their experiences.

In 2005, DEEWR argued that the impact on population ageing in Australia was equivalent to a drop of nearly 200,000 workers by 2020. While employment overall was expected to grow, the growth was likely to be substantially influenced by the demographics as an ageing population nears retirement. While the impact will differ in each State with New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland having the largest numerical shortfall in available workers, DEEWR (2005) predicted that the relative impact was likely to be greatest in South Australia, the ACT and Tasmania, where the demand for additional workers was predicted to be substantial. While their predictions appear substantiated, the uptake of employment by people with a disability has not matched expectations and has remained static since 2005 (ABS, 2011).

In the eyes of some, those with disabilities represent an untapped resource to meet the expected demand for workers (Disability Services South Australia, 2012) and may provide additional opportunities for those with an intellectual disability to become employed or increase their hours of work. For the wider Australian community, programmes that encourage those presently underrepresented in the

workforce to become engaged will be important in a period where the working population is diminishing due to ageing (ABS, 2011).

Despite this optimism the South Australian Social Inclusion Board which was setup in 2002 to provide advice to the South Australia Government on Social Justice issues, found little evidence of employers in South Australia having responded to this call during the period 2002 to 2011 (Social Inclusion Board, 2011).

Any change to the levels of employment for those with an intellectual disability requires major shifts in "government policy, workplace practices and vocational preparation of youth with an intellectual disability" (Shaw, Jacobs, Lysaght, Ouellette-Kuntz & Lin, 2012, p. 409). If these shifts are achieved it will create a system to encourage those who have an intellectual disability to enter the workforce because they will have a support system that matches their needs and aligns to the wider employment community's demands (Simonsen & Neubert, 2012).

Recognition that support systems are vital for those with an intellectual disability to consider employment as a viable post-school option (Beyer & Robinson, 2009) is a necessary step. Recent changes in South Australian government policy have encouraged the development of a range of new services from both government and private sectors. The Disability Employment Services, Australian Disability Enterprises, and other government or privately funded personal support programmes are now in place. Despite these changes, employment for those with an intellectual disability has barely changed in Australia (Edwards et al., 2011; ABS, 2011). It is anticipated that in the future the National Disability Insurance Scheme will provide additional choices about employment for people with an intellectual disability as they take personal control of their support funds and are more able to choose the services they require (Butteriss, 2012).

The ABS (2011) suggests that as the number of people with a disability increases in Australia more and more individuals will have direct relationships with at least one person with an identified disability. As a result of greater involvement with people with a disability the ABS (2011) suggest there will be a greater understanding of the abilities of these individuals and an increasing societal expectation that those with a disability will participate more in the workforce. The DEEWR (2009) report

suggests that those who previously were not considered able to be part of the workforce because of their intellectual disability will be required to replace the aging population providing a pool of employable workers who were not previously available. If government expectation of increased involvement in employment for people with disabilities continues the future expectations and experiences of those with an intellectual disability may be different to their predecessors. This research therefore, may provide some insight into the factors that are required for a person with an intellectual disability to gain and maintain employment.

Foley et al. (2012) found that paid work is a common desirable objective for those with a disability. For the individual with an intellectual disability, paid work is not only seen as providing the basic means of sustaining life and improved quality of lifestyle, but the activity itself provides an identity and self-esteem for the individual and their family and those closely associated around them (Bill, Cowling, Mitchell & Quirk, 2004; O'Brien & Dempsey, 2004; Somavia, 2001). Employment is seen as a far more positive alternative for psychological wellbeing, developing larger social networks and higher self-esteem in those who are unemployed (Forrester-Jones, Jones, Heason & Di'Terlizzi, 2004; McVilly, Stancliffe, Parmenter & Burton-Smith, 2006). Kober's (2010b) finding that those who are employed report a higher quality of life than their peers who are unemployed, reinforces the South Australian experience, that once a person with any form of disability was in the 'system' they "fared much better than those who disengaged" (Social Inclusion Board, 2009, p. 7). Through specifically listening to workers with an intellectual disability, this study intends to add to the knowledge about workers with an intellectual disability.

1.3 The context of this research

In South Australia the numbers of people who have a disability or are severely limited in the areas of self-care, mobility and communication have increased from 15,081 in 2003/4 to almost 22,000 in 2010/11 and are predicted to further increase (Disability Services South Australia, 2012). While this is the most recent data available from the ABS collected in 2006/2007, there is evidence that these numbers are increasing in line with ABS predictions (ABS, 2011).

The ABS (2011) data for employment of those with a disability in Australia reinforce earlier findings by the OECD (2009) showing the employment for those with disabilities in supported work places and open work placements has grown steadily since the 1990s. Unlike their peers without a recognised disability, the OECD 2009 study argues that employment outcomes for people with a disability do not follow the economic trends that affect employment in the general population. Rather, opportunities for employment for those with a disability have remained consistent with an upward trend in all developed countries over the past twenty years where paid employment for those with a disability gains greater acceptance (Berthoud, 2011; World Health Organisation, 2007; Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2002). The Social Inclusion Board (2009) found the employment trends for workers with an intellectual disability in South Australia to be similar to these national and international trends. However, most individuals with intellectual disabilities in South Australia are still unemployed or at best underemployed (ABS, 2011) and remain in the same low skilled positions with low wages and little opportunity for advancement (Burrows, Ford & Bottroff, 2001).

The South Australian Government's Social Inclusion Board provided important leadership in the discussion in the area of social justice from 2002 to 2012. The Board was established by South Australian Premier Mike Rann in 2002 to reduce homelessness and support young people staying at school to complete 12 years of formal education. Significantly in 2006 the Chair of the Board became the Social Inclusion Commissioner and was appointed as an independent advisor to the Executive Committee of State Cabinet and became a member of the South Australian Economic Development Board. Elevation by Premier Rann of the Chair of the Social Inclusion Board to these positions underlines the influence and authority of the Board as a major change agent for young South Australians considered as having disadvantage or disability (Rann, 2012). The Social Inclusion Board was disbanded in 2012 on the change of Premier (Rann, 2012).

The employees with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study all attended school in South Australia and shared the formative influences of growing up in a similar situation to the people aged 18 to 25 years with disabilities whose experiences were reviewed by the Social Inclusion Board from 2002 to 2012.

Advancements in medicine, health and hygiene now mean that the general population is living longer. Life expectancy has risen from about 55 years for men and 60 years of age for women in 1900, to 80 for men and 85 for women in 2009 (ABS, 2010). With an aging population the percentage of people recognised as having a disability is also expected to increase. In June 2010, 13.5% of the Australian population were aged 65 years or older compared to only 4% in 1901 (ABS, 2010). Similar changes to the life expectancy of those with an intellectual disability could also be expected. In the United States (US) the life expectancy of those with an intellectual disability was reported to be dramatically changing. People with a moderate to severe intellectual disability are now routinely approaching the average life expectancy experienced by the general population (Perkins & Moran, 2010) and as such will more than ever expect to experience all the life transitions and milestone points of their peers. While no specific research is available in the United Kingdom (UK) those with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities are expected to follow similar life pathways to the general population as they age (Knapp, Perkins, Beecham, Dhanasiri & Rustin, 2008).

Research by Ellison (2010) indicates that in South Australia those with an intellectual disability who are working have an increased life expectancy and greater opportunities to pursue friendships, leisure and recreational activities during working lives than those who are not employed. These benefits continue through to the retirement phase of their lives. According to Ellison (2010) for many South Australians working in supported workplaces, their improved health and commitment to their employment is so great that they show little eagerness to retire, even when approaching the age normally considered appropriate for retirement.

Young people with a disability in Australia join young people throughout the world in a period of transition that no previous generation has faced (Mortimer, 2012). The traditional indicators of adulthood are undergoing rapid change (Settersten, 2012). Even with this, one of the most notable findings from the Social Inclusion Board's *Strong voices* report (2011) was that despite the many obstacles, young people with a disability tended to fare better than those of a similar age who did not finish school and had become disengaged from formal education (Social Inclusion Board, 2011). The report found that those in this group without a recognised disability did not 'fit'

the systemic requirements for support from organisations or agencies and so were unable to access programmes and services that were helpful into adult life (Social Inclusion Board, 2011). As a result the outcomes were often better for those with a disability because they were in and remained in the 'system' and had greater access to support services in their transition from school to adult life. The Board however, was critical of the general requirements and performance of the various organisations involved in the support of adults with a disability in South Australia. In an earlier report the Social Inclusion Board (2008) criticised the model of service delivery for people with disability that "operated as a series of silos rather than an integrated service that is people centred" (Social Inclusion Board, 2008, p. 43). Specifically, this 2008 report found that those with an identified intellectual disability suffered most from the dislocation of services that resulted from organisational models that were not integrated or person centred (Social Inclusion Board, 2008). The criticisms of services for those with a disability by the Social Inclusion Board in South Australia are common throughout Australia and in countries with similar structures such as the UK, and New Zealand (Butteriss, 2012).

In all these countries, alongside the official services for those with an intellectual disability provided by government departments, there are a number of complementary services provided by semi and non-government organisations. These services are established to fulfil needs not covered by the more mainstream disability services. Many of these complementary services are not part of large governmental or institutional organisations and struggle to attract ongoing and recurrent funding from government grants (Social Inclusion Board, 2008). The support programmes provided by the complementary services tend to have a history of support for specific disability groups often founded by parent groups to provide services that governmental organisations were not providing. However, these too, were found by the Social Inclusion Board (2008) to operate in a series of 'silos' with little interagency liaison. The lack of cooperation or collaboration between departments, organisations and agencies is particularly unhelpful for individuals with a disability at times of transition such as from school to post-school options.

For a person with a disability the time of transition from school to post-school options can be uniquely stressful, uncertain, frustrating, and dis-empowering for both

the individual and the wider family when compared to their peers without a disability (Martin, 2011). In particular, for parents and caregivers, the time of transition may lead to negative feelings at the loss of the highly structured, supportive special education system where they deal with one teacher or school, and experience an unfamiliar and often disjointed adult service system (Social Inclusion Board, 2008). These changes occur at a time when the physiological and psychological changes of adolescence overlay the social and cultural changes faced by the young person with a disability in moving from school into an adult environment (Gillan & Coughlan, 2010). Gillan and Coughlan (2012) suggest that at this time of transition the place of the wider family support systems cannot be underestimated if the young person with an intellectual disability is to be successful in gaining and maintaining employment.

In South Australia, the Social Inclusion Board found that many young people with a disability (including those with an intellectual disability) did not easily make the transition from school to work. The number of people with a disability who were unemployed or underemployed was found to be unacceptable given the wider expectation in South Australian society that those with a disability who had the capacity to work should receive the support needed to ensure they can fulfil that right (Social Inclusion Board, 2009). Several Social Inclusion Board Reports (2008, 2009, 2011) to the Government of South Australia highlighted weaknesses in the South Australian employment support system for people with disabilities. These reports highlighted the disproportionate percentage of young people with a disability who leave school by age 16 compared to their peers who typically leave one or two years later. The reports consistently found that those with an intellectual disability and their families had difficulty in comprehending the eligibility and reporting demands of the service organisations and often disengaged from the very services that they required to gain and maintain employment. The Social Inclusion Board made a number of recommendations to the South Australian Government to improve outcomes for people with disabilities in South Australia (Social Inclusion Board, 2011). However as the Disability Services South Australia Report (2012) noted the recommendations were largely ignored at the change of Premier early in 2012, and the Social Inclusion Board was disbanded shortly after (Rann, 2012). Up until late 2012, of the 19 recommendations made to the South Australian Government by the

Social Inclusion Board only a small number have been fully or partially implemented by the South Australian Government (Disability Services South Australia, 2012).

1.4 Justification of the study

The research for this thesis adds to the small but emerging literature on why those with an intellectual disability make decisions about seeking and maintaining employment. Not only is there little research in this field (Timmons et al., 2011; Yanchak, 2005), but it is acknowledged by agencies such as the ABS, that establishing guidelines for collecting data about those with an intellectual disability is "particularly challenging because of the complex nature that affects the physical, social and emotional well-being of individuals and their families" (ABS, 2010, p. 4). Despite these problems, recent work has shown that strong and consistent conclusions for research practice can be drawn using innovative research theories and methodologies (Cook & Inglis, 2012; Nind, 2011; Williams, 2011). Such research practice has encouraged this researcher to explore methodologies that address the complexities of collecting data from those with an intellectual disability.

Even with the advances in research methodologies encouraging the involvement of people with disabilities in the past few years, there is limited research about the decision making of people with intellectual disability when they consider employment as a post-school option (Timmons et al., 2011). While accepting that employees with and without a recognised disability may experience some difficulties in gaining and maintaining employment and often encounter similar challenges, those with an intellectual disability typically experience a greater level of difficulties than their peers without a recognised disability (Caton & Kagan, 2007; ABS, 2009). While this research is not a comparative study, knowing the greater difficulties typically experienced by those with an intellectual disability in gaining and maintaining employment, encouraged this researcher to listen to the stories of the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability.

Despite the changes and innovations in research methodologies, Atkinson (2005) also found there is little research focused on the narrative 'life story' of those with an intellectual disability. Of that which has been done, most studies, involving adolescents with an intellectual disability, have focused on the transition from school

to career related post-school options, concentrating on placement rather than pathways (for example see Timmons et al., 2011; Dempsey & Ford, 2009; Beyer & Robinson, 2009). These studies mostly use statistical data to follow the employment of individuals with an intellectual disability through their position in the workforce and follow the hours worked and the income provided through employment. They neglect the engagement of those individuals in the work and workplace. Although some studies (Schalock et al., 2011; Beyer, Brown, Akandi & Rapley, 2010; Werner et al., 2009) have looked at the quality of life, these studies too have not reported on the engagement of the individual with the work and the workplace.

What does appear from the slowly expanding body of research is that the training and support that those with an intellectual disability receive at school prior to entering a post-school option is a key factor in employment success (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2004). Linked to this finding, the formulation of a plan of action to secure the necessary resources and supports in a proper and timely manner (Martin, 2011), is an essential part of this transition process to the desired post-school option.

Despite the obstacles to entering the workforce, Kuchinke (2011) established that the option of paid or voluntary work was an important factor in providing self-worth and developing positive self-esteem for individuals with an intellectual disability in all sections in the community, including those working in a supported workplace (Beyer & Robinson, 2009). Similarly, in the general community, Hodson and Sullivan (2008) found that work provides a sense of station and value for the individual in that community and while the nature and degree of participation in the workforce may vary over time depending on individual circumstances, the aim for all was the choice of lifelong involvement in the workforce. However, for some with a moderate to severe intellectual disability, employment involves workplaces specifically established to provide an opportunity for them to be part of the workforce. The workers with an intellectual disability working in such supported workplaces carry similar positive perceptions to work as the general community and see themselves as productive and valued employees (Beyer & Robinson, 2009). In addition, workers with an intellectual disability working in supported workplaces report seeing themselves as having opportunities to take part in training and develop relationships with fellow workers within the workplace (Verdugo, Jordan de Urrıes, Jenaro,

Caballo & Crespo, 2006; Beyer et al., 2010). The organisations established to provide a supported work environment that have been shown to increase the feelings of self-worth and self-esteem in their workers, have seen an increase in demand for places in the past decade (Ellison, 2010).

There are however, critics of such supported work environments. They argue that some workplaces offer little or no meaningful choices to the people who are employed within them (Storey, 2006; Social Inclusion Board, 2008). Where an individual has limited communication or cognitive skills, critics claim there is little opportunity for the individual to explore options and express self-determination through a commitment to being part of the workforce (Powers, 2006; Storey, 2006; Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001). The lack of research in the wider field of employment for people with an intellectual disability has also been acknowledged by many writers (Taggart, Truesdale-Kennedy, Ryan & McConkey, 2012; Foley et al., 2012; Timmons et al., 2011) and has become the major driver of this study.

1.4.1 Work: A rite of passage for those with an intellectual disability

In South Australian society, like most western societies, the gaining and maintaining of employment is a significant rite of passage toward full adult status. In the eight diverse countries studied by Kuchinke (2011), work was seen as a major indicator of adult status and a sign of full active participation in society and, along with family, a major part of an individual's life. For many years in developed societies such as Australia, paid work has defined one's place in society, and has reflected the material quality of life that comes from that work (Flore, Jenaro, Orgaz & Martín, 2011). It is also recognised that an individual's sense of worth and self-esteem are linked to one's paid work and the feeling of contributing in a meaningful and valued way to society (Mill et al., 2010). Paid work also gives people the opportunity to widen their social contacts and it provides a structure to the day (Lippold & Burns, 2009). Work is a place where young adults learn new roles for specific situations (Moon & Baker, 2010). New workers learn how to be a worker, a colleague, someone who gives instructions, and someone who follows instructions and changes the individual's identity to reflect their new position and status as workers and participants in society (Ibara & Barbulesco, 2010). As Hodson and Sullivan reflect:

> In post-industrial society, work has become a 'master status' determining a person's overall position in society and his or her enduring sense of dignity and identity (2008, p. 30).

In contemporary Australian society a common opening question in social situations can be, 'What do you do?' or more simply, 'What is your job?' Often it is really an inquiry about 'Who are you?' Paid employment has equated to value in society and gives a person status (Kelley-Laine, 1988; Jiranek & Kirby, 1990; Clement-Heist, Siegel & Gaylord-Ross, 1992). Social situations reinforce work as a central definition of self (Morgan, 2010). Work contributes to an individual's self-esteem and provides a feeling of confidence and wellbeing that comes from knowing his or her work is valued in society. But for those without a respected or appreciated employment position, such social situations may lead to feelings of inferiority and worthlessness (McAllister & Bigley, 2002). It has been suggested by Hodson and Sullivan (2008) that in Australia, USA, UK and similar developed countries, those without regular paid employment experience a challenge to their self-esteem and self-worth when in new or changed social situations.

Those working part time or in casual positions are now more common in contemporary Australian communities and the greater acceptance of part time work has helped the acceptance by the general community of those with a disability who do not work full time (Berthoud, 2011). Ellison (2010) argues that for those with intellectual disability where medical, social or emotional obstacles require part time work there is greater social respect and appreciation than occurred in previous generations. The increasing expectations from society to be in paid work is part of the changing experience for those with an intellectual disability. As such this study aimed to capture the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability who have already gained employment in a supported workplace and are actively involved in maintaining their position.

1.4.2 Transition to a new phase of life

The experience of developing the relationships necessary to gain and maintain employment is invaluable in developing independence (Carter, Austin & Trainor, 2012), while the job itself provides a socially valued meaning to life and the income

derived from paid employment offers opportunities for independent choice and improved quality of life (Mill et al., 2010).

While, Mortimer (2012) found that the phases and pathways of the transition periods in the lives of people with an intellectual disability may be similar to the general population, the outcomes are often different. Ellison (2010) specifically suggests that the transition of individuals with a disability from school to work, independent living and the other milestones of adulthood are similar to the general community, but they may occur through different time frames and may be highly dependent on the support network in place for each individual.

Young people with an intellectual disability in South Australia are reflecting a worldwide trend where they are eager and willing to seek employment (ABS, 2011). Despite this the choice of entering the workforce has not always been available to them (Timmons et al., 2011).The Social Inclusion Board (2008) suggests that in South Australia the difficult eligibility criteria for services and the lack of planning and skill development for employment by service organisations could be a reason why young people with a disability are at risk of not choosing some type of paid employment as a first post-school option.

There is little research to guide the employment process and the broader transition to adulthood specifically for those with an intellectual disability (Stewart et al., 2012; Nind, 2008). Arguably the broader issues of quality of life, post-compulsory education and training, residential independence, and recreational pursuits that ought to be addressed alongside employment as a major rite of passage for young people with a disability, have not been fully explored in contemporary research (Noonan, Morningstar & Ericson, 2008; Kober, 2010a; Crockett & Hardman, 2010b). Extrapolation from general disability research in employment may provide some directions, but as was highlighted in the opening of this chapter, there are many unique issues facing workers with intellectual disabilities that are due to the nature of an intellectual or cognitive impairment. This study identifies some of these issues by capturing through stories the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability who have experienced the transition to employment in a supported workplace as a post-school option.

The diversity of people with an intellectual disability however, provides a caution that permeates this research. Those with an intellectual disability are not a homogeneous group but a collection of individuals whose experience, skills and abilities are varied and diverse (Gunderson & Siegel 2001). Verdonschot et al. (2009) suggest that some are able to make the transition from school to work with little or no help. The difference for the group requiring little or no help may be decisions by families and services that lead to additional support services at earlier times than usual (Verdonschot et al., 2009). In South Australia many of the services that are required by people with an intellectual disability have eligibility conditions or structures that can make early access to services difficult (Social Inclusion Board, 2008).

In South Australia for some with ongoing chronic health issues, behavioural challenges or other debilitating or episodic needs, the Social Inclusion Board (2009) reported a substantial gap in appropriate services available at the time of transition from school to post-school options. The Board also reports though that, for many others, involvement with service and support agencies begins in the school and along with the school provides effective services and encouragement to ensure the individual with an intellectual disability is able to enter the workforce. Unfortunately the Social Inclusion Board do not proffer reasons why individual differences in taking up support to enter the workforce occur, but research by Verdonschot et al. (2009) highlight the impact of environmental factors that may provide a clue.

Despite government optimism, Murray (2007) found that completing a required number of years at school does not guarantee an independent livelihood for an individual with an intellectual disability. Even with an increased attention to the school-work transition process, and despite many policy and legislative changes in the past decade those with an intellectual disability appear to remain underrepresented in the workforce compared to other disability groups (Timmons et al., 2011).

In summary then, while research focussing on those with a disability in the workplace is increasing, little has been written specifically about those with an intellectual disability in the workplace (Stewart et al., 2012).The literature about individuals with physical and developmental disability and Autism Spectrum

Disorder (such as Cimera, Wehman, West & Burgess, 2011; Carter et al., 2012) is reviewed in Chapter 3 and the difficulty researching in the specific field of workers with an intellectual disability (Nind, 2008) is discussed.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This study examines why people who have a recognised intellectual disability, who work in a supported workplace, have the aspiration and ambition to be part of the workforce: what makes workers with an intellectual disability seek to gain and maintain employment? The answer to this question was sought through small group interviews with workers with an intellectual disability currently employed in a supported workplace, complemented by the general perspectives of trainer/supervisors. In this way the small stories collected from participants may allow this research to have wider relevance.

This doctoral thesis adopts the following structure: introduction and theoretical framework; literature review; research design; analysis of data; the presentation of research findings and conclusions.

This first chapter provides the aim and justification for the study. It looks at work as a rite of passage and entrance into a new phase of life by the individual with an intellectual disability. The chapter then outlines the South Australian context in which workers with an intellectual disability operate and the family, community and governmental expectations that affect a person with an intellectual disabilities participation and decision making about entering the workforce for the first time.

The second chapter provides a review of the literature relevant to the employment of people with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace. It introduces 'social capital' (Bourdieu. 1986) as the framework that informs the subsequent methodology and basis for the analysis of the experiences of the participants in this study. The literature review identifies the lack of research into why workers with an intellectual disability seek to gain and maintain employment and points to the lack of research directly asking them about employment and the value of work. The discussion in this chapter highlights Nind's 2008 conclusion that using interviews to collect data with people with an intellectual disability was practicable but also possessed many inherent challenges.

The reasons for using small group interviews in the research design of this study is outlined in Chapter 3. Collecting the stories or the narratives of workers with an intellectual disability is introduced as a way of looking at why some have the aspiration to develop social capital in the workplace to gain and maintain employment. The impact of social capital in the workplace is also examined using the three aspects first identified by Woolcock (1998) and adapted for the workplace as discussed previously. Furthermore, the decision to interview a number of trainer/supervisors is explained. The trainer/supervisors role in this research was to provide an understanding of the context and expectations of the organisation the workers are part of. Interviews with trainer/supervisors were used to provide both information about what the workers with an intellectual disability said and for expansion of participant's responses, where the level of communication appeared to limit the ability to express perceptions, feelings and ideas.

The method used to analyse and evaluate the data from the small group interviews and trainer/supervisor interviews is outlined in Chapter 4. The decision to select a thematic analysis methodology that concentrates on the content of the text rather than the way it was conveyed (Riessmann, 2008) is discussed, along with the importance of the video recording of the small group interviews as part of this methodology. The thematic analysis approach has relied on persistent processing and coding of the transcriptions from the small group interviews to elicit strong common themes that underlie the stories of the workers with an intellectual disability who were interviewed. The resolution of the dilemmas identified as issues in research involving people with intellectual disability are discussed and the reasons for the selection of this methodology are outlined.

Chapter 4 also considers specific problems of interviewing people with intellectual disability identified in Chapter 3. The method of data analysis used to overcome these difficulties and provide confidence in the results is discussed in detail within this chapter.

The findings of this study are discussed in Chapter 5 in terms of relationships that the participants developed within the workplace. The development of social capital through building bonding, bridging and linking relationships is used to discuss the relationships with people the participants work with, those who supervise them and

those whom they come into incidental contact with during the workday. Chapter 5 then examines the importance of work for the participants. The process of gaining employment and the participants memories associated with this time are discussed in terms of work ethic and the importance of the trappings of work as signs that as workers they are valued in the community and they value their employment. Lastly this chapter discusses the relationships between the participants and the employing organisation and focuses the tensions inherent in a workplace established to provide employment for an identified group rather than profit. The summary of the key findings at the end of Chapter 5 provides the structure for the concluding chapter.

Chapter 6 discusses the key findings of this research and draws together conclusions in terms of *bonding, bridging and linking* social capital in the workplace to provide answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 3. The chapter also provides a critique of the lessons learned about interviewing people with an intellectual disability and suggests possible areas for further research. The conclusions drawn from this research aim to add to the wider body of knowledge about employment opportunities for those with an intellectual disability.

1.6 Summary

Despite most people with an intellectual disability not being fully employed and the relative levels of employment remaining static, there are a greater absolute number of people with disabilities in the workforce than ever before. As a result, those in the general workforce are presently much more likely to have contact with a worker with a disability than in previous eras.

This chapter also points to where this study adds to the knowledge about the experience of workers with an intellectual disability in gaining and maintaining employment through the examination of:

- The place of those with an intellectual disability in the South Australian context
- Work as a rite of passage for those with an intellectual disability
- The opportunities for employment

- The research conducted with those with an intellectual disability about their experiences in gaining and maintaining employment, and the transition process.

The review of literature in the next chapter, discusses what is known about workers with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace, and introduces the three aspects of social capital in the workplace (bonding, bridging and linking) that are the foundation of the investigation, analysis and conclusions throughout this thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the workplace relationships of individuals with intellectual disability. The concept of 'social capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) in the workplace is placed as the central theoretical concept in this thesis. Social capital is used throughout this study to embody those attributes of wellbeing that are important for gaining and maintaining employment. Social and medical models of disability are discussed in relation to the participation in the workforce by those with an intellectual disability.

Within this chapter it is argued that there are difficulties including those with an intellectual disability in empirical research. The problems have been associated with a lack of confidence in the data gathered, (Cook & Inglis, 2012; Turk et al., 2012). The field is further clouded by the common practice in the literature to treat those with a disability as a homogeneous group rather than individuals with varied and diverse experiences and skills (Gunderson & Siegel, 2001). This chapter argues there is a lack of research that focuses specifically on the experiences of those with an intellectual disability in the workplace.

The chapter concludes by highlighting two deficiencies in the research about workers with an intellectual disability, to date:

- The lack of literature about the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability in the workplace
- The scarcity of studies regarding issues that face female workers with intellectual disabilities.

2.2 Theoretical foundation

Social capital is increasingly used to represent the important attributes necessary for success in the workplace connected with worker well-being (Stewart et al., 2012;

Flore et al., 2011) and arguably, the long term viability of any business enterprise (Bandiera, Barankay & Rasul, 2007). Social capital, however, is not widely or routinely used in literature examining those with an intellectual disability.

Bourdieu describes social capital as:

> The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249).

While no studies were found that directly used Bourdieu's theory of social capital to examine experiences of work for people with disabilities, Björnsdóttir and Jóhannesson (2009) used Bourdieu's theory to examine self-advocacy for people with an intellectual disability in Iceland. Hallahan (2010) used an autobiographical methodology in an article where she used Bourdieu's 'field', 'capital' and 'habitus' to examine her own practice as a social worker/academic with a disability. The conclusions drawn by Hallahan (2010) about her personal narrative as a practitioner (worker) discussed in terms of 'field', 'capital' and 'habitus' encouraged this study to investigate the experiences of those with intellectual disability of gaining and maintaining employment using Bourdieu's concepts of social capital (1983, 1986) to examine the relationships that are formed by workers with an intellectual disability in the workplace.

In the late 1990s interest in concepts associated with social capital grew (Bates & Davis, 2004). The publication of Putnam's (2000) *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*, was the catalyst for researchers to revisit social capital as a means of describing relationships within a community. As such the next decade provided a proliferation of publications using social capital as the basis for investigation of community and other relationships in health (Yamamura, 2011), diversity (Uslaner, 2011), and new technologies (Bauernschuster, Falck & Woessmann, 2011). In the field of disability studies its use is much more limited, but a small number of writers have used social capital as the basis for examining relationships involving people with disabilities (Cohen-Hall & Kramer, 2009; Allan, Smyth, I'Anson & Mott, 2008; Williams, 2004).

Research exploring social capital in employment/the workplace has focused on social capital being equated with the health of employees and considers ultimately

the impact on production or on the economic success of the business (Antoci, Sabatini & Sodini, 2011; Kouvonen, 2008; Suzuki et al., 2010). This study in contrast, focuses on the experience of workers with an intellectual disability in terms of their gaining and maintaining employment. However, in light of the studies above, the effect of social capital on the economic and financial viability of the business at which workers with an intellectual disability are employed must also be acknowledged.

Field (2003) suggests that the concepts of social capital share the intangible aspects of daily life that contribute to interaction between individuals, fellow workers, and family and community members that are part of the individual's social unit. In particular goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse were emphasised early in the twentieth century as central to the concept of social capital (Hanifan, 1916). The exploration of social theory by Bourdieu (1983) and later Coleman's (1994) discussion of the social context of education revived early concepts of a social/community form of 'capital' or 'wealth' that could be built upon for individual and community social improvement/advancement (Hanifan, 1916, 1920), encouraging an interest in personal networks and relationships. Writers such as Yamamura (2011) and Sacconi and Antoni (2008) continue to debate the importance of networks and strong personal relationships in and around employment but also work to highlight common issues which include: the sharing of social norms and of values; mutual trust; cooperation and; in certain circumstances, collective actions by workers in the workplace (Bookman, 2004; Skocpol, 2003).

Putnam's seminal study of an American community documented the concept of social capital as a form of 'communal spirit' of social networks, where reciprocity and trust were built as critical foundations for the development of what was described as human well-being (Putnam, 2000). This influential definition of social capital positions it as a social bond which underpins civil society, and uses the analogy that it is as the social glue that holds social institutions together. Other accounts of social capital describe it in a more limited way and conceptualise it as useful organising idea to examine the quality and quantity of social interactions (Claridge, 2007).

In the late 1990s The World Bank, described social capital in terms of:

> The institutions, the relationships, the attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development. … It includes the shared values and rules for social conduct expressed in personal relationships, trust, and a common sense of 'civic' responsibility that makes society more than a collection of individuals (The World Bank, 1998, p. 1).

This concept of social capital emphasises that individuals do not exist in isolation but are part of a number of social relationships and networks that shape, and are shaped by, that individual and all the others who share the relationship. It is a combined experience of all members that shape and reshape the relationships to form the ever-evolving network (Wellman & Gulia, 1999). For Stone, Gray & Hughes, the structure and relationship within and between these networks are seen as important and they describe them in further detail:

> [The] structural characteristics of networks include the size of the network, the density of social ties within the network, and the diversity of the backgrounds and social institutions of the network members (2003, p. 9).

In the workplace, social capital is the network of individual relationships, involving attributes of trust and reciprocity that "lead to outcomes of mutual benefit" (Stone et al., 2003, p. 1) for both the worker and the business.

These characteristics are evident in employment contexts and according to certain research studies the quality of these workplace-based networks is connected to several beneficial outcomes, including: as a predictor of economic success for the workplace organisation (Cohen & Prusak, 2001); and personal health for the worker (Rocco, Fumagalli & Suhrcke, 2011).

2.3 Workplace relationships

New employees typically adjust to the expectations, culture and social norms that are part of each workplace (Levy & Yupangco, 2008; Helliwell & Huang, 2005). In his study of employability skills required in Australia, Pardy (2004) argued that reliance on gaining generic skills through immersion in various workplaces during work experience was not enough, because the participants' awareness of similarities and differences from previous experiences may not be transferable to the unique characteristics of the real situation. This finding is particularly relevant given that the

generalisation and application of learning and experience in building relationships is greatly affected by intellectual disability (Schalock et al., 2010).

Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of social capital are useful in describing the investments and achievements necessary for workers to build the social capital needed to gain and maintain employment. The unique features of relationships in a workplace can be discussed in terms of "a durable network … of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu's, 1983, p. 249) and the development of relationships as building social capital within that workplace.

Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of 'doxa', 'field', 'habitus' and 'illusio' are used in this study to describe what the durable networks of social capital look like in the workplace. Through 'learning to play the game' ('illusio') within the social positions and structures of the workplace (the 'field'), workers learn to find their place in the workplace, adopting the common, regular processes and practices ('habitus') of that workplace, with successful workers developing a core set of standards and principles ('doxa') that are valued and validated within that workplace (Bourdieu, 1986).

It is particularly Bourdieu's (1983) concept of 'illusio' which is relevant to this study, where in order to build social capital individuals are required to 'learn to play the game'. For Bourdieu (1986) the complexity of gaining and maintaining employment involves 'learning how to play the game' (illusio) within the social constructs of the workplace (habitus) and through this developing a core set of social standards and principles (doxa) that are valued within that place of work (field). The decision for those with an intellectual disability to participate in employment could also be described in terms of Bourdieu's (1986) 'illusio'. The development of self-determination and decision making in the workplace for those with an intellectual disability is part of learning how to 'play the game of work' and can be linked to the people, circumstances, and experiences, described by Timmons et al. (2011) as factors that shape employment related decisions. However, 'illusio' is much more than an acknowledgement of a social culture:

> Illusio is in the fact of being interested in the game, of taking the game seriously ... that is, the fact of attributing importance to a social game, the fact that what happens matters to those who are engaged in it, who are in the game. Interest is to 'be there', to participate, to admit that the game is worth playing and that the stakes created in and

> through the fact of playing are worth pursuing; it is to recognize the game and to recognize its stakes (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 76-77).

Illusio represents the choice of wanting to be involved and that the effort involved is worth it.

Adopting the trappings of dress, behaviours and symbols associated with a specific occupation or workplace is indicative of being a 'worker' and can be described in terms of 'habitus'. Bourdieu described 'habitus' as "a set of dispositions, reflexes and forms of behaviour people acquire through acting in society" (2000, p. 19) that distinguishes the different positions in society. Through adopting the dress and behaviours associated with the workplace ('habitus') and knowing the 'rules of work' ('illusio') associated with the particular workplace, workers with an intellectual disability can become confident in answering the question 'what do you do?' Through this, the worker develops a set of standards and principles of behaviours and attitudes ('doxa') that are valued within the workplace ('field') by fellow workers. As such in social situations the worker feels dignified, knowing that they are part of the workforce because they do the things that workers do (Mortimer, 2012).

Being valued and validated in the workplace provides the worker with a sense of place (Hodson & Sullivan, 2008), self-worth and positive self-esteem (Kuchinke, 2011). This idea of self provides a worker with identity and a higher quality of life than those who do not have this experience (Kober, 2010b).

2.3.1 Social capital in the workplace

Social capital and associated terms such as 'illusio', 'habitus', 'doxa' and 'field' are relational, complex and debated concepts within sociological theory. Consequently this thesis pragmatically suggests that 'social capital for the workplace' is relational and context-based. This is arguably also consistent with Bourdieu's (1986) social capital constructs of 'illusio', 'habitus', 'doxa' and 'field'. There are several advantages for this study as a consequence of emphasising a relational and context-based interpretation of social capital. For example the workplace relationships formed within this particular relational conceptualisation of social capital can be fruitfully aligned to this study of the relationships between participants and co-

workers; participants and people they have incidental contact with; and participants and those who are in positions of power or authority within the economic organisation.

Throughout this research the concept of social capital is used to include the traits of trust, reciprocity, co-operation, shared norms and a shared understanding. The value and nature of social capital as a construct is to provide a theoretical context in which to examine the collaborative skills, attitudes and awareness required to maintain a position in a community or workplace (Daniel, Schwier & McAlla, 2003).

A relational and context-based (or applied) interpretation of these key concepts from the writings of Bourdieu also beneficially fits with this study's use of the explanatory framework used by Woolcock (2001) throughout this study to examine the relationships between the worker and other work groups. The relationships are conceptualised in terms of Woolcock's (2001) three aspects of social capital in the workplace: bonding, bridging and linking:

- **Bonding social capital** has been equated to the close relationships in the immediate workgroup
- **Bridging social capital** has been used to refer to the wider often incidental relationships with other workgroups, customers and the general public
- **Linking social capital** has been defined as the connection with people who are in positions of power or authority that provide income, social or physical resources to the workgroup.

These definitions are examined in depth in Chapter 3 and provide the framework for the collection and analysis of data discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Woolcock's (2001) three distinct relational aspects of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking) have been used in this study to examine the relationships formed by workers with an intellectual disability as they develop the necessary social capital to gain and maintain employment.

This thesis proposes that parallels to the development of social capital in the community as outlined by Woolcock (2001) can be usefully drawn with the workplace and in the context of enquiring into what makes individuals with an

intellectual disability seek to gain and maintain employment. Furthermore, Timmons et al. (2011) found that it is the networks and relationships developed within the workplace that determine participation and progress within the work environment.

As discussed previously highly developed social capital in the workplace has been linked to improved outcomes for business (Cohen & Prusak, 2001), where higher measures of social capital in an organisation result in:

> Better knowledge sharing … Lower transaction costs … Low turnover rates, [retaining] valuable organizational knowledge … Greater coherence of action due to organizational stability and shared understanding (Cohen & Prusack, 2001, p. 183).

Helliwell and Huang (2005) also highlight that the management and staff of any organisation have characteristic networks of trust and reciprocity specific to that organisation that must be learned by a newcomer to successfully be part of that organisation. The inference from Cohen and Prusack (2001), and also Helliwell and Huang (2005), is that there is a type of social capital that is specific to the workplace community that leads to more successful businesses.

Research has emphasised that the construct of social capital facilitates information exchange, knowledge sharing, and knowledge construction found to be important for workplace success (Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), 2005). These social resources are created through continuous interactions in a specific social context, building reciprocal trust, and maintained through a shared understanding of the tasks required to achieve an ultimate workplace outcome, such as the manufacturing of a suitable product, or the delivery of a quality service (Cherniss, 2000). In addition, there are a number of workplace characteristics that encourage those with an intellectual disability to maintain employment. In particular Lin (2008) found the expected pace of work, job structure, and a culture of acceptance that encourages social interactions with a supportive managerial approach, were important for success for those with an intellectual disability in the workplace (Cappellari & Tatsiramos, 2011; Social Inclusion Board, 2011).

Those who have experienced generational unemployment or other family or community expectations that may discourage an individual's participation in the workforce may not have developed sufficient social capital to find employment on their own (Mortimer, 2012). While recognising the complex and unique needs of

individuals with an intellectual disability, it appears that professionals and families working together provide the best opportunity for those with an intellectual disability to find employment post-school (Stewart et al., 2012).

Many schools and support groups provide social skills training to supplement the family's efforts to develop the social skills of their child. Unfortunately over the years a number of studies have shown these types of programmes are largely ineffective (Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2006; Kavale & Mostert, 2004; Vaughan, Bos & Schumm, 2007). In particular the findings of a meta-analysis by Mostert (2013) of social skills training programmes for people with learning difficulties and intellectual disabilities showed that: "the outcomes for Social Skills Training (SST) efficacy are mixed, at best, with very little evidence of strong efficacy effects across the literature" (2013, p. 87). Courses based on teaching explicit social skills often assume the family and community experience will fill in the implicit skills necessary for developing social capital. The Dusseldorp Skills Forum (2006), however, found that many families are unable to provide the necessary experience for these programmes to be effective. Even if families are able to provide the environment and preparation, skills gained from families and community experience may not generalise into the workplace (King, Baldwin, Currie & Evans, 2006). Social skills programmes for those with an intellectual disability and the associated training courses, are often unsuccessful, not building the social capital required to be part of the workforce. Perhaps this is a reason why many with learning difficulties or an intellectual disability continue to find the transition into employment difficult (Kavale & Mostert, 2004).

It is the extension of social capital into the workplace that provides the vehicle in this study to examine the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability in gaining and maintaining employment. The questions outlined and discussed in Chapter 3 have their basis in the 'bonding', 'bridging' and 'linking' aspects of social capital outlined by Woolcock (2001) and adapted for the workplace. The following sections examine each of these aspects of social capital using Woolcock's (2001) concepts and Stone et al's 2003 description of social networks adapted for the workplace, focused to expand Woolcock's (2001) bonding, bridging and linking social capital into the workplace.

2.3.1.1 Bonding social capital in the workplace

In this study, the relationships that are formed in the workplace with those in the immediate workgroup are examined in terms of Woolcock's (2001) 'bonding social capital' and further developed by Stone et al. who provide a context in which this 'bonding social capital' is used:

> Bonding social capital is argued to exist in dense or closed networks, and helps people 'get by' in life on a daily basis (2003, p. 10).

In the workplace, bonding becomes the development of the relationships that are characteristics of an immediate workgroup. Rocco et al. (2011) found that the ability to get on with fellow workers within the immediate work group had a positive effect on physical and psychological health for workers with an intellectual disability, characterised by less time off and increased productivity. Interestingly, Bandiera et al. (2007) found that the relationships among workers could indeed be a factor in production output within a workplace and as such the continuation of the business. If this finding is extrapolated to a supported workplace, and the relationships among workers with a disability is critical to production output, then the continuing existence of the supported workplace may be reliant on cultivating workplace relationships. The findings from this study about the development of social capital in a supported workplace may provide some directions.

2.3.1.2 Bridging social capital in the workplace

The wider relationships in the workplace between employees in other workgroups, customers or the general public are examined in this study in terms of Woolcock's (2001) bridging aspect of social capital, contextualised for the workplace by Stone et al. (2003):

> Bridging social capital involves overlapping networks that maybe make accessible the resources and opportunities which exist in one network to a member of another (2003, p. 10).

In the workplace 'bridging social capital' refers to the wider relationships with other workgroups that exist within the greater business environment. It involves both formal and informal networks, and provides the greatest opportunity for a worker seeking advancement to become aware and seek out options that may not exist within the current workplace. Kober (2010b) and Stone et al. (2003) suggest that deliberate networking within an industry by an employee in the general community

was a major determinant of promotion and increased salary opportunities by using these connections to change employer in order to take on increased responsibility as part of their career development. The inability to build bridging social capital by those with an intellectual disability may be a limiting factor to their career advancement and full employment, and may help to explain the findings of Dempsey and Ford (2009), and later Timmons et al. (2011), that most workers with an intellectual disability stay in one organisation for their entire working life with little opportunity for promotion or advancement and are often underemployed for most of this time. This research aims to examine the participants in this study who have developed the bridging social capital to build the networks for career advancement.

2.3.1.3 Linking social capital in the workplace

Relationships between workers with an intellectual disability and those in positions of power or authority is discussed in this research as 'linking social capital' (Woolcock, 2001). In this study the term is used within the context of the workplace as described by Stone et al:

> Linking social capital involves social relationships with those in authority or positions of power and is useful for garnering resources (2003, p. 10).

In the workplace, linking social capital is about the connection with people who are in positions of power or authority who are able to leverage the social and physical resources in the workplace essential for production success. For those with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace this means the ability to mix and interact with those in authority or positions of responsibility e.g. supervisors, trainers or management. Developing linking social capital in the workplace enables employees to build the attitudes, skills and knowledge to carry out their daily duties knowing they have the resources and support necessary to be productive. What is questioned in this study is the ability of participants to develop the relationships with those in positions of power or authority into patronage that will be beneficial to advancement within the organisation and encouragement in the pursuit of career goals.

Throughout this study the bonding, bridging and linking attributes of social capital that develop relationships and networks necessary for success in the workplace have been referred to as 'social capital in the workplace'. The short title of this study,

‘Game to Work’, encompasses an examination of the social capital in the workplace of employees with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace. The short title draws on Bourdieu’s (1983) concept of ‘illusio’, where workers with an intellectual disability ‘learn to play the game’ in order to be ‘game to work’ and be successful in gaining and maintaining employment. As such it is the accounts of workers with an intellectual disability in the gaining and maintaining of employment that are the focus of this study.

2.4 Intellectual disability

Research, such as Settersten (2012), suggests that while individuals with an intellectual disability may be expected to pass through similar life stage changes to their peers without a recognised disability, there are differences in intensity and timing that effect this passage. There is sufficient evidence to accept that people with an intellectual disability face greater difficulties than the general population in understanding, learning, and remembering new things (World Health Organisation/The World Bank, 2011; Geake, 2009; Waterhouse & Virgona, 2005). As a consequence workers with intellectual disabilities face challenges to participation and to promotion in the workplace (Dempsey & Ford, 2009; Shaw et al., 2012). Dempsey and Ford, (2009) suggest that, depending on the nature of the disability, workers with a disability may have difficulty meeting production output and that this will influence both gaining and maintaining employment within an organisation.

While the general definition of intellectual disability used in this research, has a connection to the score derived from an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test and general characteristics that reflect difficulties in daily living skills, each individual has their own personality and unique set of strengths and weaknesses (Schalock et al., 2010). Difficulties in learning and processing information, and grasping concepts such as money and time, are some of the general characteristics with which those with an intellectual disability have difficulty and may lead to limited employment options. While these characteristics may have an impact on the ability to gain and maintain employment (Timmons et al., 2011), the most notable characteristic to impact on employment found by Butcher and Wilton, (2008) was an inability to understand the subtleties involved in the interpersonal exchanges that are part of a general social

interaction. As a result those with an intellectual disability may behave awkwardly or inappropriately in social situations (Schalock et al., 2010). This awkward or inappropriate behaviour may have an impact on participation in employment (Luecking, 2011) depending on the severity of the intellectual impairment and the nature of employment.

The degree of an intellectual disability has no fixed absolute definition in Australia, but there appears to be a common understanding used by professionals that is based on works such Schalock et al., (2010). In general, severity is divided into three loose categories: mild, moderate and severe or profound, the use of these terms is not fixed but current general usage throughout Australia is summarised by the Centre for Developmental Disability Health (CDDH) Victoria website is as follows based on the standard score derived from a recognised Intelligence tests:

> **Mild Disability:** Individuals with a mild intellectual disability usually have an IQ score between 50 and 70, and may live independently in the community with limited support required to handle money and organise their daily lives.
>
> **Moderate Disability:** Those considered to have a moderate intellectual disability usually have an IQ score between 35 and 50 may develop independent personal care and make choices about what to eat or drink, but require considerable support in daily life. Employment is a problematic option for this group but organised day care activities are often accessed by this group.
>
> **Severe or Profound Disability:** Those with a severe or profound disability generally have an IQ score below 35, have little or no speech and require lifelong support to carry out daily activities. Employment for this group is problematic and organised day care with activities are available in some cases for this group (CDDH Victoria, n.d.).

Not surprisingly the literature reviewed in this study suggests that those with severe and profound intellectual disabilities are more likely to experience greater difficulties in all areas of life than those with a mild or moderate intellectual disability (Sheppard-Jones, Garnett & Huff, 2007).

There is a lack of research in developed countries that focuses directly on workers with an intellectual disability and as Williams (2011) contends, many accounts in this area focus on the viewpoint of the employer, families or organisation often missing the direct experiences of those with an intellectual disability. Other studies use the carers of those with an intellectual disability as important sources of data, but the individuals with an intellectual disability are rarely involved in the research process (Turk et al., 2012). Further studies have sought to address this inequality and involve individuals, their carers, and other key stakeholders as support and co-researchers (Hallett & Armstrong, 2013; Nierse & Abma, 2011; Nind, 2011). However, little has been written or commissioned to tell individual stories of the experience of workers who have an intellectual disability (McVilly et al., 2006). Without an extensive corpus of research that uses these stories, the everyday experiences of those with an intellectual disability, remains anecdotal.

2.4.1 Models of Intellectual disability

Until recently the preoccupation was with disability as a 'medical problem' that can be cured or managed. However this distracts from the lived experience of those with a disability. Many, together with their families, cling to a future hope offered by a medical breakthrough promising a cure (a medical model), and often neglect the alternative offered of changes to the social and physical environment, that promise an improved contemporary quality of life for the person with a disability (a social model).

The literature regarding these two models of disability is discussed below in terms of the impact for people with an intellectual disability and the influence each model may have on a willingness of an individual with intellectual disability to gain and maintain employment.

Crow (2010) is one writer with a disability who has been able to publicly voice and analyse her individual lived experience (her personal narrative). Despite experiencing a physical rather than cognitive disability, she is only one of a handful of writers to analyse her situation in terms of the broader society, expressing her experience in film and theatre. She describes her life as having two phases: before discovering the social model of disability and her experiences after it. Her discovery of how the social model described her disability in terms of social constraints was

enlightening, shifting the difficulties from her body to society and providing a focus on which to concentrate her energy for change:

> It wasn't my body that was responsible for my difficulties; it was external factors, the barriers constructed by the society in which I live. I was being disabled – prejudice, discrimination, inaccessible environments and inadequate support were restricting my capabilities and opportunities ... Even more important, if all the problems have been created by society, then surely society could uncreate them. Revolutionary! (Crow, 2010, p. 124).

Crow's (2010) response to the discovery of a model of describing her disability that accepted her disability and allowed her to change the environment to suit became empowering for her. She felt encouraged to change her reliance on a 'medical model' of disability based on finding a cure, inspiring a new hope in altering the environment and society to make it less disabling for her.

The medical model

Many studies have found that employers often do not promote opportunities for equity and understanding for workers with a disability and are slow or resistant to create an accepting workplace (Kirsh et al., 2009; Shaw et al., 2012). Arguably, the medical model of disability reinforces and reproduces these unhelpful attitudes to disability long found within the business community (Williams, 2004).

The contemporary community emphasis on neuroscience and genetic research have produced hopes and expectations in the community that these two branches of medical science will soon be able to 'fix' any disability and make the individual 'normal' (Buntinx & Schalock, 2010). Only when normalised does the individual become eligible to take part fully in the 'ordinary expectations' of society, such as being valued in employment, and being able to follow a career path.

The medical model of disability is constructed on a diagnosis, which is claimed to be formed from an objective observation and measurement to describe a condition, it can then be categorised for treatment, management or cure. As such, the medical model of disability can be classified as a solution-based approach (Shakespeare, 2006). This model, arguably, allows classification of intellectual disability to be pragmatic and precise (Jewell, 2010). The ultimate aim of this model is to elicit a cure at best, or a management regime at worst. Its aim is to normalise the individual, thereby opening up opportunities for participation in society (Mill et al., 2010).

The medical model has critics who see treatment regimens and policies as infringements of civil rights and the disempowerment of the individual. It is argued by writers such as Swain, French and Cameron (2003) that the medical model reinforces the view of a faulty individual who depends on others for care. As well, any social or economic complexity met by the individual is seen as innate to that individual and their impairment, with no responsibility accepted by the community.

> If a cure is not available, that is regrettable, and the only remaining recourse is to remove them from the community and put them away in a home (Jewell, 2010, p. 164).

Jewell (2010) emphasises the 'cure' or 'hide' (put them away) nature of the medical model, and is reinforced by the lived experience of Crow (2010). For Crow the medical model only allows for the individual's full participation in society through the discovery of a cure and 'normalisation'.

According to Kirsh et al. (2009), the reliance on the finding of a 'cure' for full participation in society is reflected in the labour market where misunderstandings about competence, social adequacy and support needs limit the opportunities for those with intellectual disabilities. The prevalent lack of understanding about the abilities of those with a disability continue to be a barrier to full participation in society (Timmons et al., 2011). Those employers willing to employ people with any form of disability have tended as Jewell (2010) suggests to hide them from the general public or create 'sheltered workshops' in which those with a disability can work, 'protected' from society and outside eyes (Migliore, 2011).

The aim of this research is to examine particular social relationships developed in the workplace. The perspective of a medical model of disability is not consistent with this aim and is not used to describe or reflect on the disability of the participants in this study. However it goes some way to explain some of the difficulties experienced by those with an intellectual disability in gaining and maintaining employment.

The social model

Against a backdrop of the civil rights and women's movements, community thinking about individual difference began to change throughout the developed countries. In the 1960s and 1970s a social model of disability, where the disabling factors were

not the medical condition but the social construct of society itself, became the focus of the progressive disability movements of the 1980s and 1990s (Thomas, 2011).

With this complex background, many people with all forms of disability, watched the movements in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and became increasingly dissatisfied about the inability, imposed by society, to control their own lives (Barnes & Mercer, 1997). Shakespeare (2006) traces the foundation of a social model of disability to England in 1976. These calls for change suggest that disability was beginning to be seen by activists living with a disability in England, more as a social construct than a medical condition. During this time, the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) produced a policy statement (UPIAS, 1976) in response to a letter in *The Guardian* newspaper from their founder, Paul Hunt, calling for the views of the 'disabled' to be heard. Hunt's call to the readers of *The Guardian* (cited in UPIAS, 1976) and his involvement with the UPIAS was a direct result of a dispute between residents of LeCourt Cheshire Homes and their carers over the right of people with a disability to control their lives (Barnes & Mercer, 1997). The UPIAS response to the dispute was a policy statement that focused for the first time on the disabling factors imposed by society:

> What we are interested in, are ways of changing our conditions of life, and thus overcoming the disabilities which are imposed on top of our physical impairments by the way this society is organised to exclude us (UPIAS, 1976, pp. 4-5).

During the last forty years of the twentieth century Race, Boxall and Carson (2005) reported that a social model of disability gained strong favour within the physical and sensory disability groups, but those working with learning difficulties and intellectual disabilities were less keen. In this environment, those working in the area of intellectual disability turned to the work of Wolfensberger who began writing on Normalisation and Social Role Valorisation (SRV) for those with an intellectual disability. Flynn and Lemay (1999) summarised Wolfensberger's writing during this period as the most important influence on policies and practices in the field of human services in the late twentieth century. As a result deinstitutionalisation, alternative living options and increased opportunities for community participation and employment gained prominence on the political and social agendas of most developed countries (Race et al., 2005). While the impact of SRV theory can be seen to underlie much of the contemporary government policies throughout the developed

countries it is no longer explicit and has gradually become less prominent in the literature (Race et al., 2005). Indeed, Race et al. write of a reconciliation between SRV and the Social Model and describe both theories as "promoting, supporting and sustaining their inclusion in mainstream society" (Race et al., 2005, p. 508) for those with learning difficulties or intellectual disability.

The recognition that the lived experience for a person with a disability could be changed in a different social context, a different culture or even in a different time was slower (Jewell, 2010). As Shakespeare observed:

> Rather than disability being inescapable, it becomes a product of social arrangements, and can thus be reduced or possibly even eliminated (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 29).

Describing disability as a personal experience, gained support in Australia during the 1980s at a grassroots political level and quickly moved into general community usage in a similar way to the movements described by Shakespeare (2006) in the UK and US. Referring to 'people with a disability' in preference to 'disabled people' has become central to the 'person centred approach' of many disability support services during the past twenty years (Amado & McBride, 2001; Disability Services South Australia, 2012). Lawson and Purslow (2012) underline the philosophical roots of a person centred approach, defining it as "discovering and acting upon what is important to a person from their own perspective, taking account of their wishes and aspirations" (Lawson & Purslow, 2012, p. 77).

For clients of such services the 'person centred approach' can, ideally, put more emphasis on the individual's strengths and abilities rather than on their weakness and deficits or the systemic requirements of the agency. Stewart et al. (2012) suggest that a person centred approach can also encourage beneficial discussion about school to post-school options that include employment for those with an intellectual disability just as it is with those who do not have a recognised disability.

2.4.2 Summary

Acceptance of a social model of disability by influential groups in society shifts the emphasis from overcoming the impairment to changing social, environmental and attitudinal obstacles that limit the opportunities of those with a disability (Crow, 2010). The more recent emphasis has been on changing society's arrangements,

concentrating on fixing social, physical and political constructions, as distinct from an individual cure or remedy of the medical model (Jewell, 2010). Indeed Shakespeare suggests:

> The social model features a 'political' commitment to improving the lives of disabled people, by promoting social inclusion and removing the barriers which oppress disabled people (2006, p. 29).

In South Australia this change is no clearer than the election to the South Australian Legislative Council of Kelly Vincent in March 2010 on a 'Dignity for the Disabled' platform, stressing the need for social change to accommodate those with a disability. She became Australia's first elected politician with a disability (Manning & Anderson, 2010)

Carey (2011) contends that there has been a politicisation of disability to the extent that all disabilities are classified together under one name, 'disabled'. Like Crow (2010), he argues the disabled 'brand' is characterised by the assumption that the differing impairments play no part in the experiences of the individual, reducing the definition of disability to purely biological or social constraints (depending on a medical or social lens). The concept of disability based on any form of reductionist, generalisation based definition is out of place in contemporary society (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2011) yet according to the Social Inclusion Board it was still common within the South Australian context at the time of the Board's last report in 2011.

While acknowledging the value of the social model of disability when striving for equal rights and improved conditions for those with a disability, however writers such as Crow (2010), remain critical of the social model of disability and instead argues for reform in the accepted general concept of disability. She argues that contemporary movements that focus absolutely on the social construct of disability ignore the impact that the impairment has in determining individual experience (Crow, 2010). If accepted this notion implies increased attention to the domain of experience amongst affected individuals and further consideration of how an individual reacts to their impairments in their everyday functioning. In the context of employment this might imply attention as to how an individual's intellectual and cognitive impairments influence their employment prospects and the role that they are expected to play in a person centred approach to planning their transition from

school to employment or alternative post-school options (Shogren & Plotner, 2012; Mill et al., 2010).

The environment overseas appears little different to that in Australia. In the UK, Carey's (2011) reflection is that the future for those with a disability is less about the definition of disability or the enforcement of rights, and more about the establishment of networks. The current UK's Disability Living Allowance was, for Carey (2011), about disability being move away from a benefit with all the connotations of charity to an entitlement that recognised societal responsibility to provide support for those with a disability. He describes it as the last of the 'benefit battles' to be fought and introducing the networking of different disability groups as the next phase.

The 'benefit battle' in Australia has been a similar political encounter to the UK, and climaxed with the launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2012. The result is, arguably, greater spending on enabling those with a disability (and their families/carers), to make informed and responsible decisions about the choice of support systems they need to develop the networks necessary to be involved in community activities, including employment (Carey, 2011).

Norway is one of few nations where disability has been accepted as a social construct reflected through government policies (Tøssebro, 2004). Tøssebro (2004) describes the early 1990-93 Norwegian Government Plan for 'disabled' people using defining disability as an incompatibility between an individual's capabilities and the environment in which they live. This definition reflects a social acceptance that disability occurs in specific situations and is a result of a mismatch between individual and environment with a continuum of debilitation (Williams & Mavin, 2012).

Others, such as Crow (2010), stress the importance of using the social model of disability in achieving the legal rights of those affected by a disability. However Crow (2010) also suggests that the social construction of disability discussion has been hijacked by campaigns that have unintentionally presented disability as a single entity to the general public. As a result of the 'social construct' approach the impairment is portrayed as "irrelevant, neutral and sometimes positive … never ever

as the quandary it really is" (Crow, 2010, p. 126). Crow's 2010 call to 'bring back impairment' reflects her experience that the impairment was not always irrelevant, neutral or positive. Crow accepts no implicit meaning in 'impairment'. The usage is simply a description of the way a person's body functions or does not function in specific circumstances (i.e. the restriction). She argues that impairment was frequently used to imply an inferiority about the person's body or mind, and by association that the person was therefore inferior (Crow, 2010).

The World Report on Disability (WHO, 2011) supports Crow's (2010) view of impairment, reporting that those with disabilities experience inequalities in many areas of their lives, are subject to violations of their dignity and often denied autonomy and independence. This WHO report goes so far as to link the human rights issues associated with disability to an increased risk of social and economic deprivation, and the importance of "safety net interventions for people with disabilities" (WHO, 2011, p. 11), as part of the economic development of a nation. Other scholars such as Riddick (2012) have explored the effects of labelling suggest that a more nuanced and balanced approach be taken to the issue: one which acknowledges that there can be benefits or downsides of categorising individuals with a disability, which vary from individual to individual, and case to case.

2.5 Pathways to adulthood

Work is a valued social and financial commitment for people with disabilities, and provides a potentially rich venue for social inclusion (Lysaght, Cobigo & Hamilton, 2012). However, it has long been recognised as a "complex and problematic" (Kelley-Laine, 1988, p. 8) part of the transition to adulthood for many individuals with a disability.

In the US recent research by Tipton, Christensen and Blacher (2013) suggests that only 21% of those with a disability, compared to nearly 60% of peers with no recognised disability, consider themselves to be employed. Those with a disability have been found to socialise less with friends and are much more likely to be living in poverty than their peers without a disability (Wehman, 2011). In Australia, data collected by the ABS (2009) and Social Inclusion Board (2011), point to similar situations in the South Australian context.

Studies such as those conducted by Disability Services (2012) and the Social Inclusion Board (2011) in South Australia, suggest that sustainable and gratifying employment remains unobtainable for many with an intellectual disability. This is despite the social, political and policy changes which have occurred in the last decade – including the provision of better support networks for both individuals with an intellectual disability and potential employers.

According to Hodson and Sullivan (2008) increased labour costs and a decrease in the cost of technologies, have forced the replacement of traditional labour intensive positions, such as driveway attendants or 'shop floor' positions in manufacturing, that in the past were available for people with intellectual disability. Kirsh et al. (2009) found people with all types of disability are also currently excluded from employment because of employer's perceptions and concerns about loss of production. This concern is particularly relevant to those with an intellectual disability where concerns about behavioural issues compound employer's fears (Shames et al., 2007). The result, suggested by Griffin and Beddie (2011), is a lack of confidence by potential employers which is a major barrier to the employment of those with an intellectual disability in open employment.

For Kirsh et al. (2009) consideration of disability and employment involves important questions around social exclusion and social justice for those affected:

> Exclusion of persons with a disability from employment is a problem of social justice that carries with it the risks of disempowerment and severe socio-political vulnerability (Kirsh et al., 2009, p. 392).

According to Kirsh et al., without the option of employment, those with a disability face "disempowerment and severe socio-political vulnerability" (2009, p. 392) through exclusion from activities and experiences that others in the rest of the typically-developing, non-disabled community would perceive as normal aspects of adult life. Arguments about the ethical necessity of access to a 'normal' life experience ('normalisation') for individuals with disability has been central to the international movement around inclusive education (Ainscow & Miles, 2008) and is enshrined in longstanding international legislation around the educational rights of children with a disability (UNESCO, 1994, 2000).

While the achievement of 'adult status' for any young person in the 21st Century remains complex and problematic for many, including those in the general population (Mortimer, 2012), those with disabilities face additional attitudes and prejudices that still expect them to be dependent and reliant (Chenoweth & Clements, 2009). Faced with this general community attitude, Lotan and Ells (2010) found that those with an intellectual disability did not have the confidence to make decisions or participate in planning, and their participation in the transition to an adult identity, was limited and restricted. In many cases the participants in the study by Lotan and Ells (2010) appeared to rely on others to make decisions connected with their future. Such concerns about the reliance on others to make decisions as a form of 'learned helplessness' have often been raised in the literature concerned with programs designed to build the adult, life-skills necessary for employment and independent living (Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001; Zijlmans, Embregts, Bosman & Willems, 2012). The term was itself first used in the early 1970s and is associated with the work of Martin Seligman, Lyn Abramson and colleagues in the US (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978). In a more recent study of learned helplessness in connection with travel amongst those with a disability Lee, Agarwal and Kim define it as a:

> Psychological condition in which a person has learned to believe that he/she has no control over a situation and that whatever he/she does is futile. In effect, it occurs when an individual is trained to be locked into a system, albeit a family, a community, a culture, a tradition, an institution or an environment. Learned helplessness may therefore arise in everyday situations in which able-bodied or disabled people feel or actually have no control over what happens to themselves, sometimes resulting in motivational, cognitive and emotional deficiencies (Lee et al., 2012, p. 569).

Learned helplessness as defined above might pose a barrier to a person centred approach because it would prevent the meaningful participation of young adults with intellectual disabilities in decisions about their future (Concannon, 2005).

The individual's quality of life moving toward adult status has been shown to be directly related to the recognition of personal desires and plans (Lachapelle et al., 2005) and is reflected in the contemporary trend that emphasises listening to individuals and planning services *with* them, rather than *for* them (Stewart et al., 2012). However good these intentions are, Concannon (2005) argues that involving people with an intellectual disability in the planning of services and support is

problematic and currently remains largely tokenistic. However, Lawson (2010) argues that to move beyond tokenism requires acceptance of authentic participation of the individual with an intellectual disability in the process and actively listening to the stories of their experiences.

2.5.1 The importance of work

Research by Settersten (2012), argues that the reasons for participation in employment appear little different between those with a disability and those without. In both groups employment provides self-esteem and increases socialisation. In developed countries such as Australia work is considered a basic foundation of contemporary life that enhances social skills, encourages communication, develops community skills and provides economic security (Lysaght et al., 2012). What appears different for those with a recognised intellectual disability is that lack of opportunity for upward mobility and career advancement (Wehman, 2011).

Unfortunately, contemporary data specific to those with an intellectual disability only is not available in South Australia (Social Inclusion Board, 2008, 2011). Therefore inferences must be drawn from a wider context, such as Blacher, Kraemer and Howell's (2010) findings that most parents of a child with a disability they interviewed in the US, want their child to be employed after they leave school. In the Australian context Lamb and MacKenzie (2001) found that, amongst the population without a recognised disability in Australia, individuals who failed to find employment (part or full time) within seven years of leaving school were at significant risk of long term unemployment. They also found that nearly twice as many school leavers with a declared disability began their working life through part time jobs in the same way that many of their contemporaries without a disability did (Lamb & McKenzie, 2001).

The only South Australian research that examines intellectual disability and employment is a discrete study more than two decades old. Jiranek and Kirby (1990) found four differences for those with an intellectual disability when compared to other disability groups. Those employees with an intellectual disability showed lower psychological wellbeing than their peers with another form of disability regardless of employment status. However psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction appeared "higher in those working in open employment compared to

those in a supported workplace and both were higher than their unemployed peers" (Jiranek & Kirby, 1990, p. 133). There is no evidence from South Australia that any of these benefits have changed, as such work continues to be considered important for individuals with a disability and their families. This proposal is supported by recent international studies which highlight the perceived value of employment amongst young people with a disability and their families. For example, in a UK based study, Maddison and Beresford (2012) found that the participants interviewed highlighted the value they attributed to employment and how employment was an important factor in planning for life post-school.

2.5.2 Autonomy and choice

Jiranek and Kirby's South Australian study (1990) found that the psychological wellbeing of workers with an intellectual disability were reported as lower than other disability groups but was higher than those with a similar intellectual disability who were unemployed. This study also suggested that employment offers this population a unique opportunity for the expansion of networks beyond family and support into the individual's social setting. What is noteworthy in Jiranek and Kirby's study is that while work provides opportunities to build friendships and relationships, it also provides a sense of belonging and worth that is recognised as being beneficial to overall good health and a longer life (Rocco et al., 2011; Cacioppo, Hawkley & Berston, 2003).

There are a number of studies which suggest that in the community in general those in employment have better physical and mental health than those who are unemployed (Yamamura, 2011; Rocco et al., 2011; OECD, 2009). A comparative study between patients with an intellectual disability and other patients in an English Medical Practice found that those with an intellectual disability appeared to have more than double the health problems than other patients (van Schrojenstein, Lantman-De Valk, Metsemakers, Haverman & Crebolder, 2000). However, the health problems become dramatically lower if the person with an intellectual disability is employed (Rocco et al., 2011; Raphael, 2006).

Like the general population, people with an intellectual disability are living longer and are in better health than previous generations, and are presenting new challenges to healthcare professionals as they age (Disability Services South Australia, 2012).

However, recent work by Rocco et al. (2011) conducted in 26 European countries, along with research in Japan by Yamamura (2011), reinforces Putnam's (2000) earlier contention that an individual's networks in a community has a direct positive impact on health and wellbeing. Wehman (2011) suggests this beneficial impact on health would be reflected in those with an intellectual disability who have established wide networks in the workplace.

In the Australian context, absences from the workplace due to health problems become an issue for all employers as the population ages (Demographic Change Advisory Council, 2008). According to Shaw et al. (2012) employers who are considering the employment of individuals with an intellectual disability to fill the gaps left by the ageing workforce are concerned that those with a disability will display similar traits due to health problems and the additional costs of resources necessary to support a person with a disability in the workplace. However, it is clear that for those with an intellectual disability regular employment brings improved mental and physical health when compared with the increased health risks and social isolation of their unemployed or underemployed peers (Flore et al., 2011). However, those with an intellectual disability are yet to be in positions of responsibility and authority (ABS, 2011; Dempsey & Ford, 2009; Social Inclusion Board, 2008) where the effect on health of the increased stresses that stem from these positions on workers with an intellectual disability can be confidently tested.

The difference in health and wellbeing for a person with an intellectual disability may be explained by the apparently simplistic observation by Pitonyak, that those with any form of disability may be "profoundly lonely … loneliness was the only real disability" (2010, p. 5). If this were so, then the connection of workers with an intellectual disability to the workplace, rather than the work itself discussed in Chapter 5, can be linked to avoiding loneliness by seeking to gain and maintain employment.

According to Barrick, Mount and Li (2013) the motivation to work to avoid loneliness by a person with a disability was in distinct contrast to their peers without a recognised disability, who seek work that reflects their personality and their goals in life and feel fulfilled when the work, their goals and their motivational strivings are aligned. Loneliness may be a major reason why individuals with an intellectual

disability seek to gain and maintain employment in a supported workplace that purports to support the development of personal relationships and friendships in their mission statements. Unfortunately many have a considerable way to go in meeting this goal (McVilly et al., 2006).

2.5.3 Gaining employment

There appear some differences in the process of obtaining employment for those with an intellectual disability and the general community. Griffin and Beddie (2011) found that those without a recognised disability when leaving school have access to a range of employment and training options (Vocational Training, Technical and Further Education, and University) and are usually directly involved in the decision-making process about work and further study. However, Concannon (2005) found that the choices for those with an intellectual disability are reduced and that their participation in the transition process was likely to be tokenistic, and possibly paternalistic in nature (Jewell, 2010). The transition process for those with an intellectual disability is more 'placement' by support agencies into 'available' positions (Timmons et al., 2011). Subsequently, individuals with an intellectual disability may have little or no real choices about work and post-school education (Storey, 2006). In the Australian context, more often than not, a new worker with an intellectual disability is a direct entrant from the schooling system, with a few entering paid work for the first time after initially choosing to remain at home unemployed after leaving school (Griffin & Beddie, 2011). Therefore, the traditional job seeking process involving an application and selection process is not necessarily applicable to those with an intellectual disability.

Young people without a recognised disability undertake an initial employment process that includes clarifying interests, choosing pathways and seeking out vacancies in appropriate areas that are precursors to the application, interview and reference checks that usually precedes the offering of a position (Zibarras & Woods, 2010).

Flore et al. (2012) also notes that while their peers without a recognised disability often fail at their first job selection, many have the confidence to start over and continue until they find an appropriate position. In contrast, Groce (2004) found that if an individual with a disability fails at their first placement they are at severe risk of

being labelled unemployable by family networks and support agencies and any chance of future employment options may be closed.

As the choices of types of work are much narrower for those with an intellectual disability and the process of employment may be more about placement than selection. In this case, even with the best intentions of parents and other supportive groups, involvement in the process and decision making by the individual with a disability may be limited and often tokenistic (Concannon, 2005). In particular, the role of the parent/carer in the gaining of employment is often seen as paramount (Mill et al., 2010), and may explain why lifelong parental involvement is seen as a vital, supportive role in continuing employment (Meadan, Shelden, Appel & DeGrazia, 2010).

2.5.4 The role of parents/caregivers

The continued involvement of parents in employment was a different expectation for those with an intellectual disability when compared to their peers without a recognised disability (Griffin & Beddie, 2011). Griffin and Beddie (2011) found that if the relationships between the young person with an intellectual disability, parents/ carers and professionals during the early stages of employment, was inclusive, then more successful employment decisions would be made. Many concerns within the family about the process can be allayed through encouraging their young person to take on "varied and valued roles and responsibilities within the family and community" (Mill et al., 2010, p. 194). Where there is a negotiation of autonomy with the individual who has a disability and a recognition by the family of the changing role within the family, then the transition to post-school options is less likely to be marked by anxiety, distrust and conflict (Gillan & Coughlan, 2010).

Similar to the general community, the role of parents who have a child with a disability is being redefined as parents become better educated, have more information, and are more articulate about the support services they require to support their child with a disability (Maddison & Beresford, 2012). Many parents are politically aware and willing to become committed to achieving the goals that will benefit their son or daughter. In South Australia the election of an Upper House member on a 'Dignity for the Disabled' platform was a world first and was driven by a passionate group of parents and carers who have children with a disability

(Manning & Anderson, 2010). Mill et al. (2010) suggest that many parents are more demanding of education and service providers than their predecessors as they prepare their children with a disability for a life where outliving their parents is probable. This is in contrast to the many older generations who resisted movements toward independent living and community involvement for their children with an intellectual disability because they faced early loss and accepted personal responsibility for caring for that child as part of their 'lot in life' (Llewellyn, McConnell, Gething, Cant & Kendig, 2010).

In addition, parallel to the improved life expectancy of the general population in Australia, many people with an intellectual disability are now living with an ageing family carer who may have support needs of their own (ABS, 2010). In South Australia, there is increasing pressure from parents who have cared for an adult child with a disability in the family home to remain in the family home with paid support on the death the parents, rather than moving to a residential/nursing facility (Ellison, 2012). This group are becoming very politically active in seeking alternative resources preparing for the time they will not be able to care for their son/daughter (Taggart et al., 2012).

Importantly, Maddison and Beresford (2012) found a distinct movement by contemporary parents away from the practices of previous generations, whose children with a disability were expected to die before them. They found parents more willing to examine options that promote independence for their child and themselves. Changes in societal attitudes to people with an intellectual disability have encouraged parents not to closet their children away from general society. Increasingly, families are offered opportunities for socialisation through support agencies that provide recreational and sporting activities that are specifically established for people with intellectual disabilities (Ellison, 2010). Ellison (2010) suggests that much of this change is a result of the deinstitutionalisation movement of the 1970s and 1980s and the options for semi and independent living that are now available within the community.

In the UK, Mill et al. (2010) found that appropriate, ongoing, fulfilling employment was one of the most important resources identified by parents for their child on leaving school. However, while most parents want their children with an intellectual

disability to enter employment or further training leading to employment after leaving school, Blacher et al. (2010) found that parents may unintentionally exert unwarranted pressure on the young person with an intellectual disability.

Timmons et al. (2011) found that in families where work related decisions are strongly influenced by family members, a young person with an intellectual disability may have little opportunity to exercise choice about work related matters. As a result many workers with an intellectual disability are ill prepared for making considered decisions without substantial support when facing work and lifestyle changes and challenges (Timmons et al., 2011). Therefore, workers with an intellectual disability may experience underachievement after they enter the workplace (Lysaght et al., 2012) because they have only experienced the tokenistic involvement in planning and decision making before entering employment described by Concannon (2005).

2.5.5 The role of support systems

Gillan and Coughlan (2010) found that effective support systems play a major part in the gaining and maintaining of employment by those with an intellectual disability. Other researchers, such as Beyer and Robinson (2009) suggest that the role and relationship between the support agency and their client with an intellectual disability is particularly important for achieving successful employment outcomes for those with a 'mild' intellectual disability.

While Bayles' (1981) models of professional-client relationship describe the relationship within the disability sector in England during the late 1970s, they continue to be perpetuated in South Australia today (Jewell, 2010). In his examination Bayles (1981) concluded that there is no ideal client/professional relationship and that the most appropriate model is dependent on the characteristics of the client and the professional. He adds a warning that the relationship may change over time, as may the personal connections or feelings between the client and professional, and describes five separate models of professional-client relationship that relate to the disability sector. The first three models assume an equality of power, while in the later the professional assumes greater power than the client due to specialised knowledge or skills.

Agency: the professional provides services to achieve the client's goals.

Contract: the professional agrees to fulfil a list of duties or actions based on the wishes of the client. It is not so much based on trust but a formal agreement.

Friendship: the professional and client develop a close relationship of mutual trust and cooperation in a partnership.

Paternalism: the professional is acknowledged as having superior knowledge and skills. In this model the client is often considered incapable of giving considered and informed consent.

Fiduciary: the professional's superior knowledge is acknowledged. The relationship is based on trust. However, the client retains a significant authority and responsibility in decisions about what happens (Bayles, 1981).

On an individual basis the professional relationship of the support person or agency with the client is not simply a choice of a client/professional relationship for those with a recognised intellectual disability. Particularly in the years surrounding the acknowledged age of adulthood (in Australia, 18 years of age) the relationship is a triad of the individual/professional/family where in many cases the family and the individual both receive the support of the professional services (Todd & Jones, 2003). However, Jewell (2010) warns that:

> Because the family receives services, it is at a disadvantage ... sharing decision making and responsibility. In practice, the professional is relatively powerful. The family and the disability professional are likely to have the same agenda, but quite different perspectives (Jewell, 2010, p. 28).

Several studies have looked at the differing perspectives of family and engaged professionals throughout the world during the period of seeking and obtaining employment for a family member with a disability. In the US parents have seen the employment process for those with an intellectual disability as a traumatic, uncertain, and difficult period (Stewart et al., 2012). Stewart et al. (2012) found the key concern identified by parents of a child with a disability moving from the formal support of the schooling sector was the different experience of a system demanded

by the adult services providers; this is supported in the South Australian context by the Social Inclusion Board's (2011) findings.

The bureaucratic demands of adult service providers are not usually experienced by school leavers, but for Irish parents who have children with an intellectual disability the demands caused fear, and uncertainty about their child's future (Gillan & Coughlan, 2010). Mortimer (2012) looked at the fear and uncertainty felt by families, and suggested that some parents in the US experience such trauma during the transition of their son or daughter from school to a post-school option that they withdraw their support for employment as an option, limiting the young person's post-school options. Similar findings have been found in Canadian studies where an individual with an intellectual disability may be pressured to accept a transition to employment process developed by the family or support professionals in Canada that was out of their control and does not take into account their individual choices, plans and visions (King et al., 2006). For some with an intellectual disability Shogren and Plotner (2012) found that the pathway to a post-school option may even be selected by others with the individual unable or even unwilling to contribute to the planning. Considered together these studies suggest young people with an intellectual disability may end up in an unsuitable post-school placement because of the differing perspectives of those in positions of influence and a lack of genuine involvement in the planning of the transition process by the individual with an intellectual disability.

2.5.6 Pathway planning

While there is little known about how those with an intellectual disability comprehend the decisions involved in the transition process (Timmons et al., 2011), we do know they are more likely to experience greater difficulties around transition from school than their peers without an identified disability (Sheppard-Jones et al., 2007). However, Gillan and Coughlan, (2010) suggest sound planning that is conscious of the individual's active involvement in decision making can improve the transition process from school to employment.

Martorell, Gutierrez-Recacha, Pereda and Ayuso-Mateos (2008) found that the determinants of a successful transition programme for an individual with an intellectual disability are based on the individual's active participation and involvement in the decision making processes during the programme. Furthermore,

Wehman (2011) identified that, good transition planning, begun early and continued throughout the formal years of schooling, ensures maximum access to: fulfilling employment, an enjoyable social life, and the choice of living in the local community. Additionally, many transition to employment plans have concentrated on developing skills and knowledge about the workplace, this type of programme have not been found to be as successful as those that promote student involvement and focus on self-determination (Wehmeyer, Palmer, Lee, Williams-Diehm & Shogren, 2011).

Despite this, even if well researched and proven systems to individual transition planning are used, there may be conflict with government and organisational policy that restricts some approaches to planning from use. For administrative purposes many governmental and organisational policies consider those with an intellectual disability to be part of the wider disability community assuming all have the same common support requirements, ignoring the principles of 'Person Centred Planning' (NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, 2009). The Social Inclusion Board (2008) implied that disability groups in South Australia are regularly homogenised by governments and organisations, as each disability group may be subjected to standardised processes and procedures by institutionalised forces that may not accommodate individual needs. In many cases the processes and procedures used to process people with intellectual disabilities would not be acceptable to their peers without a disability because they would be seen as intrusive and condescending.

For Martorell et al. (2008) the essential factor in the transition plan may be the ability of the support personnel to perceive the young person as an individual adult, rather than a child, and for the process to allow the young person to display and exert self-determination throughout the process. Through greater individual involvement in transition planning, positive work outcomes can be provided for those with an intellectual disability (Wehmeyer et al., 2011).

While work and further learning are key facets of transition planning, lifestyle outcomes should also be considered at the same time. The recognition of individual interests and the encouragement to engage in meaningful activities that develop a

wide social network are part of developing a safe stable lifestyle (Butcher & Wilton, 2008).

The resultant transition plan for an individual with an intellectual disability will have benefits for students and support personnel involved in the transition process (Simonsen & Neubert, 2012).The aim of the planning process toward employment is to encourage the individual to become a self-advocate who was able to communicate their preferences, set achievable goals and make choices (Wehmeyer et al., 2011).

2.6 Gaps in the literature

Two major gaps have appeared in this review of the literature about workers with an intellectual disability. The first is a lack of voice for people with an intellectual disability about their experiences in the workforce. The second is the particular experiences of females with intellectual disability within the workforce. Both these gaps in the literature appear to stem from research that has tended to concentrate on the placement of people with intellectual disabilities into employment, and not on the individual stories of gaining and then maintaining employment.

The lack of 'voice' of workers with an intellectual disability was identified by Mills et al. (2010). There appears little research directly capturing the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability. Much more has been written using the voice of workers with a physical or sensory disability, but little research directly involves those with an intellectual disability (Nierse & Abma, 2011; Ashby, 2011; Lawson, 2010). The second gap in the literature is around the particular experiences of female employees with an intellectual disability, which is beyond the scope of this study, save to draw attention to it and the lack of disability and feminist research in the field.

2.6.1 The voice of those with intellectual disability is missing

There is a scarcity of literature that tell the individual stories employees have with gaining and maintaining employment (Mill et al., 2010), yet these stories are important to inform the support individuals with an intellectual disability need to be successful in the workplace:

> There is a small but expanding literature about the transition to adulthood for young people with disabilities. However, voices of young people with disabilities are underrepresented (Mill et al., 2010, p. 194).

Without a direct voice an individual's pathway becomes merely an historical record of placement in employment without the nuances necessary to understand how events and experiences presented or prevented opportunities.

While accepting that multiple versions of a story by different people may produce a rich tapestry of information about the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability, the individual must have the opportunity to tell their own story in their own words about their work and their experiences (Björnsdóttir & Svensdóttir, 2008).

It is beneficial if in doing so the individual reinterprets what has happened and produces new understandings of events "weaving past and present into a coherent repertoire that allows them to communicate their identity and negotiate it with others" (Ibara & Barbulesco, 2010, p. 151). As a result the worker has a greater understanding of their identity within the workplace, particularly at times of transition or passage between roles (Ibara & Barbulesco, 2010).

In the wider research environment, the stories and evidence offered by young people with intellectual disabilities are often rejected as 'unsound' or 'unreliable' simply because they have an intellectual disability (Gudjonsson & Joyce, 2011; Bull, 2010). However, there is a growing movement to include adults with disabilities as co-researchers and participants particularly in the field of health, where using an appropriate inclusive research design, a strong partnership with adults with intellectual disability can be achieved (Turk et al., 2012; Nind, 2011). Including people with intellectual disability as participants has the potential to improve the data collection around people with intellectual disabilities and add richness to the traditional methodology of using carers as 'informants' and adds to the multi-methods of data collection called for by many qualitative analysts (Curry, Nembhard & Bradley, 2009; Grbich, 2007; Brenner, 2006; Mason, 1996).

> In contemporary research there is much to suggest that: disabled people [sic] have been spoken about, and spoken for, but rarely listened to (Sherry, 2005, p. 165).

The aim of this study is to add to the research that listens to those with an intellectual disability.

2.6.2 Gender: Female workers with an intellectual disability

> Women with disabilities traditionally have been ignored not only by those concerned about disability but also those examining women's experiences. Even the feminist scholars to whom we owe great intellectual and political debt have perpetuated this neglect (Fine & Asch, 1988, p. 3).

Despite Fine and Asch (1988) writing this more than 25 years ago, contemporary writers such as Hall (2011), Hirschmann (2012) and the Women with Disabilities Australia Report (2011) have reaffirmed this as a current summary of women with disabilities.

For many years unemployment among young women with a disability was 50% higher than comparably educated young men with a disability (Groce, 2004). There is no evidence to suggest this has changed much in the last 10 years (ABS, 2011) and women with disabilities still battle with a double disability involving greater legal, social, economic, health and psychological issues than their male counterparts (Goodley, Hughes & Davis, 2012).

Women with intellectual disabilities have been underrepresented in research studies in the workplace, and while there were an increasing number of women with physical and sensory impairments becoming involved in researching, writing and publishing in the field of feminism and disability those women with an intellectual disability remain underrepresented (Hirschmann, 2012; Hall, 2011).

More than a decade ago, Traustadottir and Johnson (2000) reported that less than a handful of women with intellectual disability were speaking in public about their lives. Traustadottir and Johnson (2000) imply that women have been generally ignored within the disability movement. They suggest that almost all the writings about all forms of disability are assuming that gender was irrelevant or at best a very minor aspect of the issues associated with the disability. The only extended debate is in the field of sexuality, where reproductive rights and responsibilities have been canvassed by human rights movements – who often have only limited conversations

with the women most directly involved – those women with an intellectual disability (Hall, 2011).

While writers like Morris (2001) and Ghai (2003) provide insights into the world of a woman with a physical disability, their repeated message is the invisibility of women with a disability, and a lament over much of the feminist discourse:

> There is nothing about being a female that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as being female, itself a highly complex category constituted in contested sexual scientific discourses and other social practices. Gender, race or class consciousness is an achievement forced on us by the terrible historical experience of the contradictory social realities of patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism (Haraway, 1989, p. 179).

For many years a small number of feminist writers have warned against overgeneralising disability, reminding us that the experience of each individual is unique within their community and disability type (Meekosha, 1998; Morris, 1993; Thomas, 1999; Thomson, 1997; Wendell, 2001), yet writers like Ghai (2003) in the general disability field appear to concentrate on those with some form of physical disability. This tends to reinforce Hirschman's (2012) view that women with an intellectual disability are marginalised within much of the mainstream discourse about disability and also underrepresented within the feminist discourse. Hall (2011) suggests that this is because:

> Like disability studies practitioners who are unaware of feminism, feminist scholars are often simply unacquainted with disability perspectives (Hall, 2011, p. 14).

As such the unique position of women with a disability is largely missing. However, Hall's (2011) text has created a foundation for a greater examination of gender and disability in both disability and rehabilitation education that has been long missing (Lewis, Brubaker & Armstrong, 2009) and eventually may provide a stimulus into a revitalised field of research.

> Disability studies today is like women's studies was in the 1970s and 1980s (Hirschmann, 2012, p. 396).

Writers like Hall (2011) and Hirschmann (2012) are leading a burgeoning revision of the place of women with a disability in the community and through them perhaps a more thorough investigation of female employees with an intellectual disability will follow. Despite this resurgence, the specific experiences of women with an

intellectual disability as workers has yet to be addressed and deserves treatment in its own right, beyond the scope of this study.

2.6.3 A possible reason for these gaps in the literature

While two gaps in the literature about workers with an intellectual disability were identified in this study, the reasons for both gaps identified appear linked to the difficulties involved in collecting data about people with intellectual disabilities outlined in the literature (Nind, 2008; Cameron & Murphy; 2007, Brewster, 2004). For many researchers, primary data collected from those with an intellectual disability is seen as unreliable or not valid and in some methodological approaches it is rejected (Gudjonsson & Joyce, 2011; Bull, 2010).

Much of the current literature uses interviews with families and caregivers to report on the development of workplace skills and relationships, however little is known about decision making in the family at the time of transition into employment (Maddison & Beresford, 2012). Often studies have relied on observations of the worker with an intellectual disability by parent/caregivers in the home after work, reporting second hand on what happened in the workplace during the day. While these observers may have a deep understanding of the individual worker and can report on attitudes to work and the workplace, they cannot confidently report what happens in the workplace. This appears indicative of the problems associated with research about workers who have an intellectual disability. As such knowledge about workers with an intellectual disability is limited to second hand observation from interested observers such as trainer/supervisors, family connections or carers. The literature reviewed in this chapter tended to be descriptive in nature concentrating on access, tenure and wages (Stewart et al., 2012), arguably ignoring the many skills people with intellectual disabilities have and the relationships they build (Dempsey & Ford, 2009). While studies on the opportunities for career advancement for workers with an intellectual disability and how these opportunities are received by the workers are missing (Wehman, 2011), there is not enough about the involvement by those with an intellectual disability in the planning of post-school options to be conclusive about the role those with an intellectual disability play in transition planning (Timmons et al., 2011).

2.7 Summary

The literature review carried out in this chapter highlighted how the corpus of research examining employment for those with an intellectual disability has been clouded in wider tensions between the social and medical models of disability that effect the knowledge about the employment experiences of workers with an intellectual disability. While historical and much contemporary research tended to concentrated on empirical historical data about where people with an intellectual disability are placed in employment, it has rarely directly listened to the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability telling their story about gaining and maintaining employment. Much of the previous research has been reliant on 'informants' who can see and describe the historical placement of workers with an intellectual disability, but do not have an insight into the how or why an employee sees a particular pathway as more valuable than another.

This study aims to make a unique contribution to the small but emerging corpus of literature which conveys the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability about their employment and in relation to the important question of what, from their perspective, helped them to gain and maintain this employment.

This chapter examined the literature concerned with employment for those with an intellectual disability and as a result:

- Emphasised the problematic policies and practices created by conceptualising disability as a medical problem rather than a social construct
- Introduced the concept of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) tying the concept to the workplace
- Examined the nature of work and the relationships required to gain and maintain employment, through examining the individual's social capital to include aspects of bonding, bridging and linking (Woolcock, 2001) with the different groups in the workplace
- Highlighted the role of parents/caregivers, support organisations and systems in the journey of an individual with intellectual disability in gaining and maintaining employment.

This chapter concludes by describing two major gaps in research literature about workers with an intellectual disability: firstly, the direct voice of those with an intellectual disability is often missing, with research relying on 'informants' rather than first person accounts ('narratives'); secondly, there appears to be a lack of reference to women with intellectual disability in the workplace as workers.

In the next chapter the methodology used in this study is defined and the selection of small group interviews is outlined after careful consideration of the difficulties of interviewing those with an intellectual disability that are highlighted in the literature.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

The complexities associated with research about people with intellectual disability may be a causal factor in the paucity of literature about their lives in the workplace as suggested in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 outlines the research design adopted by this study proposing how research undertaken contributed to scholarly knowledge in this area.

The methodology used in this research can be broadly classified as qualitative relying upon narrative enquiry in the operationalising of the methodology used. While the methodology uses interviews as the primary vehicle for data collection the problems associated with interviewing individuals with intellectual disability are considered and addressed as part of the rationalisation for this choice. This chapter sets out the methodological choices and explores some of the complexities of narrative enquiry identified in the research literature – particularly in the area of research with individuals identified as having an intellectual disability.

The qualitative approach utilised in this study explores the perception and beliefs of the participants about an area of their own lives and is a common goal for research described as qualitative (Mistry, 2012). Small group interviews were utilised in order to build knowledge and a deeper understanding of participants' relationships at work – specifically those relationships that encourage individuals with an intellectual disability to gain and maintain employment. This research uses a model of interviewing that Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall describe as "valuing what people say and treating this as meaningful and informative" (1998, p. 52). The interviews are treated as 'mini-narratives' that are located within a particular context where individual interpretation of the experiences provides data for analysis (Grbich, 2007).

Some writers, such as Josselson (2013) use the terms ‘narrative’ and ‘qualitative’ research interchangeably. While recognising that “qualitative research encompasses much more than the narrative approach” Josselson (2013, p. vii) uses these terms interchangeably when the research seeks to understand “how people understand and make meaning of facets of their lives” (p. vii). Her main point however, is that the interview process is relational in nature, between the interviewer and those being interviewed. Josselson (2013) also argues that it is important for the researcher to recognise that reality is socially constructed by the individual and that the researcher has a part in forming this reality through the construction of questions, the conduct of the interview and the method employed in analysis.

Because there is an evolving relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer the interview is not a fixed process. Its dynamism is based on the changing relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee during the interview process. It is during the interview that the interviewer begins to better understand the participant and gains an appreciation of the reasons for the participant’s responses and in turn the interviewer is influenced by these responses (Josselson, 2013). Thus:

> The aim of interviewing is to document people’s experience, self-understanding, and working models of the world they live in, so that we may later attempt to make meaning of the phenomena at levels of analysis beyond simple descriptions of what we heard (Josselson, 2013, p. 2).

Josselson (2013) argues that individual identity is constructive as a narrative, though it is the selection of personal experiences that are drawn together into a story that reflects the sense of self of the narrator, and tells us something of the culture in which the narrator is situated. Her recognition in the interview process, these stories may vary from grand epics to small tales has resonance in Bamberg’s (2006) assertion that while small stories are often neglected in research, they can be as equally valid as using big stories in advancing the research process.

Being positioned within the social context of the workplace is a central consideration for this study and Josselson, suggests that the “phrasing used by the participants and the particular words they choose indicate something about how they locate themselves (or find themselves positioned) in the social world [of work]” (2013, p. 3). In the interview the researcher pays attention to “both the content of the narration

(the told) and the structure of the telling (the telling)" (p. 3). Josselson provides consistent support for a qualitative research approach for this study based on a narrative where the researcher is in "direct contact with the participant's language" (p. 6). This is particularly important when interviewing those with an intellectual disability or communication difficulty where the receptive and expressive language of the participant's may be problematic. Despite these limitations it is important to listen to the story and its structure because "the nature of the discourse and the communication provides a crucial opening into the participant's experiential and social worlds" (p. 6) and gain an insight into an individual's experiences (Rejnö, Berg & Danielson, 2014).

The research design used in this study draws on a narrative approach (Polkinghorne, 2007; Elliot, 2005; Gibson, 1996). The design asks participants to tell their own story of about gaining and maintaining work in small group interviews. Interviews with trainer/supervisors closely associated with the participants provide background and clarification of the work environment in which the participants operate. The focus of the interviews is the development of the aspects of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking) outlined in Chapter 2 that are suggested as essential factors in gaining and maintaining employment.

3.2 The research question

The literature review in Chapter 2 suggests that while little is known about the factors that are important for those with an intellectual disability in choosing to gain and maintain work, it appears that there are a collection of factors that contribute to continued involvement in employment (Timmons et al., 2011). Chapter 2 of this thesis also more generally highlighted the importance of the relationships of a worker with the various groups within the workplace and specifically highlighted the role of bonding, bridging and linking aspects of social capital as indicators in the likelihood of an individual gaining and maintaining employment.

This study set out to examine the relationships in the workplace that build appropriate social capital in the workplace to help individuals with an intellectual disability gain and maintain employment: *What social capital do workers with an*

intellectual disability build to gain and maintain employment in a supported workplace?

Associated with this, three supplementary questions were developed to represent the relational nature of social capital in the workplace:

1. *What relationships are formed by workers with an intellectual disability in the workplace?*
2. *How important is work for workers with an intellectual disability?*
3. *What relationship do workers with an intellectual disability form with the employing organisation?*

These supplementary questions help provide an insight into the bonding, bridging and linking social capital outlined in Chapter 2 that the workers interviewed in this study have, potentially, developed in order to gain and maintain their employment. Because one aim of research is to establish whether and to what extent this theoretical frame is useful in understanding the research question the word 'potentially' becomes important. Insights gained through this enquiry may also provide an understanding of the development of social capital needed for others with an intellectual disability who wish to follow a similar supported employment path in South Australia and potentially elsewhere.

3.3 Theoretical framework

This study aims to expand the knowledge about workers with an intellectual disability gaining and maintaining employment, and uses small group interviews with 14 workers with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace to collect data about their experiences of gaining and maintaining employment. Interviews with four trainer/supervisors added a different perspective to the data collected from participants in the small group interviews and provided a wider context to the transcripts of the participants, however, the focus of this research is always about the experience of workers with an intellectual disability.

As outlined at the start of this chapter, the research undertaken takes an approach best classified as qualitative, with Griffen (2012) offering a helpful insight into a suitable methodology from healthcare research.

> In qualitative healthcare research, there are three principal sources of enquiry:
>
> - people, their views and experiences
> - interactions, either interpersonal or interactions with artefacts
> - structures such as the workplace, its organisation and its culture.
>
> Typically, qualitative research uses first-person accounts, interviews, focus groups and (sometimes) observations as its main supply of data (Griffen, 2012, p. 30).

These sources of enquiry are used in this study to examine the experiences of participants of gaining and maintaining employment: being 'game to work'.

For workers with an intellectual disability this thesis suggests that gaining and maintaining employment is about developing social capital. In Bourdieu's terms social capital is about 'learning to play the game' (illusio) within the social positions and structures of the workplace (the field) adopting the common, regular processes and practices (habitus) of that workplace and developing a core set of standards and principles (doxa) that are valued and validated in that workplace (Bourdieu, 1986). This study therefore, broadly, explores Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital to explore aspects of the working life of individuals with intellectual disability.

As highlighted in Chapter 2, the concept of social capital is explored through Woolcock's (2001) three aspects of social capital – bonding, bridging and linking – to develop an understanding of the specific relationships which participants refer to during the small group interviews.

Throughout this study the definitions used for bonding, bridging and linking in the workplace, adapted from Woolcock, are:

> **Bonding social capital** in the workplace – ties with people in a similar position in the immediate workgroup.
>
> **Bridging social capital** in the workplace – ties with other people where the relationship may be intermittent or transient, such as customers or workers from other divisions or other work groups in the organisation.
>
> **Linking social capital** in the workplace – ties with people in positions of power, responsibility and authority that provide resources and income for the workgroup (Woolcock, 2001, pp. 13-14).

It is these definitions of social capital that provide the framework for the formation and examination of the research questions.

3.4 Research design

Whilst a qualitative, narrative approach best 'fits' the methodology adopted by this thesis and is used in informing the research carried out, it is important to emphasise awareness of other possible approaches which might have been employed, and also briefly disclose why these were not deemed suitable.

The merits and possible weaknesses of a narrative approach are considered in the context of the aims of this study. In particular the suggestion is made that narrative enquiry offered a helpful but not problem-free methodological frame for the research carried out. The suggestion is also made that 'narrative inquiry' is therefore used by this study in the relational sense, described by Gergen and Gergen (2011), in their account of this methodology. This relational approach:

> Gives rise to stories about self and the world … and deepens the social orientation … it is a culturally shared structure of narration ...[where] the challenge is that of reconceptualising the nature of human experience (Gergen & Gergen, 2011, p. 379).

Six qualitative approaches as outlined by Flick (2014) were specifically considered appropriate for examination as a suitable research design in this study before settling on a narrative approach:

Case studies – through a detailed analysis of a small number of workers with an intellectual disability.

Comparative studies – where the experience of workers with an intellectual disability were compared to a group of workers who do not have a recognised disability.

Retrospective studies – involving a detailed historical study of a group of workers with an intellectual disability.

Snapshots – an analysis of state and processes for workers with an intellectual disability at the time of the research.

Longitudinal studies – a study of a small group of workers with an intellectual disability over an extended period of time.

Narrative inquiry – collecting the stories of workers with an intellectual disability talking about their experiences in the workplace.

Individual case studies were not considered due to the pragmatic difficulties obtaining the large blocks of time required to collect the data. The use of longitudinal case studies was also ruled out, as time constraints and access to participants over a long period could not be guaranteed. A retrospective case study also did not fit as most participants had been in the same employment position since entering the workforce and would only record a history of placement. However, questions regarding an individual's employment experience were identified as being useful to help identify an employee's pathway and supply background contextual data.

The complex nature of this study encouraged further investigation of the narrative inquiry approach, which has become prevalent over the last twenty years as a qualitative approach in the fields of education, psychology, nursing and anthropology where the circumstances are complex and cross disciplinary in nature (Elliot, 2005; Gergen & Gergen, 2011; Trahar, 2009). There is much evidence that a narrative approach is increasingly used as a methodological tool across many areas of research (Goodson, 2012; Atkinson & Delamont, 2006). There is interest in the narrative approach in the areas encompassing; healthcare and social care (Hsu & McCormack, 2011); theology and religion (Berzano & Riis, 2012); the media (Bordwell & Carroll 2012); literature (Farwell, 2012); psychology (Jovchelovitch, 2012); and anthropology (Scutta & Hobsona, 2013).

The increasing interest in narrative approaches does not mean that they are without controversy. Chase (2011) summarises the many challenges facing qualitative researchers wanting to use a narrative approach. She notes that in the six years between the third and fourth editions of her chapter, addressing 'narrative inquiry', much has changed. Chase (2011) cites the many new books that have been published in this area and the increasing popularity of this approach within published journal articles falling broadly within the educational area. With multiple approaches to narrative inquiry and changing methodologies, her conclusion is that while narrative inquiry is flourishing it is continually evolving and subject to much debate and scrutiny.

The insight that narratives are a way of structuring personal psychological experience of the world is, however, not new. Bruner (1991), for example, reminds us that narratives and stories have long been recognised as the way in which human beings:

> … organise our experience and our memory of human happenings, mainly in the form of narrative – stories, excuses, needs, reasons for doing, not doing, and so on (Bruner, 1991, p. 4).

Polkinghorne also suggests that "narrative opens the experience of history and moves it beyond personal history to create communal history" (2007, p. 134). Furthermore, Casey describes narrative as a "way we put shards of experience together, to (re)construct identity, community and tradition" (1995, p. 216). Such processes enable personal narrative to be developed to explain the world. The narrative then can be considered as the organising principle for human actions (Turner &Bruner, 1986; Sarbin, 1986) and "can give privileged insights into how people make sense of the world" (Lawson, Parker & Sikes 2006, p. 57). It is for these reasons that narrative form of inquiry was chosen for this study.

The narrative methodology has been identified as having great potential in cross-disciplinary collaboration and many "different forms of narrative analysis are regularly applied to businesses" (Heinen & Sommer, 2009, p. 200). However, Atkinson and Delamont describe the popularity of narrative data and narrative analysis as a mixed blessing. They argue that while the approach gives "voice to an otherwise muted group" (2006, p. 166) there cannot be any assumption that the approach automatically gives an insight to "an interior authentic self" (p. 166). They warn:

> Autobiographical accounts are no more 'authentic' than other modes of representation: a narrative of a personal experience is not a clear route into 'the truth', either about the reported events, or of the teller's private experience (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 166).

While their warnings are important they continue to support the collection and use of narrative materials for analysis, they argue that the data collected must be treated 'seriously' to recognise that the data is a form of social interaction in a 'social context', and as is the case in this study part of "socially shared conversations" (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 169). Equally important to consider is Goodson's

(2012) argument that there is no single form of narrative methodology but a 'cluster' of approaches that are selected to meet specific aims and approaches of the academic tradition and discipline in which the examination of life stories is being applied to:

> … the key role of narratives [is] for coming to terms with personal experience, for constructing collective identities and for making sense of the past and the future (and) is now widely acknowledged (Heinen & Sommer, 2009, p. 4).

Josselson contends that the narrative approach allows the researcher to take a "holistic rather than reductionistic" (2013, p. 10) approach where the aim is for the researcher to have stories from the participant's life that can be analysed and interpreted at a variety of levels. Interestingly, a narrative approach that focuses on the interviewer enabling the narrator (interviewee) to tell their story has become increasingly prevalent in research dealing with older people (Hsu & McCormack, 2011), and research populations where techniques such as surveys and structured interviews do not capture the experiences of those interviewed (Elliot, 2005). This practice can inform research with people with an intellectual disability because in the narrative interviewing approach, the question-response technique is avoided and the semi-structured approach allows the interviewer to be an active listener and a facilitator, allowing the interviewee to tell their story (Hsu & McCormack, 2011) even if they have a communication difficulty. Hsu and McCormack found narrative interviewing techniques help older people tell their story because it made every day experiences more important than the responses to discussion points that use the "jargonistic and unfamiliar terminology of health care that alienated individual experience" (2011, p. 842). Similar claims could be made when interviewing workers with an intellectual disability, allowing participants to tell their everyday experiences without the requirement to understand the jargon and unfamiliar terms that often accompanies more structured interview techniques (Di Placito, 2011; Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

With this in mind, this study recognises Lyotard's (1984) claim of "the pre-eminence of the narrative form in the formulation of traditional knowledge" (1984, p. 19) and uses interviews with workers with an intellectual disability "to flesh the small stories out" (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 122) in order to provide an insight into the participants experiences of gaining and maintaining employment.

Josselson provides a timely reminder about the ultimate purpose of narrative (qualitative) research and the end point of this research, to add to the knowledge about workers with an intellectual disability, when she suggests:

> … the purpose of studying other people in depth is not to measure, predict or classify them. Our purpose is to understand, more extensively or more deeply, other people's experiences of some aspect of their lives (2013, p. viii).

As the aim of this study is to increase the understanding of the experience of workers with an intellectual disability Josselson (2013) provided the focus for the selection of the 'narrative inquiry' approach for this study. Throughout this study 'narrative inquiry' is used in the relational sense described by Gergen and Gergen as a form of "relational constructivism" (2011, p. 379), where the experiences of participants in this study is described in a terms of the social context within their workplace:

> … by viewing experience not as something *we have* as a private possession but as something *we do* in relational participation … there is broad agreement that we often experience the world in terms of narrative (Gergen & Gergen 2011, p. 380 original emphasis).

Within this particular narrative inquiry approach the interviewer has an active listening role that encourages participants to tell their story in their own way, in their own 'voice'. Where how they spoke and the words or actions they chose were "repositories of meaning" (Josselson, 2013, p. 6) providing a 'voice' for the participant that could be interpreted to provide wider meanings. While acknowledging that some writers insist on distinguishing between the terms 'narrative' and 'story' (Smith & Sparkes, 2008) this study follows Spector-Mersel (2010) and Riessman (2008) by using them interchangeably.

Eliciting the story of individual experiences that link to the complex development of social capital in the workplace and the unpredictable nature of the target population in this study is informed through a narrative research approach (Curry, Nembhard & Bradley, 2009). Using a narrative approach allowed the complex social processes involved in building the necessary social capital in the workplace to be able to choose to gain and maintain employment, to be examined in a setting familiar to participants and helped the recruitment and organisation for the researcher (Barr, McConkey & McConachie 2003).

Small group interviews were used in this study to further provide participants with confidence and a safe environment to talk about their experiences (Cambridge & McCarthy, 2001). In this study small group interviews are also used to locate the researcher's role as a co-creator and because they:

> … have unique affordances that allow researchers to dwell in an evidentiary middle space, gathering empirical material while engaging in dialogues that help avoid premature consolidations of their understandings and explanations (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p. 548).

Using small group interviews in this way allows the collection of data as evidence that have particular time and place, a context for the data "without assuming the evidence can ever speak for itself" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p. 548), and recognises that collecting qualitative data from those who have any form of disability is recognised as being difficult because of the complex nature of the individual's experience of their disability (Turk et al., 2012).

The difficulties are further outlined by the ABS (2010) in a special bulletin devoted to the collection of data from those with a disability. While the questionnaires for the Australian census are carefully crafted and tested, the ABS cautions that the data collected can be variable and was designed to capture broad characteristics rather than specific data sets. This approach was in contrast to the detailed data or unambiguous estimates of prevalence that are expected in other parts of the census and reflects the recognised difficulties associated with the collection of data from those with an intellectual disability (ABS, 2010). This research recognises the problems highlighted by the ABS and acknowledges the small sample available for this research limits generalisations and extrapolations from the conclusions drawn.

The ABS (2010) cautions the use of questionnaires and other similar tools to collect qualitative data from people with an intellectual disability because the data collected may be untrustworthy due to the limited literacy of the people completing them. Introducing the concept of a scribe to read and enter the answers was rejected as the opportunities for error and confusing data increased with an intermediary. In particular, the use of Likert type scales have been shown to be untrustworthy and ineffective in adult populations with an intellectual disability, even when pictorial representations were used where the reading and language skills of the participant were problematic (Hartley & MacLean, 2006). Hartley and MacLean (2006) further

warn that they were only able to review a small body of published literature because "much of the research demonstrating unreliable and invalid Likert-type scales may not have been published" (2006, p. 825). Therefore the literature does not fully reflect the problematic nature of Likert type scales for use in research with people with an intellectual disability. These problems discouraged the use of any form of questionnaires for this study as its aim specifically sought to collect and record the workplace experience of workers with an intellectual disability through their own words.

On a more encouraging note, the recent development of practical guidelines and the recognition that conducting qualitative research with people who have an intellectual disability was achievable (Munger & Mertens, 2011), has opened up research disciplines that previously were considered too challenging for consideration. The result has become an expanding corpus of literature in a range of disciplines that encourage those with a disability to be an integral, participative part of the research process (Nind, 2008).

Including people with an intellectual disability in research has long been considered problematic but there is a growing interest in the field using emerging qualitative research methods (Turk et al., 2012; Nierse & Abma, 2011; Williams, 2011), and serious consideration during the early stages of this study was given to ways which employees with an intellectual disability could be involved with the research design. However, the nature of this study was considered too complex to follow this approach at the current time and small group interviews with workers with an intellectual disability were chosen. Using a small group interview process in research with those with an intellectual disability arguably introduces its own complexity. The interviewer must be continually aware that the suggestibility, acquiescence and compliance of participants with an intellectual disability have been shown to build during the interview process and allow for it during the interview process (Gudjonsson & Joyce, 2011).

While acknowledging the risks associated with interviewing people who have an intellectual disability in data collection highlighted by writers such as Nind (2008) and the ABS (2010), there are guidelines and practices that have been established in areas such as the legal system. Court systems throughout the world have long faced

the wider issues associated with the trustworthiness of information obtained from individuals with an intellectual disability in interview situations. The concern around understanding and accuracy of recall has consequences that may disadvantage those with an intellectual disability in all areas of the criminal justice system. In particular, the interpretation of police interviews may question the capacity to give evidence or the understanding of charges and fitness to plea and stand trial (Gudjonsson & Joyce, 2011). Worldwide, the legal systems and government data collection agencies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics do not purport to have definitive answers to the problems of interviewing people who have an intellectual disability, however, there a number of guidelines have been developed that are of interest to the wider research community.

In the UK the Mencap (2008) guidelines suggest using simple language that was jargon free in short sentences, with supporting images to ensure information was clear and easy to read for people who have an intellectual disability or basic literacy problems. Throughout this study, the Mencap (2008) guidelines were also used to provide information about the project in a clear and easy to read form for potential participants to encourage an informed choice about being part of this research (see Appendix A). Without an informed choice by the participants the research was at risk of being tokenistic with the collection of data being compromised by hearing only the views of those who are encouraged by others to take part, rather than those who made an informed choice to be part of the research (Finlay & Lyons, 2001). Later in this chapter the recruitment of participants is described, and outlines the care taken for the recruitment process to be entirely voluntary and avoid any real or perceived coercion from staff in the organisation for employees to be part of the study.

Other research recommendations from other writers support the small group interview approach selected for this study (Griffen, 2012; Nind, 2008; Cambridge & McCarthy, 2001). Both Nind (2008) and Cambridge and McCarthy (2001) suggest that a small group approach encourages participants to communicate experiences which they would not usually discuss in a one-to-one situation. While the difficulties associated with understanding complex grammatical structures and symbolic or metaphorical language are well documented for all interview situations, the problems

are magnified for people with an intellectual disability (Finlay & Lyons, 2001). However, Cambridge and Forrester-Jones (2003) found that using small group interviews increased confidence, were less threatening and provided a feeling of safety for the participants. Also small group interviews provide:

> … inter-member reinforcement, peer support and validation of views and experiences, and enable members to participate in research from which they would otherwise be excluded due to poor literacy skills (Cambridge & McCarthy, 2001, p. 477).

Despite this, even in a small group those with an intellectual disability may still feel pressured to respond to a question they do not understand or comprehend the consequences of their answer (Gudjonsson & Joyce, 2011). At these times, "the key to success appears to be willingness to adapt methods appropriately and to modify expectations to hear the voice of respondents" (Lloyd, Gatherer & Kalsy, 2006, p. 1399). With these points in mind, questions and vocabulary were kept as simple as possible, extra time was allowed for answers, and extra time was allowed to process the questions asked before answering (Bull, 2010).

The small group interviews for this study took a form described by Gudjonsson and Joyce where:

> ... the person is asked to say in their own words what happened to them. They are not asked any detailed questions, but instead encouraged to talk. The interviewer may say things like 'tell me more about that' (2011, p. 19).

The interviewing technique uses what Josselson (2013) describes as 'a relational approach' that uses an open ended invitation for participants to talk about their experiences in gaining and maintaining employment. It is the data collected from the narrative of the interview that is subsequently analysed by the researcher. The process allows the researcher to derive meaning inductively from "the narrative material itself [that] could only have been produced in that particular interview under those particular circumstances" (Josselson, 2013, p. 8). Riessman, however, reminds us that the benefits of "narrative accounts are not in their faithful representation of a past world, but in sifting the connections they forge amongst past, present, and future" (2008, p. 6). Therefore, while relationships between events can be established, causation cannot be attached to the narrative account and any attempt to develop causal relationships retrospectively are hard to prove (Boje, 2001).

The idea that "interviews are narrative occasions" (Riessman, 2008, p. 23) allow participants to tell their story in their own way reinforcing the equal importance of the narration (the told) and the structure of the narration (the telling) that was previously discussed by Josselson (2012). It was important in this study for the workers with an intellectual disability and the people who work with them (trainer/supervisors) to tell their own story and for the researcher to listen to how it was told, but as Riessman warns:

> Narratives do not speak for themselves or have unanalysed merit; they require interpretation when used as data in social research (2008, p. 2).

Boje also reminds us the transcription process of the narrative invariably involves an interpretation by the researcher and even practised researchers and experienced ethnographers "narrate differently to someone who lives their story" (Boje, 2001, p. 7). The researcher has a role that must be acknowledged and recognised in the selection, collection and analysis of the data. The researcher himself is part of the social interaction and context in which the narrative is collected and is the agent of interpretation for the data. He is also the co-creator of the interview through the choice and style of questioning and sets the boundaries of the discussion, but to truly understand the experience of participants the researcher during the interview process needs to "get out of the way as much as possible except to encourage elaboration and extension" (Josselson, 2013, p. 11). While the role of the researcher is further considered in detail later in this chapter, note must be taken of Atkinson and Delamont's (2006) warning that to gain insight and understanding the narratives collected during the research process must be subject to systematic analysis and treated as social phenomenon not private experience:

> While the 'voices' of otherwise muted groups may be charged with political significance, we cannot proceed as if they were guaranteed authenticity simply by virtue of the narrators' social positions (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 170).

3.4.1 The 'voice' of participants

While problems interviewing those with an intellectual disability due to barriers of expressive language difficulties and comprehension are recognised (Wilkenfield, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), in this study the focus remains clearly on the collection of experiences from participants in which they intentionally use their own words to express experiences of importance to them personally (their own 'voice').

The practical and philosophical implications of this observation are however acknowledged as inherently complex and require further discussion.

Hertz (1997) describes 'voice' as having three dimensions; the first in terms of the author (participant) and the second in terms of the presentation of the author (participant) by the researcher. The third dimension, not relevant to this study, arises from a methodology where the author and researcher are one in a self-reflective piece. While these dimensions of 'voice' are useful in describing the complexities of what 'voice' is, the overarching challenge for the researcher is described by Hertz as:

> A struggle to figure out how to present the author's [participant] self while simultaneously writing the respondent's [researcher] accounts (1979, p. xi).

Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln remind us that the term 'voice' has many meanings in the area of research and is debated as investigations into narrative increasingly "directly and openly deal with human emotions" (2011, p. 123). They identify the multi layered nature of the term and the important recognition allowing the participants to speak for themselves allowing the reader to hear the participants, "letting the participants speak for themselves" (p. 123). However, some accounts of qualitative research methodology, when discussing participant voice, question its 'authority' insisting that what is 'heard' is constructed through the dialogue developed between the participant and researcher (Mazzei & Jackson, 2012; St. Pierre, 2009; Atkinson & Delamont, 2006). Mazzei and Jackson further question the assumption frequently posited in qualitative research that the "voice can speak the truth of consciousness and experience" (2012, p. 745), they argue that without the wider context of individual experience and competence the result can be oversimplification.

The descriptions of the experiences collected in this study cannot be guaranteed or ranked for authenticity simply because of the participant's social position as a worker with an intellectual disability (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006) or because of their individual competence to communicate (Ashby, 2011). Each contribution by participants in this study (or 'story') was accepted as a viable contribution to an understanding of the social phenomenon of relationships in the workplace (Bamberg, 2012; Grbich, 2007; Atkinson & Delamont, 2006). Data gathering and analysis was informed by Jackson and Mazzei's insightful observation that there is no

unproblematic way to capture voice and that any data captured contain "no easy truths" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008, p. 307). The participants' responses in this study were, to some extent, moderated, contextualised, and labelled through the associated interviews with the trainer/supervisors and the researcher's experience in working with individuals with an intellectual disability to attempt to convey 'voice' and reach 'truth'. This problem is long recognised by writers such as Hertz (1979) and was described earlier as a challenge for the researcher. This insight also limits the probable generalisability of the study (see Section 3.9 Limitations to this study). One advantage of this self-reflexive approach is that it holds the potential to produce a data set that is developed through discursive reflection (St. Pierre, 2009) so "a more nuanced, complicated and productive story may be told" (Mazzei & Jackson, 2012, p. 746).

3.5 Participants

The potential participants identified for this study were workers with an intellectual disability already working in a supported workplace. It was felt that this cohort would have the experience necessary to tell their stories about gaining and maintaining employment. Potential participants were limited to workers eligible for the Disability Support Pension primarily due to an identified intellectual disability in the paid workforce of the supported workplace. This workplace was in the southern suburbs of Adelaide, South Australia. The workers interviewed held base grade positions in various divisions on the largest of the five worksites of this supported workplace. The trainer/supervisors were based in the main worksite. Two were in charge of work sections and involved directly in the day-to-day production and employee support. The other two trainer/supervisors were in management positions responsible for overall well-being and management of the organisation.

While the participants in this study cannot be considered 'representative' of a population but can be seen as 'informers' about the population, because they have firsthand knowledge of being a worker with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace. Secondly, the characteristics of participants were crucial for the research methodology to be used in this study. The results from these and other studies are encouraging as they move beyond the obvious and explicit to find the hidden and implicit when researching people with intellectual disabilities.

The participants in this study were employed in a large supported work environment and in continuous employment for more than one year. Continuous employment for more than 12 months was used to indicate that they were committed to employment and showed that their employer recognised they had the skills and attitudes necessary to remain in employment with that organisation. This was outlined at the initial meeting of potential participants and the information sheet and consent form only given to those who indicated they had been employed by this or another organisation for 12 months previously. Importantly at this site, the organisation requires an ability to travel independently on public transport as a condition of employment. This, associated with an absence of augmented and alternative communication devices at this location, provides a simple indication of the higher functioning level of intellectual disability of the potential participants for this study.

3.5.1 What is intellectual disability?

Those with an intellectual disability in this study are identified as recipients of the Disability Support Pension due primarily to an intellectual disability. The definition used by the Australian Government to allocate a Disability Support Pension due to an intellectual disability was chosen for its universal acceptance in Australia and the use of additional adaptive factors rather than a simplistic dependence on an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) score that can be confusing and challenging when considering a worker's position in the workplace. A worker with an intellectual disability for this study is currently eligible for the Disability Support Pension, and has been assessed by the Australian Government as not being able to work in open employment for at least 15 hours per week, because of an intellectual disability (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997).

To be classified as having an intellectual disability the Australian Government requires an individual to be assessed in three key areas:

> **IQ (Intelligence Quotient)** using the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (Revised WAIS-R) and two areas of social functioning: **adaptive behaviour** and **capacity for independent living**. The claimant is given a score for each and the three scores are then added. The three scores are then added to gain a rating that determines eligibility for financial support through the Disability

Support Pension and services through the supported employment agencies to obtain appropriate employment (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997, Table 10).

Eligibility for the Disability Support Pension due to an intellectual disability as defined above and currently employed in a supported workplace were used as the criteria for selection of potential participants in this study. The population of workers with an intellectual disability in the selected supported workplace could be classified as mild to moderate using the functional definitions commonly accepted in Australia with no potential participants classified as severe or profound working in the supported workplace at the time of the study.

3.5.2 Workers with an intellectual disability

The number of people working in supported workplaces in South Australia who have an intellectual disability as their first classification is small (ABS, 2011). In this organisation the number was considered by the administration to be around 20 at this site. However, the number of employees with an intellectual disability as the primary disability linked to other medical, psychological or neurological issues, and classified as a dual disability, was higher.

This study limited the cohort to those eligible for the Disability Support Pension based primarily on intellectual disability. The study was able to interview 14 of the possible 20 eligible employees on this worksite about their experiences of gaining and maintaining employment. This sample of workers with an intellectual disability interviewed cannot be regarded as representative of all workers with an intellectual disability in supported workplaces, and must be considered a snapshot of a given population, at a given time within this specific organisation.

Sixteen workers with an intellectual disability as their first (major) eligibility for the Disability Support pension and four trainer/supervisors from the same workplace agreed to be interviewed. Access to employees and trainer/supervisors was facilitated at the senior level by the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Management of the organisation who publicised support for the research through an email to all staff and a letter of support used to obtain approval from the University's Ethics Committee. Their support for the research followed consideration of an outline of the proposed approach at a Board of Management meeting. The support of

management for this research allowed first hand contact throughout the organisation and facilitating of the recruitment and interview process.

To ask the Human Resources Department as the gatekeeper of the organisation to directly identify potential participants for this study raised ethical issues of anonymity and confidentiality for participants. It was agreed that the Human Resources Department of the organisation would arrange for posters supplied by the researcher publicising a lunchtime meeting to discuss the research to be displayed in appropriate areas and inform trainer/supervisors about the general aims of the research and the participants required, to enable them to answer any questions from the workers regarding the study.

3.5.2.1 Recruitment of workers with an intellectual disability

'Easy English' posters about the research and promoting the information session were placed in prominent noticeboards around the worksite where employees were known to check regularly (Appendix B). Because of regular visits to the site, the researcher was already well known to most supervisors and the research was common knowledge in the organisation, there was a level of trust already present and a number of supervisors specifically gave details about the information session directly to workers in their teams who they knew received the Disability Support Pension due to an intellectual disability.

The development of 'Easy English' posters to publicise the information session and later 'consent forms' followed the format and principles from Mencap's 'Make it Clear' guidelines (Mencap, 2008). The 'Easy English' promotional poster for the information meeting included graphic symbols and a simplified vocabulary and a photograph of the researcher to publicise the meeting and introduce the research. 'Easy English' is the generic name used by speech and language specialists in South Australia to the accommodations made for reading and comprehension difficulties when designing information and procedural materials for people with learning difficulties and intellectual disabilities. The use of 'Easy English' posters around the organisation were commonplace and used for communication of events and in safety issues such as 'Safe Operating Procedures' (SOPs) for the use of machinery.

To ensure potential participants with an intellectual disability were able to read and comprehend the invitation letter, information sheet and consent form were each measured for readability and suitability using the Flesch Reading Ease scale and Flesh-Kincaid Grade Level test as recommended by the University of South Australia Learning Connection (2008). In addition they were independently checked to ensure reliability against the SMOG (Simple Method of Gobbledygook) Test of Readability developed by McLaughlin in 1969 and still relevant as a simple indication of reading ability for school year level. The aim was for communication to be written so that it could be read and understood by a person having a functional reading age of a student around the upper limits of Primary School in Australia (Year 6 or 7).

Table 1 below outlines the readability scores of the invitation letter, information sheet and consent form provided to potential participants with an intellectual disability.

Table 1: Readability scores of research correspondence

	Flesch Reading Ease Score	**Flesch-Kinkaid grade level (Approximate Australian school year level)**	**SMOG Analysis (Approximate Australian school year level)**
Introductory Letter to workers with an intellectual disability	72.4	7.4 (Year 7)	8.81 (Year 6 or 7)
Information Sheet for workers with an intellectual disability	83.1	4.9 (Year 4)	6.71 (Year 4 or 5)
The Consent Form for workers with an intellectual disability	71.54	7.86 (Year7)	7.86 (Year 5 or 6)

The scores from these readability tests suggest that the readability and ease of understanding of the introductory letter, information sheet and consent form were in an acceptable range for the potential participants to read and understand. For those

whose functional reading was below this level, the correspondence was structured so that it could be easily read to the potential participant and discussed with them by a parent/guardian or a friend with higher reading skills.

Those who attended the lunchtime information meeting were given an 'Easy English' information sheet along with an 'Easy English' consent form, again developed using the Mencap guidelines (2008).

Nearly 40 people attended the initial information session. During the information session the researcher outlined the aim of the research and the process that would occur. At the end of the session 28 took an 'Easy English' information sheet and an 'Easy English' consent form (see Appendix B). The consent form was to be returned to a box in the front office of the organisation. This is a common process in the organisation and no workers appeared to have any problems with the concept. The method allowed maximum anonymity for the worker and involved the deliberate action of placing the envelope in the box to indicate that they wished to participate in the study. It also provided for the involvement of parents/guardians (if appropriate and required) and provided the best opportunity to obtain informed consent to participate in the research (Cambridge & Forrester-Jones, 2003).

The aim was to form four of five small groups of three or four participants each. While there appears no definitive research literature to guide the numbers in each small group for optimal data collection there does appear an indication within the work of Kenny, Mannetti, Pierro, Livi and Kashy (2002) that a workable small group usually consisted of three to five participants.

From the initial interest from potential participants it was decided to aim for four groups, each with four participants. The final number and size of groups were later revised due to availability of participants and the interview room. Subsequently sixteen workers with an intellectual disability began the small group interviews. In two groups only one participant arrived at the prearranged time and the interviews began with only one participant. Both these interviews demonstrated the problems associated with interviewing people with disabilities that were highlighted by numerous writers (Gudjonsson & Joyce, 2011; ABS, 2010; Nind, 2008). Both single interviews were abandoned midway through. One because the participant wanted to

return to his work, the other because the responses from the participant were a repetition of the questions asked and did not provide information for the study. The remaining interviews were held in groups of three or four participants. Groups 1 and 4 had three participants while Groups 2 and 5 had four each. A total of 14 participated in the small group interviews.

The process of consent for recruitment followed the recommendations of Wilkenfeld (2014) for interviewing people with intellectual disabilities. In particular, this study accepted that not all eligible and interested participants will become part of the study because of decisions by made by parent or carers, even when there was not a guardianship order in place. More importantly following Wilkenfeld's (2014) recommendations during this study 'consent' was considered as dynamic and provisional at all times, and careful monitoring for signs that participants no longer consented were important. Practically the researcher was alert for signs that a participant was suffering from discomfort. If this was the case the researcher was obliged to terminate the interview

3.5.2.2 Background of the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed

Fourteen workers completed the small group interviews, ten male and four female, this is reflective of the gender balance in the main worksite of the organisation. All the employees interviewed had considerable support during their schooling years, attending Special Schools, Classes or Units for their secondary years. 75% of participants had been working for more than four years and all felt happy to be working for this organisation. When asked, they expressed appreciation for the support they received from staff and reported being happy in their role. None were in positions of responsibility above basic roles and had not advanced in the organisation since beginning employment.

The 14 workers with an intellectual disability who were interviewed came from four work units within the organisation: Furniture, Packaging, Hospitality and Mail Management. The Furniture and Hospitality units have high work expectations and recruit those with an intellectual disability who are considered more reliable and independent workers. In contrast the Packaging and Mail Management Units are recognised as accommodating 'less able' workers with an intellectual disability. Employees were placed in these work units because they were considered by the

organisation to require ‘higher support and supervision’. All four units are on the main site and employees work in small teams of between four and eight under the direction of a work Supervisor responsible for production. They are part of a larger group supported by a Personal Officer and Trainer who provide a Human Relations and Training role.

3.5.3 Trainer/supervisors

Four trainer/supervisors from the same organisation were interviewed in this study. All were very experienced in working with people with a disability and had undertaken Higher Education studies in the area. The description trainer/supervisor was a generic term used by the organisation to indicate that the position requires direct daily support of employees and differentiates from administrative, supply and finance roles within the organisation. The term covers a wide variety of positions, but can broadly be divided into production and support roles.

3.5.3.1 Recruitment of trainer/supervisors

The trainer/supervisors interviewed were identified after the selection process for the workers with an intellectual disability to be interviewed was completed. Trainers from the work divisions of the employees selected for small group interviews were invited by letter (Appendix B) to attend a small group interview. They were asked to provide background information about the workplace and relationships within the general work group.

3.5.3.2 Background of the trainer/supervisors

Three trainer/supervisors from the ‘shop floor’ in the areas indicated willingness to be interviewed. Only two were able to attend on the day and were interviewed together providing background information and observations about the workgroup and the expectations of the organisation. They were not told which workers had volunteered or had been selected and attended.

In addition two trainer/supervisors from the wider organisation were invited and agreed to be interviewed about the broader aspects of the workplace. Both were in senior managerial roles and were not informed about any other trainer/supervisors or workers who were being interviewed. They were interviewed separately. Again they were not told which workers with an intellectual disability were being interviewed.

3.6 Role of the researcher

As the collection of data using an interview process is an interactional relationship (Josselson, 2013; Brenner, 2006), the quality of relationship between interviewer and interviewee often becomes even more critical when interviewing people with intellectual disability (Lewis & Porter, 2004). It is therefore arguably important to recognise the researcher's contribution to the co-construction of the interview experience and that, to a certain extent, the "richness and value of an interview depends on the relational and empathetic skills of the interviewer" (Josselson, 2013, p. x). The researcher also has dual roles in the interview process: the first part of their role is to establish a relationship with the interviewee; and the second part is to ethically ensure the collection of a considered response: a response which is suitable for subsequent data analysis and in order to claim to have captured the 'voice' of the participants interviewed (Grbich, 2007; Atkinson & Delamont, 2006). There should also be some realistic recognition that this process is often complex and imperfect (Josselson, 2013).

The challenges of this process are highlighted in a further consideration of the researchers role in building positive working relationships with potential participants. While it is important and beneficial to understanding the context in which participants operate, McConnell-Henry, James, Chapman & Francis (2009) warn that there is evidence that participants may be less comfortable during qualitative data collection when they have a strong pre-existing relationship with the researcher. The implication for the researcher this study was the establishment of a relationship with potential participants that was friendly but not familiar and be aware of the participant's level of comfort during the interview process, ensuring engagement, while at the same time acknowledging that the purpose of the interview is to collect representative data (Josselson, 2013).

The second role of the researcher is to engage in the language of the participant during the interview and ensure the interviewee understands the questions asked and provides answers that show a considered response that is suitable for interpretation during the data analysis phase. As this study concentrates on the experiences of people with an intellectual disability it is important to acknowledge there is a recognised and well documented issue that people with an intellectual disability

sometimes have problems providing considered answers that show the questions asked have been understood and processed before answering (see for example Gudjonsson & Joyce, 2011). Therefore during the interview process a researcher's experience in working with people with an intellectual disability, is valuable in recognising times when the answers from the participants suggest that the participant has not comprehended the intent of the question (ABS, 2011). At these times the experienced interviewer is able to rephrase or reframe the original question or ask supplementary questions until satisfied that the answer is consistent with a considered response to the original question. Without this skill the researcher could be misled in data collection and inaccurately report on the experiences of participants. The reporting of the participant's experiences by the researcher is socially co-constructed (by the researcher and the participant) and mediated through the language used by the participants:

> How people speak, which words they choose, how they link ideas – are all these aspects of discourse are repositories of meaning and important elements to interpret (Josselson, 2013, p. 6).

Without an awareness and appreciation of the difficulties and characteristics of the language skills of a participant with intellectual disabilities, reporting on the co-construction of the experience conveyed during the small group interviews, could be problematic.

While co-construction can provide a challenge to capturing the experience of participants, the practical implications of an interview process with participants with an intellectual disability, using Josselson's (2013) relational approach, are equally important considerations for the researcher. The study by Lewis and Porter (2004), that used interviews with children with intellectual disability as its central methodology, has particular relevance for this study. Their findings highlighting the role of the researcher in interviewing children with an intellectual disability inform and guide the interview process with participants in this study. In particular, Lewis and Porter's (2004) caution that the researcher must take care the interview does not become over formalised in order to meet the demands academic convention or bureaucratic pressure. Over formality may lead to an increase in the pressure felt by the interviewees and result in answers that reflect not what the participant want to say, but rather, what they feel that the researcher wants to hear. Lewis and Porter

(2004) also warn the researcher to be cautious about the views from proxies, facilitators or observers who may seek to speak on behalf of those with an intellectual disability.

Lewis and Porter also caution of the dangers of 'tokenism' in capturing the voice of vulnerable participants with intellectual disabilities and suggest:

> … careful planning, preparation and the apportioning of appropriate time. These are not procedures that can be rushed … we need to keep asking ourselves what trust can we place in our methods and check that we have not overly predetermined the views that we have encouraged to be heard (2004, p. 196).

Similar cautions about the importance of meticulous planning in ethically capturing the experiences of participants with intellectual disability are made by Hallett and Armstrong (2013) in their study of young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder, many of whom had intellectual disability, have also influenced the thinking about the role of the researcher in this study. Linked to this is the importance of building a relationship between the researcher and the participants with an intellectual disability and "cannot be overstated" (Winkenfeld, 2014, p. 7). As a result the researcher's experience working with people with an intellectual disability over many years became an important factor in realising the aim of this study, to understand more extensively and deeply the participants experiences in gaining and maintaining employment.

3.7 Data collection

The collection of data in this study uses semi-structured interviews, and was based on the responses of workers with an intellectual disability to questions asked by the researcher about experiences and relationships in the workplace. This study relied on self-reporting by the workers and was supplemented by interviews with experienced trainer/supervisors who worked alongside participants, or were part of the selection and recruitment process of the employees for the organisation, and knew the participants well. Self-reporting has a range of strengths and potential weaknesses that may be limitations. The mitigation of the weaknesses of using self-reporting is outlined in Section 3.9 Limitations to this study.

3.7.1 Background data collection

Background information about each worker with an intellectual disability was collected at the beginning of each small group interview by the researcher using a form to collect information about the individual's perception of their disability, their schooling and work history. Similarly, background data was collected from the trainer/supervisors, using a pre-defined form. The form covered areas such as experience working in the disability sector, their role within the organisation, and work history (see Appendix A).

Before the small group interview each participant interviewed was asked questions about their age, gender, length of time in the workplace, and residential situation. This information provided an understanding of their life experiences. Questions were also asked about educational background, particularly if they had attended a special school or class, which gave an indication of the educational level and support in the formative years of decision making about gaining and maintaining employment. Other questions about perceived support needs and agency involvements sought to develop an indication of the individual's understanding of their disability and their need for support. The information provided background information and was used to identify common experiences that could relate to the development of social capital in the workplace. The responses to these questions provided the basis for the background of each individual outlined in Appendix C.

Each trainer/supervisors interviewed was also asked preliminary questions about their experience and qualifications in the disability field and the production or administrative area they supervised. The responses to these questions provided the background information for each trainer/supervisor outlined in Appendix C.

3.7.2 Strategies for the small group interviews

To ensure consistent data collection a standard approach to asking questions was used during the small group interviews with participants. On each occasion the interviewer: asked a question; allowed 10 full seconds (Pause); before some form of prompting reiterating the question – if needed (Prompt); gave praise for answering (Praise) and then paraphrased the answer to check for accuracy (Paraphrase). This is referred to as the 4P approach.

The 4Ps approach described above allowed time for the question to be processed and an answer formed. This was an adaption of the technique often used in remedial reading programmes for students with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties to encourage participation express ideas and feelings about the text (Merrett, Wheldall & Colmar, 1987). The 'Pause, Prompt and Praise' (3Ps) approach was developed a number of years ago to provide more effective tutoring for low progress readers. Originally developed by Merrett et al. (1987) and expanded by this researcher over a number of years has been adapted to a 4Ps approach (Pause, Prompt, Praise and Paraphrase). When conducting interviews with people who have an intellectual disability Pause, Prompt and Praise encourages considered responses and Paraphrase allows the interviewer to check for accuracy in understanding the response. Purposely using this strategy ensured the interviewer was employing the active listening skills of frequent summarisation and clarification:

> [an] awareness of non-verbal cues from participants such as body language, eye contact, and behaviour indicators (yawning, fidgeting, distractibility, etc.) is crucial in effective communication with those with expressive language difficulties (Wilkenfield, 2014, p. 7).

A video of each small group interview was taken to ensure that the non-verbal cues described by Wilkenfield (2014) were captured for later analysis if required.

The use of video recording with the camera and long range microphone at a distance rather than obvious microphones on a desk endeavoured to minimise intrusion into the personal space of the individual in the group and to reduce the level of stress for participants. Simple audio recording was offered individually to each worker with an intellectual disability before each small group interview began, but no participant took up this offer, opting for the room to remain the same as set up by the researcher. The use of video in this study is not like that described by Ellingson (2011) where the researcher creates a 'live performance' or 'engages audiences', rather the video provides a supplementary collection of data that can record what the non-verbal part of the 'language' of those who are described as having communication difficulties.

Each small group interview lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. Regular training or meetings with Personnel Officers are generally at a similar time, so absence from the 'shop floor' was not seen as unusual and assisted those who sought confidentiality

about being part of the research. Only the direct supervisor of the participant at the time of interview knew of their participation in this research.

Group rules were discussed before recording began to ensure that the workers with an intellectual disability being interviewed were clear and satisfied with the process. Participants were assured of confidentiality and security of the information collected. Being assured that no one would be able to identify their responses and that no one in the organisation would see their responses in a raw form were accepted by nodding of heads or verbal confirmation (e.g. 'Good' or 'OK'). This process gave confidence to the researcher that the participants had chosen to be part of the research and that they understood that the information and data collected would only be used by the researcher and they would not be identified. Each participant was also reminded at this time that they could leave the interview at any time they wanted or if they felt distressed or uncomfortable.

Before beginning the small group interviews with participants and trainer/supervisors the researcher gave a brief outline of the type of questions that were to be asked and checked that each employee was comfortable being there and was happy to talk about their work experiences. A reminder that any comments that were made would not be reported to anyone in the organisation and that nothing to identify them would be used in the final record of the study. As well it was emphasised that they should respect any comments they heard during the interview process and not repeat them outside, and they were free to leave at any time during the interview if they felt uncomfortable. Each interviewee was individually asked if they wished to continue and the interviewer waited for a verbal response or a nod of the head to indicate acceptance before moving to the next. The recording did not begin until after everyone had indicated agreement.

Listening to the experiences of employees in small groups enabled the workers with an intellectual disability in this organisation to be included in research about their experience as workers in a supported workplace and why they choose to work instead of staying at home. The decision to interview a small group of people who knew each other through their work was part of building a safe, non-threatening environment with an interviewer they have met before and with whom they feel comfortable talking about their work life.

The use of video in conjunction with audio was particularly helpful in identifying situations during the interviews process where body language was an indicator of the participant's response. This added a layer to the transcription that ensured the response of the participant was recorded precisely; and it enabled the researcher to be more certain that the data recorded was what the employee intended to express. Again, the researcher's long experience working with people with an intellectual disability was an asset in helping relax the participants and minimising the stress of participation in the small group interview increasing the likelihood that what was said reflected the intent of the participant rather than providing an answer that the participant felt the interviewer wanted to hear. However, Gudjonsson and Joyce, (2011) suggest that interviews conducted with vulnerable participants in a kind and sympathetic manner with a relaxed atmosphere may "overcome many of the problems associated with potentially unreliable or misleading accounts" (p. 18). With this in mind this study used familiar and comfortable surroundings and places for all interviews.

All interviews with trainer/supervisors occurred after the small group interviews with workers who have an intellectual disability. The interviews with trainer/supervisors were planned to be one-on-one interviews, but the constraints of time resulted in two 'shop floor' trainers being interviewed together, while those in managerial positions were interviewed separately. The 'shop floor' trainer/supervisors (T2 and T3) were interviewed in the same room as the employees while those in managerial positions (T1 and T4) were interviewed in their offices on different days to the small group interviews. While the authenticity of data collected from interviews with trainer-supervisors was not as concerning and so audio recording only would have sufficed, but for consistency and ease of use, video recordings were used for the group interview with T2 and T3. The same room, same camera and recording settings were used to ensure the camera remained unobtrusive. Both T2 and T3 were asked individually for permission to use video recording. Interviews with T1 and T4 were held in small offices and only audio recording was used.

The approach to questioning was similar to the interviews with workers, using a broad semi-structured interviews rather than strictly scripted approach. The discussion covered the wider issues of employees with an intellectual disability, how

workers with an intellectual disability build relationships with their fellow workers, those in positions of power or authority and those with whom they came in contact with during their usual work.

3.7.3 Group interview questions

The selection of a small group interview using a semi-structured interview as the main research tool allowed the researcher to fruitfully explore a broad range of possible group interview questions. (For example: What do you like about coming to work? What don't you like about coming to work?). This approach to the formation of group interview questions was adopted on the grounds that it is less restrictive than adhering to a smaller, more structured set of questions, prompts or directions that are often used in more formal interviews (Kirby, Greaves & Reid, 2006; Fontana & Frey, 2005). Therefore using a broad array of questions was chosen over using a scripted list of questions as the most suitable approach for the interviews with participants and their trainer/supervisors. The narrative approach encouraged participants with an intellectual disability to express their views and tell of their experiences. Within the approach of the narrative approach the researcher values what the participants says as worth hearing (Nind, 2008) and what was said by the participants was accepted by the interviewer as a valid view of their experience.

At the same time a number of broad questions were developed to reflect the conceptual framework used in research, offering some potential indication as to how responses might be categorised in terms of the bonding, bridging and linking concepts adopted for study from Woolcock (2001). While the questions were in the form of a loose script due to the nature of the participants, the researcher often had to expand or restate the question in a slightly different way to ensure the participants understood what was being asked.

While these questions provided the basic outline of the interview process the researcher remained aware of the substantial ethical issues associated with interviewing people with intellectual disabilities, and made decisions about follow up questions or abandoning lines of questioning for each individual, based on ethical principles discussed below.

Other informal questioning of each participant, before the interviews began, checked their understanding of the 'Easy English' information sheet and any hesitation in responses were clarified to ensure there was an understanding of the proposed interview process. Before the formal interview began each participant was again asked if they were willing to continue. This process was part of ensuring that informed consent was obtained from those with an intellectual disability before the small group interviews begin. This is discussed further later in this chapter.

Table 2: Interview question base for small group interviews

Focus	Broad Questions/ Topics	Rationale
Bonding close relationships in the immediate workgroup	• Tell me how you get on with fellow workers? • What do you think helps you build good working relationships with your fellow workers? • What do you like about coming to work? • What don't you like about coming to work?	To inform about the importance of **bonding** with workmates
Bridging wider relationships with other workgroups, customers and the general public	• Tell me how you get on with other people you come into contact with during your work time (e.g. the general public, or delivery people, or people from different work units)? • What do you think helps you build good working relationships with people you come into contact with from outside your work unit? • What was it like for you when you first started working? • What problems did you face when you started work?	To inform about the importance of **bridging** with others they come into contact with in the workplace
Linking connections with people who are in positions of power or authority that provide income, social or physical resources to the workgroup	• Tell me how you get on with your supervisors? • What do you think helps you build good working relationships with people who are your supervisors? • What things make you think about giving up work? • What helps you to stay on at work?	To inform about the importance of **linking** between themselves and those in authority or power

Questions for the trainer/supervisors were finalised after the transcripts from the small group interviews with employees were examined. The questions for the

trainer/supervisors were less structured and wider ranging than the employees to follow some of the issues that arose from the employee small group interviews. Other questions sought background information to clarify or expand some of the broader issues that were identified from the transcripts of the small group interviews with the workers with an intellectual disability.

Table 3: Interview question base for trainer/supervisor interviews

Focus	Questions asked	Data collected
Bonding	• Can you describe some examples of good interactions between workmates? • What do you think helps a worker build good working relationships with their fellow workers?	Working operational definition of the skills of **bonding** that can be used to develop a rubric to identify instances of bonding to build scenarios that reflect this focus
Bridging	• Can you describe some examples of good interactions between workers and supervisors? • What do you think helps a worker build good working relationships with people who are in a supervisory role?	Working operational definition of the skills of **bridging** that can be used to develop a rubric to identify instances of bridging to build scenarios that reflect this focus
Linking	• Can you describe some examples of good interactions between workers and people who they may come into contact with (e.g. the general public, or delivery people, or people from different work units)? • What do you think helps a worker build good working relationships with people they come into contact with from outside their work unit?	Working operational definition of the skills of **linking** that can be used to develop a rubric to identify instances of linking to build scenarios that reflect this focus

3.7.4 The interviews

Ten male and four female workers with an intellectual disability completed the small group interviews (individual interviews with two male workers with an intellectual disability were terminated due to difficulties collecting data from the participant). The gender balance (approximately three males, one female) reflects that of the work units in the organisation, and the overall ratio of male/female employees in all disability groups in the organisation.

The trainer/supervisors interviewed in this study represented two areas of responsibility within the organisation. Two (both female) trainer/supervisors were at the managerial level working across the organisation in a supportive human relationship role. While both these trainer/supervisors knew all of the workers with an intellectual disability, and therefore those interviewed, neither had day-to-day contact or were responsible for them. The other trainer/supervisors interviewed were directly responsible for the workers on the 'shop floor'. Both (one male, one female) were responsible for production output and work related issues on a day-to-day basis. Interviewing trainer/supervisors from 'management' and the 'shop floor' gave differing perspectives during the interviews.

It was planned to have six small group interviews for the workers with an intellectual disability, each with four participants. At the designated times for interviews 16 participants attended. Due to illness or change of mind interviews were conducted in two groups of four, two groups of three and in the other two groups only one participant attended. The two groups with only one participant were abandoned after a short time because data collection was difficult or restating questions suggested to the researcher that the participants were giving answers they thought would please the researcher. These two interview groups with one participant only, vindicated the choice of small group interviews with workers with an intellectual disability over individual interviews. The experience reinforced the advantages of small group interviews with people with an intellectual disability identified by Cambridge and McCarthy (2001). The small groups helped people to gain confidence in a group environment through creating a safe environment where each member reinforced, support and validated each other's views and experiences.

3.7.5 The use of video as supplementary data collection

The use of a discrete video camera provided additional data to the audio recording that was detailed in the transcript to ensure that nonverbal responses, such as the nod or shake of a head were captured, and available as part of the data analysis. The video camera used was palm size and placed high in the corner of the room well away from the interview table. The view from the camera allowed clear view of the participants but was at a sufficient distance to be unobtrusive from where the participants sat.

Video as a supplement to audio recording provided the opportunity to ensure that the participant's visual and auditory responses are captured for analysis in the least stressful environment (Wang & Lien, 2012). Supplementing an audio record of the small group interviews with video in this study provided additional opportunity to record responses from those who had limited oral communication. Those with an intellectual disability may experience difficulty in verbalisation, but then can express agreement, dissent, satisfaction and frustration as reactions to the researcher and fellow interviewee's responses. Without a video record that could be watched in parallel with the audio, many of these responses would have been lost. As found by Perry (2004), having an alternative method of data collection through a video record ensured that the all interviewee responses were considered and recorded in an appropriate context so the story of each worker with an intellectual disability could be captured. The use of supplementary data collection methods, such as video, allows the interview to be more than a collection of data and more central to the methodology as a "focus of enquiry in its own right" (Elliot, 2005, p. 17). It is also recognised that video recording participants can of itself elicit stress among the participants. This was anticipated and the potential stress reduced by using a very small video camera on a tall monopod in the corner of the room. The camera was unobtrusive and remotely started after the collection of background data and rechecking consent, when each participant individually agreed to be videoed, immediately prior to small group interviews.

3.7.6 Ensuring the authenticity of the data

A question facing researchers where the participants have been classified as having an intellectual disability is: Do the responses to questioning in oral and written forms represent the intention of the interviewee? A lack of authentic data collected can be a result of increased expectations beyond the individual's ability to be "able to understand basic and simple questions and provide comprehensible replies, and understanding the implications of their answers" (Gudjonsson & Joyce, 2011, p. 16). Furthermore there is Finlay and Lyons (2001) suggest that people identified as having an intellectual disability may display a 'confirmation bias' where the participant feels that they must answer questions in a way they think others (in particular the facilitator) would like them to answer, rather than what they themselves think. In situations where this was suspected great care was taken to

ensure that answers were not based on the participant's willingness to give responses they thought the interviewer would like to hear. This included:

- Calling on the researcher's considerable professional experience of educational practice with individuals who have intellectual disabilities
- Careful use of supplementary questions and/or rephrasing/restating the question and in order to contextualise response provided
- The use of strategies to mitigate and reduce any possible stress or anxiety of the part of respondents, including for example the 4P process. The use of the 4P process is further outlined below.

There are several studies suggesting that participation in research can be a stress-inducing experience for those with an intellectual disability (Finlay & Lyons, 2001; Xiaodong, Hmelo, Kinzer & Secules, 1999). The experience of the interviewer working with people with an intellectual disability and the use of the 4Ps approach, outlined earlier in this chapter, was used to minimise the additional stress for participants. The Pause, Prompt, Praise and Paraphrase (4P) approach allowed time for the participants to process the questions and respond without pressure from the interviewer to 'hurry' with the answer, while paraphrasing allowed the participant and interviewer to feel confident that the response had been recorded accurately and developed a confidence that the interviewer was listening.

Even with these precautions, the aim of listening to stories of participants is to make sense of the experiences (Heinen & Sommer, 2009), using an active listening style that encourages the participants to tell their story in their own way (Josselson, 2013). The interviewer is part of the shared conversation with the participant (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 169) and is aware that the methods used must be adapted to hear the 'voices' of participants (Lloyd, Gatherer & Kalsy, 2006) in order to derive meaning from the participant's stories, each presented in the particular circumstances of the small group interview in this study (Josselson, 2013).

3.8 Ethical issues

This research and the methodology used was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of South Australia, and as this study involved people with intellectual disabilities obtaining informed consent from the workers with an intellectual

disability involved a check to determine if an order for guardianship was in place. The names of all who returned consent forms to the front office were independently checked to see if an order for guardianship was recorded on the organisation's database and the guardian's signature needed to be present on the consent form. The check was carried out by an administrative assistant in the organisation independent from this study. If the guardian's signature was not present the name of the volunteer was not listed as a participant and not assigned an interview by the administrative assistant. The completed consent forms, checked for accuracy and completion, were returned to the researcher by the administrative assistant who was independent of the study and as part of her job, required by the organisation to check employee records for accuracy and corporate data. This approach removed the researcher from collecting any data that could be considered confidential about potential participants, and place the organisation at arm's length from the study.

3.8.1 Informed consent

Consent from the trainer/supervisors interviewed was obtained using a standard style of consent form (see Appendix B). For the workers with an intellectual disability obtaining consent required greater consideration due to the complex nature of intellectual disability.

The gaining of informed consent from people with an intellectual disability can be complex, involving a modified communication process to match the level of literacy and understanding, and the building of trust between the researcher and the participants (Perry, 2004). While the difficulty of understanding the complex language associated with academic research has been well reported (Bull, 2010; Lloyd, Gatherer & Kalsy, 2006), less prominence has been given to the relationship with the researcher in giving consent (Cook & Inglis, 2012). The building of a relationship between participant and researcher was directly associated with trust and confidence (Nind, 2008). Part of the trust held in the interviewer by the participant is reflected in the understanding that consent is 'dynamic' and can be terminated at any time either by the participant or the researcher when he becomes aware of body language or discomfort in the participant during the interview (Wilkenfield, 2014). This occurred on two occasions during this study. Each time the researcher felt that the participants were uncomfortable in the situation and so terminated the interview.

3.8.2 Privacy and confidentiality

Employees and trainer/supervisors from this organisation had to feel confident that their responses would not jeopardise their position, or cause embarrassment for their employer. Privacy and confidentiality rely on the trust between researcher and participant as the researcher was already known to many of the employees and trainer/supervisors and was a well-recognised visitor therefore a level of trust was already present.

The small size and interconnectedness of the disability service community in South Australia is such that there was a strong possibility that if care was not taken, individual responses could be identified. The very small number of disability services in South Australia means that confidentiality for institutions and organisations also needed to be carefully considered when publishing the findings from this study. The Institution, trainer/supervisors and the workers with an intellectual disability were assured that any aspects that could identify the institution or individuals would be removed before publication. In the light of 21st century technology, community forces and assurances to participants and trainer/supervisors, this study has followed Tilley and Woodthorpe's (2011) strong recommendation to err on the side of anonymity for participants and organisations.

Any statements or comments that could possibly identify either a worker, trainer or the organisation have been removed where possible or generalised where not, so that individuals and specific organisations cannot be recognised.

To ensure a confidential situation for the participants, small group interviews were carried out in a place where the participants usually met and were familiar within the organisation. For employees going to onsite meetings or short training courses was commonplace and considered an everyday event by workers in the organisation. By using a training room for the small group interviews that was used on a regular basis by workers from every division for training and work meeting not only overcame issues of privacy and confidentiality but provided a comfortable and familiar place for the participants to meet onsite.

All participants who attended the interview room agreed to the use of video to record the session. The camera was placed in a corner on a two metre monopod that allowed

the camera to be in a very unobtrusive position. As a backup the session was recorded using a '*Livescribe*$^{(TM)}$' pen that allowed the researcher to make notes and record the conversation at the same time, the recording then became a backup to the audio on the video. Using a '*Livescribe*$^{(TM)}$' pen enabled the notes made by the researcher to be linked to the audio recording, permitting rapid additions to the transcript if required.

All participants were individually assured that the information and data collected during the small group interviews was confidential before the collection of individual information as each arrived, before the interviews were begun. At the same time each participant was asked if they were happy to be asked questions about their experiences at work and that they could stop and leave at any time they wanted. These assurances were given before the interviews began in line with general frameworks and recommendations to ensure ethical approaches to research involving people with an intellectual disability (Jewell, 2010; Nind, 2008; Perry, 2004).

For trainer/supervisors the process was similar. Concerns about confidentiality and privacy were addressed and prominence was given to the final publication of the study being carefully edited to minimise the possibility of the organisation, workplace or individuals being identified at a later date.

Throughout this study great care has been taken to ensure that the workers with an intellectual disability, trainer/supervisors and the organisations and institutions are not identified in written records or this thesis.

3.8.3 Storage of information

All video recordings, transcripts consent forms and notes have been secured in the office of the School of Education, University of South Australia in accordance with the University's rules and regulations regarding primary data sources. In accordance with the University's policy the video and audio tapes containing research data have been transcribed, in addition the video and audio media collected has been stored appropriately.

3.9 Limitations to this study

It is important to outline the limitations inherent in a qualitative study about the working lives of individuals who have an intellectual disability. Findings gleaned from this study cannot be considered 'generalisable' and suitable for evaluation by further replication studies. As a consequence firm, specific, conclusions cannot be drawn beyond those identified for this, specific cohort of participants. This caution is particularly relevant given the pragmatic difficulties of ethically gathering representative data from this population.

Broader directions for further research into this topic can, however, be identified as helpful general insights useful in transition planning or developing training packages for individuals with intellectual disability in the context of employment. These important recommendations are presented in the summary and recommendations section of this thesis (see Chapter 6). One key recommendation presented, is that the experiences of women identified as having an intellectual disability and those from diverse ethnic or sociocultural backgrounds appears to be underrepresented in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Importantly women and ethnic minorities identified with an intellectual disability were generally underrepresented in the participants of this study but were representative of the population of this worksite.

3.10 Summary

This chapter has explored considerations related to the research design of the study undertaken. It was proposed that the research design adopted by this thesis falls within the category of 'narrative inquiry' specifically of a sub-type described by Gergen and Gergen (2011) as 'relational constructivism'.

Chapter 3 also proposed that this methodology enabled the use of Woolcock's (2001) conceptualisation of bonding, bridging and linking social capital that was outlined in Chapter 2 as useful for the investigation of the factors relevant to gaining and maintaining employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

In addition to integrating research design with these important conceptual frames for research amongst those identified as having an intellectual disability. Chapter 3 set out the details of consideration around the research method by:

- Outlining the rationale for and conduct of groups interviews carried out: including issues specific to interviewing those with an intellectual disability
- Presenting the problems associated with the collection of data from individuals with communication difficulties in responses and how they could be overcome
- Discussing the notion of informed consent and how this was operationalised in this research following the ideas of Wilkenfeld (2014)
- Describing how ethical issues were considered in the design and conduct of this study.

In the next chapter the framework developed here is used to analyse the data collected during the small group interviews with workers with an intellectual disability and the interviews with trainer/supervisors.

Chapter 4: Analysis of data

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how data collected as part of the research study undertaken was subsequently processed and analysed. The data was gathered from small group interviews with participants and also from one-to-one and small group interviews with trainer/supervisors.

The method of coding and developing themes from the small group interviews with workers with an intellectual disability is discussed in terms of a thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process was also used for the data collected from interviews undertaken with trainer/supervisors.

Chapter 4 also discusses the process by which themes emerged during the thematic analysis of small group interviews held with participants. The themes which emerged from trainer/supervisors interviews are also identified. In addition an outline is given describing how themes and other potentially important features in trainer/supervisor interview data were cross-checked for possible connections and relationships with the themes identified from small group interviews held with participants.

It is suggested that interviews held with trainer/supervisors provided a different perspective on the workplace where the research took place and on the relationships between participants and others in the workplace. Insights gained here are potentially helpful in understanding aspects of the development of social capital within the workplace and which were not necessarily evident in the small group interviews per se. The trainer/supervisors interviewed also offered insight into the operation of a supported business enterprise established primarily to provide work opportunities for those with an intellectual disability: this on its own account disclosed revealing wider important issues affecting the employment of individuals with intellectual disability in a supported workplace. For example, there was some suggestion within

the data of ongoing, underlying tensions between the need to offer social support and holistic care for employees with intellectual disability and between the needs of the organisation as a commercial entity.

Riessman (2008) proposes four types of analysis that could be used to analyse and interpret the data collected in this study, these are: thematic, structural, interactional and performance:

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis of data concentrates on the content of the interview text rather than the way the text is conveyed. Riessman (2008) suggests that for a thematic analysis what is 'told' rather than the 'telling' of the story is more important. The object is to find common elements across the participants and the events they report to create a group of concepts that underlie the stories of the participants (Riessman, 2008). This approach was chosen as the aim of the study emphasises the 'voice' of the participant in recounting their own experiences.

Structural analysis

Structural analysis uses the interpretation of language to support explanations about behaviour (Riessman, 2008). This form of analysis aims to allow the researcher to step back and focus on how the participant uses language to create relationships in events and experiences (Rejnö, Berg & Danielson, 2014). As participants interviewed in this study were identified as having an intellectual disability, the typical language skills of participants might not be sufficiently developed to use this approach.

Interactional analysis

An interactional approach is appropriate to studies that involve a relationship between speakers. The narrative in this approach occurs in specific situations such as a court, medical or social service situation where the individual and questioner participate in an interactive conversation (Riessman, 2008). The nature of this study did not involve ongoing interactive conversation so this approach was not appropriate.

Performance analysis

Performance analysis uses a stage metaphor and is used predominately for visual media where the performance or images are not considered in isolation, but contextualised and explained through an audience, and for the performer it is more about 'doing' rather than telling a story (Riessman, 2008). This approach to analysing data was not appropriate for this study because of its performance context.

Data collected in this study richly evoked the context of participants' working lives and disclosed personal conceptualisations of why they considered work an important part of their story. This should, however, be accompanied by a certain degree of caution about the accuracy of inferences made about data gained from individuals with intellectual disability. For example Ware (2004), clearly warns, that the analysis of data collected from interviews with people who have an intellectual disability requires a higher degree of inference and interpretation using both verbal and non-verbal behaviours. Thematic analysis is helpful here for data interpretation because it favours 'the told' as opposed to 'the telling' thereby reducing reliance on the expressive language skills of the participant and reducing the possibility of misinterpretation or misunderstanding by the interviewer/researcher (Riessman, 2008). One important, reason to choose thematic analysis as the data analysis tool for research in this study is the alignment with the social construct of disability discussed in Chapter 2: this study focuses on the (social and psychological) experience of work (including the relationships at work) for participants. Finally, practices for data analysis outlined by accounts of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were thought conducive to identifying workplace-based social relationships. These protocols, outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) in more detail in Table 4, involved:

- An initial process of data familiarisation
- The subsequent generation of initial codes in a preliminary data analysis phase
- The searching of the dataset for themes
- Reviewing the themes identified
- The definition and naming of each relevant theme

- The production of a report.

In practice this process was helpful as it aided the identification of significant relationships for participants early within the data analysis process. This knowledge, productively, became the foundation for potential themes that emerged during later coding and interpretation of the data and following guidelines for thematic analysis suggested by literature (Grbich, 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.2 Data analysis

There appears to be relatively little written specifically about analysing qualitative data collected from people who have an intellectual disability as most accounts focus on the problems associated with the collection of data (Nind, 2008). The lack of developed guidelines for the analysis of qualitative data collected from people with intellectual disabilities suggests an unwritten assumption that the analysis is no different from common approaches used for people without an intellectual disability. Nind (2011), however, suggests that checking of data with participants who have any form of learning difficulty or intellectual disability can be problematic (Nind, 2008, 2011) and needs to be considered. In this study the 4P strategy discussed in Chapter 3 (Pause, Prompt, Praise and Paraphrase) acknowledges Nind's (2011) suggestion to check answers when interviewing people with disabilities as the final P (Paraphrase) checks for an acknowledgement of the interviewer's understanding by the participant of their response. Using this method checking of the data was immediate and could be restated, expanded or corrected if required. Nind's (2011) work in the area of interviewing people with a learning difficulty or intellectual disability, also suggests that the very nature of data available from written transcripts alone may lead to over-interpretation by the researcher. Her call for interview transcription to be supplemented with "pictures, symbols and single words" (Nind, 2011, p. 15) was heeded in this study through the use and detailed examination of video recording to supplement the audio transcription and to put the single words like 'yes' and movements such as a shoulder shrugs and head nods or shakes into a context for analysis.

The definitions of 'bonding', 'bridging' and 'linking' social capital in the workplace outlined in Chapter 3 were used as the analytic framework to conceptualise

relationships and provided the theoretical frame for data gathered. These relationships encompassed: those of participants with their fellow workers with a disability; others that they came into contact with through their work (for example, other workers, the public) some of whom may have a disability others may not; and the relationships with those in positions of power or authority in the workplace, none of whom had a disability. In analysing data gathered, these relationships also featured as themes which potentially described aspects of social capital relating to the participants gaining and maintaining employment.

4.2.1 The use of video data collection

Using a video recording of the small group interviews allowed the analysis of both verbal and non-verbal behaviours to provide the higher degree of inference and interpretation that Ware (2004) suggests is helpful when interviewing people with intellectual disabilities. In this study, written transcripts of the small group interviews were checked and annotated using the video recording to record and note the nodding or shaking of heads, the gestures and body language that indicated agreement or not with other members of the interview group. Video recordings of the small group interviews were also checked independently, by a University colleague not present at the interviews, with the written transcripts to ensure all relevant reactions from participants were recorded accurately.

Video recording of all interviews with employees allowed a consistent approach in the collection of data and a reliable record of each small group interview. An audio recording backup was made in case some sections were inaudible or some other technical issues arose. Interviews with trainer supervisors were all audio recorded. The group interview with trainer/supervisors (T2 and T3) was also videoed as a backup, but the video recording was not required for clarification of the transcripts.

4.2.2 How the small group interview data was processed

Selection of the mechanics of the analytical process was heavily influenced by the researcher's previous experience in evaluating multi-software approaches to computer assisted qualitative data analysis. The software programmes *Atlas ti*, *Leximancer* and *Concordance* were all considered for use in analysing data gathered in the study described: *Leximancer* was chosen primarily because of positive

appraisal in literature, specifically the apparent strength in mapping significant features of qualitative data (Hansson, Carey & Kjartansson, 2010). Evaluation of a study evaluating *Atlas ti*, *Leximancer* and *Concordance* also however suggested that its use did not in any way replace the skills or attention of the researcher and specifically that "while the software presents mapping and relational data, the researcher's skill in the interpretation is the key to successful research" (Hansson et al., 2010, p. 298). This emphasis on the knowledge and skills of the researcher was at the forefront of a data analysis process. Indeed this caution about the utility of multi-software approaches to computer assisted qualitative data analysis was highlighted by the data analysis conducted as part of the research described.

As a trial, raw data from participant interviews was processed through *Leximancer*. The results were less than satisfactory: *Leximancer* appeared to have difficulties processing annotations about body language and other relevant observations evident from careful observation of the video footage gathered. Even with weightings for these annotations, the lack of sophistication in expressive language of many of the participants led to an exaggerated emphasis on those participants whose expressive language could be processed by the software. The results of this trial revealed that *Leximancer* was not appropriate to use in this case. Other Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) such as *Atlas ti, Concordance* and *NVIVO* were also considered and trailed in initial data analysis. *NVIVO* was most promising, providing a convenient method of coding but it did not allow the broad comparison that simple hand coding. After hand coding with coloured highlighting, the appropriate sections of each transcript (and associated annotations) were cut and pasted into a number of *Microsoft Word* documents that provided the basis for the development and refinement of themes.

The thematic analysis process outlined in Table 4 by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used as the foundation for the analysis of data in this study. The initial step of becoming familiar with the data began with several detailed inspections of the videos of the interviews before the careful development of the individual annotated transcriptions were carried out ensuring nonverbal responses from the video recording were captured. From the transcripts initial code was generated and assembled into themes that were revised and reviewed until they were able to be

defined and named. From these themes, the results outlined in Chapter 5 and the conclusions drawn in Chapter 6 were produced. These outcomes were, in turn, analysed compared and contrasted with the current literature in this field.

Table 4: Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process in this study
Familiarisation with the data:	The data was transcribed and annotated using the video recording to capture nonverbal input. The annotated transcriptions were carefully examined, read and re-read as initial ideas were identified.
Generating initial codes:	The initial coding of interesting or recurring points were colour coded across all the transcripts (workers and trainer/supervisors separately). The workers annotated transcripts were examined in a systematic fashion and the data relevant to each code collated. The transcripts from the trainer/supervisors interviewed were treated in a similar way.
Searching for themes:	The collated codes were grouped into potential themes, and all data relevant to each potential theme collected together. At this stage some codes appeared in more than one grouping and were replicated into both areas.
Reviewing themes:	The themes were checked in relation to the individual data collected from the separate transcript and across the whole data set from all transcripts. Through the process a set of themes emerged that could be mapped to individual responses from the transcripts.
Defining and naming themes:	Continually revisiting the data from the workers and trainer/supervisors interviewed refined the themes. Three major themes were identified. The major themes were defined and named to include all the themes that emerged during the initial process.
Producing the report:	Using these three themes examples were extract from the small group interviews and the trainer/supervisors. The examples supported the themes and related back to the literature review in Chapter 2 and were used to develop the results outlined in Chapter 5 and the conclusion drawn in Chapter 6.

Source: Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 104

The central point made by Braun and Clarke (2006) about thematic analysis is that the technique develops over time and the process should not be rushed. In this study, it was this greater care in identifying insights and understandings the data that was highly relevant as the data was collected from people with an intellectual disability (Ware, 2004). The themes emerged from a growing familiarity with the data and from a careful reviewing of the data that saw a constant revising of the themes and checking with the data, until the themes became clear and were supported by the data:

> A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82).

After completing transcripts with annotations by the researcher from the video, each transcript was checked by an independent observer who compared the video record and the annotated transcript to ensure the transcript was correct and that the annotations captured the body language and other reactions from participants that indicated a response to the discussion at that time. This process was part of getting to know the data as a whole.

4.2.2.1 Generating the codes

Through reading and re-reading the dataset initial ideas were identified as the data became more familiar and became the basis for initial coding of a sample of the data collected. Generating the initial code involved using the data from small Group 1 and the interviews with trainer/supervisors T2 and T3 to develop simple initial coding identified interesting and/or recurring points that could reviewed and refined. The initial coding undertaken focussed on the participant's relationships in the workplace and any comments relating to the perceived significance of work (and the workplace). Using analytic framework that was generated from the research question and sub-questions that lead this study based on the relationships with fellow workers, those with whom the worker had indirect contact, and those in positions of power or authority. The initial codes were categorised into these three relational areas and the trial data from Group 1 and the interviews with trainer/supervisor T2 and T3 were examined and the coding refined.

It became evident that the responses from Group 1 showed that the participants had considered responses to questions about their relationships with differing groups in

the workplace and separately the value they placed on work and the workplace, however there was little indication at the macro level about the relationship with the organisation. In contrast, the sample coding of the trainer/supervisors was rich in data that highlighted the importance of the relationship between the employee and the organisation. As a result the initial coding was revisited to separately consider the work (tasks, production) and the workplace (the site, organisations, relationships, connections). This allowed the workplace to be considering as a representation of the organisation for the participants. With this adaptation, the coding of the sample set of data from Group 1 showed potential to examine the research sub-question that related to the relationship of participants to the organisation that was central in many of the responses of the trainer/supervisors, yet appeared absent in the participant's responses.

The final coding considered use of the 'workplace' and the 'organisations' as synonymous. In most cases employees used terms that described the 'workplace' when they spoke about the 'organisation', and trainer/supervisors saw 'organisation' as describing the 'workplace'. The codes were revised and revisited using the sample data set until it was felt all references to this theme were coded.

Five coding groups were established to develop an analytic framework for the data set that related to the sub-questions of the main research question: *What social capital do workers with an intellectual disability build to gain and maintain employment in a supported workplace?*

The themes based on the sub-questions to form the analytic framework are:

- Relationships with people which participants directly work with (bonding social capital)
- Relationships they come into contact with in the workplace (bridging social capital)
- Relationships with those in power or authority (linking social capital)
- Relationships with the workplace (the organisation as a system or support)
- Relationships in the community through employment (social capital in the community).

In Chapter 5 these coding groups are grouped together to reflect the three research sub-questions that help describe the social capital developed by participants to gain and maintain employment.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis Checklist (see Table 5) was also followed. Utilising this checklist process was beneficial because, for example, it helped to foreground themes which emerged from small group interviews undertaken, ensuring that these remained at the forefront of analysis. Separate examination of data gathered from trainer/supervisors allowed its auxiliary aspects to emerge: these insights helpfully framed the experiences reported by the participants, providing an alternative perspective on their insights and perceptions.

The process followed by this study uses 'data-triangulation' described by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) as one of the core sub-types of triangulation and where different data sources are compared and contrasted over time (or space) in order to effectively explore any commonalities or differences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 291). Despite philosophical and often highly conceptual debates about the merits of triangulation (Silverman, 1985) it is still regarded as beneficial, increasing the chance that a study will capture "fuller pictures [which] will be more rounded, nuanced, and valid than that produced by a single method" (Torrance, 2012, p. 113). Using data triangulation also allowed some of the experiences described by participants to be further interrogated often adding to and building upon the data provided by participants during small group interviews.

The checklist given below in Table 5 was also used throughout to ensure all criteria of the process were covered as part of a final check of the data analysis.

Table 5: Checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis

Process	No.	Criteria	
Transcription	1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'.	√
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.	√
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.	√
	4	All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.	√
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.	√
	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.	√
Analysis	7	Data have been analysed – interpreted, made sense of – rather than just paraphrased or described.	√
	8	Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.	√
	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organised story about the data and topic.	√
	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.	√
Overall	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly.	√
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.	√
	13	There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – i.e. described method and reported analysis are consistent.	√
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.	√
	15	The researcher is positioned as *active* in the research process; themes do not just 'emerge'.	√

Source: Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 36.

In processing data gathered from interviews with the trainer/supervisors some initially different themes emerged that were not immediately similar to the obvious themes in the analysis of data from the transcripts of the employees. Using Coding Process No. 5 of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process (see Table 5 above), these new themes were collated and examined for relevance to the themes identified from the workers with an intellectual disability. If the new theme gave a greater understanding or insight of the themes developed from the workers interviewed, examples from the transcripts of trainer/supervisors were collated to support and strengthen the data collected from the workers during the small group interviews. If a theme from the trainer/supervisors was not seen as directly relevant to the cohort of workers interviewed it was placed to one side and revisited to see if it any provided additional insights near the end of data analysis.

The use of Braun and Clarke's (2006) 15 point checklist (Table 5), ensured that the data analysis process was rigorous and thorough, in particular that enough time was allowed for the completion of each phase to provide a deep analysis of the data. With the assurance gained from using Braun and Clarke's (2006) checklist ensuring the system of data analysis was sound, the final four steps could be brought together as conclusions in Chapter 6.

The three significant themes that emerged from the analysis were; the relationship with fellow workers, the importance of work, and the tensions within the employing organisation. The first two themes were clearly evident from the analysis of the transcripts from the small group interviews with workers with an intellectual disability, while the third was highlighted during analysis of the trainer/supervisor interviews. The repeated occurrence in the transcripts from the trainer/supervisors referring to constraints and tensions in the workplace between personal development of the workers and production output due to organisational pressures emphasised the unique nature of a supported workplace. Revisiting the data from the workers interviewed using this lens showed that while not overtly recognising the issues presented by the trainer/supervisors the workers interviewed discussed aspects of their working lives that reflected an expectation that the organisation met their personal needs before addressing production targets for profitability. This was most often seen in the expectation that the trainer/supervisor would solve individual

personal problems that the worker faced, and produced evidence of the importance of the relationship of the employees with the organisation that, although unspoken was the foundation of the participant's work life.

Each of these themes identified are explored in Chapter 5 using examples from the small group interviews with workers with an intellectual disability and the additional information from the trainer/supervisors who support them. While these themes are little different to what could be expected in the workforce without a disability, the unique nature of the workplace and the distinctive characteristics of workers with an intellectual disability provide particular challenges and a different context for these characteristics to be expressed (Shaw et al., 2012). As well, the unique nature of a not for profit organisation specifically established to offer suitable employment for people with disabilities (Cimera et al., 2011) provides a difference for workers with an intellectual disability to the general population of workers. This therefore suggests that the unique nature and characteristics of workers with an intellectual disability and the distinctiveness of the supported workplace setting cannot be separated in the examination of the development of social capital in the workplace.

4.2.3 How the trainer/supervisor data were processed

Data from trainer/supervisor interviews were treated in a similar manner to the employees. As the trainer/supervisors were expected to be more articulate, the video recording was less important with most emphasis being placed on the transcripts and notes made with the *Livescribe*^{TM} pen during the interviews. However the video was used as a convenient backup during the interview with T2 and T3, but was not required.

The transcripts from trainer/supervisors were intertwined with those from the employee small group interviews under each of the thematic headings where appropriate. This was particularly useful to support and expand aspects of social capital in the workplace that were alluded to by employees but where the 'data chunk' was insufficient on its own to provide a solid point of interest. Melding of data from the two sources provided "illumination from multiple standpoints ... thus facilitating richer and potentially more valid interpretations" (Banister et al., 1998, p. 145). The inclusion of data gathered from trainer/supervisors provided a broader view of this topic: one which added a further layer of insight into the responses of

participants, framing these perceptions, views and observation within the wider context of the organisation. Interviews with trainer/supervisors provided an additional enriching level of analysis: in some cases trainer/supervisors offered contrasting perspectives on issues from those given by participants. In other cases trainers/supervisors highlighted issues which did not arise at all in data from participants, indicating an alternative perspective. Many of these issues were of strategic, economic or organisational significance to the employer but nevertheless potentially affected participants in a mediated or indirect way.

The trainer/supervisors provided the context in which the employees answered, reflecting the set of conditions and networks that shape a specific work environment (Fuhse & Mutzel, 2011) and gave important support for the points raised by the employees interviewed.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter the process of analysing the data from the small group interviews with workers with an intellectual disability and the trainer/supervisors was discussed and outlined. The choice of a thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008) was explained and the lack of literature specifically addressing the analysis of data from individuals with an intellectual disability is discussed.

The rationale and processes used for data analysis are argued in this chapter: As well the chapter highlights:

- Why annotated transcript to capture the body language in the small group interviews were used, and how video recordings of the small group interviews helped this process
- How the interviews with trainer/supervisors served to strengthen the ideas that emerged from examining the relationships in the workplace from the small group interviews with workers with an intellectual disability
- How Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis were used in the examination of the data set of participants and trainer/supervisors.

Chapter 5 takes the analysis of the data set and uses the bonding, bridging and linking aspects of social capital to develop the relationships formed by the workers

with an intellectual disability in the workplace, looking at the importance of work for these workers and their relationship to the employing organisation.

Chapter 5: Research findings

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described how the data collected from participants was processed and analysed. Coding developed for the analysis of the data set was described in terms of its usefulness in identifying work-based relationships that formed part of the development of social capital for the participants. These work-based relationships can be divided into the following categories:

- Relationships with other employees that participants directly worked with and on an everyday basis (bonding social capital)
- Relationships with those they periodically come into contact with in the workplace (bridging social capital)
- Relationships with those in power or authority (linking social capital)
- Relationships with the workplace as an organisation (the organisation as a system or support)
- Relationships gained in the community through employment (social capital in the community).

Using the research questions as an analytic framework and in order to analyse data, this chapter addresses the primary research questions posed in this study and outlined in Chapter 3. During analysis relationships identified from data were grouped into the sub-types outlined above in order to examine possible social capital that the participants developed in their workplace in order to gain and maintain employment.

As was highlighted in Chapter 2, there is a relative lack of scholarly published research into the working lives of people with an intellectual disability, and so:

> … little information is available regarding the nature of participation and richness of opportunity for people with intellectual disabilities to become equal and valued participants within the workplace and community (Dempsey & Ford, 2009, p. 241).

This chapter discusses the results of the analysis carried out in the previous chapter to add to this knowledge.

5.2 Relationships in the workplace – themes that emerged

Using the framework provided by the research questions this section examines the participants experiences of the relationships in the workplace.

> *1. What relationships are formed by workers with an intellectual disability in the workplace?*
> *2. How important is work for workers with an intellectual disability?*
> *3. What relationship do workers with an intellectual disability form with the employing organisation?*

The three research questions relate to the complex set of relationships that are part of social capital in the workplace for participants and reflected in their ability to socially bond with fellow workers, bridge with the wider work community and link with those in positions of power or authority. Analysis of the data gathered from the participants with an intellectual disability interviewed as part of this study suggest that decisions around the building of relationships are central in the desire to gain and maintain employment.

Observations by trainer/supervisors support this and indicate that once over the initial nervous period of starting work for the first time, relationships appear to form quickly within the various groups and tended to be enduring (T4, T2, and T3). As such sometimes:

> "… when one person leaves there can be a chain reaction and friends also consider leaving, simply because their friend has gone" (T4 line 46).

T2 (line 532) also recognised this connection "it's the workplace and the people … not the work" that keeps workers wanting to remain active employees in the organisation. This could be described in terms of Bourdieu's social capital adapted the workplace where the 'illusio', 'field', 'doxa' and 'habitus', described in Chapter 2, are associated with a workplace not the labour that occurs in that workplace.

The data collected and analysed in this study from the small group interviews informs the relationships that these workers with an intellectual disability have

formed in the workplace. In particular the data set provides evidence of the relationships formed by the participants with the three major groups that they interact with in the workplace, described firstly by Woolcock (2001), and in this study adapted for the workplace:

- Relationships with people they directly work with (bonding social capital)
- Relationships they come into contact with in the workplace (bridging social capital)
- Relationships with those in power or authority (linking social capital).

5.2.1 Bonding social capital in the workplace

> Bonding social capital in the workplace – ties with people in a similar position in the immediate workgroup (Woolcock, 2001, pp. 13-14).

In the workplace, bonding social capital means the ability to get on with fellow workers and includes all the aspects of a general building of relationships that show reciprocity and trust that leads to the building of relationships within the work group:

> Bonding social capital is argued to exist in dense or closed networks, and helps people 'get by' in life on a daily basis (Stone et al., 2003, p. 10).

While all employees interviewed expressed that they got on well with the people they worked with, only 3/12 employees interviewed indicated that they spent much leisure time outside their family groups with work friends. As discussed later in this chapter, many of the reported meetings with fellow workers were not prearranged but rather accidental and transitory in nature occurring during shopping or an outing with family members. For workers with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study the concept of friendship may have a different meaning to the general population. Unlike the general population the concept of friendship in the workers interviewed for this study appear for the most part limited to the workplace location and given by many of the participants as the major motivator for working. "I'd miss my friends [if I didn't come to work]". While friendships for those in the general population may grow from the workplace the concept of 'friendship' does not usually provide the primary motivation to work rather "work provides people with the opportunity to satisfy needs essential for well-being, such as the need for self-realization, the need for relatedness and the need to live a meaningful life" (Lopes, 2011, p. 71). The prominence of friendship as a motivator for workers with an

intellectual disability is also suggested by de Urríes and Verdugo (2011). These writers found friendship to be central as a motivator to work in their study of workers with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace and citing friendships as a major contributor to the happiness of workers interviewed.

"I'd miss my friends" (E2a line 63) and "I like the company here" (E4d line 38) are typical of the responses that recognised the role of bonding with fellow workers. However the indication that few met or interacted with their fellow workers outside the workplace reinforces the suggestion that the relationship with the workplace may be more important than the relationship with those who work there. This adds to the speculation about the level of bonding that has occurred because very few of the participants interviewed generalised their friendships beyond the workplace. While this is not substantially different to the general population where Lopes' findings "demonstrate that something other than pay is sought in work and strongly suggest that the relational dimension of work is particularly valued" (2011, p. 58) there are some differences found in this study and that by de Urríes and Verdugo (2011). In particular, this study supports the findings of de Urríes and Verdugo that while the participants reported as having made new friendships at work with many reporting they 'saw' these friends outside of the workplace, "there has not been much progress in decision making with regard to carrying out some activities together" (2011, p. 60). This is reflected in this study through unplanned contact outside of the workplace during shopping excursions or being out with family members rather than pre-planning activities together.

Despite not meeting with fellow workers outside of the workplace there were indications of basic levels of bonding with fellow workers. In spite of using open-ended questions asking how the employees interviewed 'got on with fellow workers', the initial response from all respondents was monosyllabic indicating their relationships were 'good' or 'OK'. Follow up questions such as "Do you get on with everyone?" almost always elicited a response that indicated recognition of tensions that exists from time to time. Further questioning indicated a degree of tension between workers was common and was problematic at times:

> "I get on good with some people, but not all of them" (E2a, line 6)
>
> "Some [fellow workers] are a bit bossy" (E5c, line 5)

"There are some [fellow workers] I don't like" (E4c, line 6).

These comments typify the comments of the interviewees and represent the difficulties that the participants with an intellectual disability may have in gaining and maintaining relationships.

A number of participants talked about their anger management issues during supplementary questions, however, there was recognition that a working relationship was essential in the workplace, even with those who do not like you. "I just don't pay attention to [them] … I just get on with my work" (E4c line 6) because you need to "work together" (E2d line12).

This and similar responses indicated that all the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study appreciated that the building of good relations with fellow workers (bonding social capital) was essential to production output of the organisation and their maintenance of employment.

When asked about the things that helped build good working relationships with fellow workers, the almost half of the responses included some reference to getting the job done (E2b, E2c, E5a, E5c and E5d). While this concentration on production indicates an understanding of the main focus of employees, there was little in the data to suggest the recognition that personal relationships as well as structural or production skills and knowledge are necessary in the industry. The responses appeared to lack any interactional component that aimed to build personal relationships: rather they did what they thought was expected without questioning.

Interactions outside of work in a social or sporting environment were the exception rather than rule, and were limited to those who lived in independent or supported accommodation (E2a, E2b and E4d). There appeared to be limited opportunities for social interactions that could lead to friendships outside the work environment for those who lived with their family. Very few friendships extended away from work and only 3/12 met people from work outside of the workplace, and on closer examination these reported meetings were often accidental while shopping and were limited to saying 'hello'. While the number of participants in this study is much smaller than the sample used by de Urríes and Verdugo (2011), the findings suggest

similarities in the formation of friendships – while new friendships have been made there is little decision making by participants to extend this outside the workplace.

5.2.1.1 The trainer/supervisors perceptions of bonding in the workplace

> "We get mixed messages [about friendships outside of work]" (T4 line 53).

What was said by workers to the trainer/supervisors about meeting friends away from the work place, on closer questioning during their normal workplace interactions, suggest to T2 and T3 that many of these meetings are not planned. Deeper questioning about meeting fellow workers outside of work during the interview process supports that many of the reported meetings by workers with an intellectual disability were not prearranged (E1a, E5a, E5c and E5d). It appears that many of the meetings described by employees with fellow workers are brief accidental encounters rather than a planned joint activity. With supplemental questioning, few (3/12) reported prearranged meetings or interactions with their fellow workers outside the workplace. The three that did, lived in supported accommodation, however, this group indicated they relied on institutional based social groups to organise and provide opportunities to meet and interact with their friends (E2a, E2b and E4d). There was no indication from any participant interviewed, that activities outside of work were self-initiated or self-managed indicating that no worker with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study had developed bonding social capital to a level that encouraged self-initiated friendship and relationships outside the workplace.

5.2.1.2 Summary of bonding in the workplace

The inability to successfully build bonding social capital in the workplace that is self-initiated or self-managed may cross over to relationships outside the workplace. Those living in supported communal housing report having more friendship networks and engagement outside of working hours than those living with their parents. The opportunities for meeting outside the workplace are encouraged through events and activities organised by paid staff and volunteers that work within the supported accommodation network. For those interviewed in this study, the supported accommodation was usually owned, organised and sustained by the employing body (T1 and T4) and provides accommodation for those wanting to live in the community, but with support and structures from the organisation. For those

living at home with parents there was a reliance on family networks and activities to develop and support social interaction and provide social contact outside the workplace (T1 and E2c). Some family groups provide many opportunities; others are limited by situation or circumstances (T4).

From the background data collected before the interviews, four of the employees interviewed lived in supported accommodation and eight lived at home with their parents. There appears a relationship between those who live in supported accommodation and reporting they saw friends outside the workplace. Those living at home reported not seeing their friends on weekends. Three of the four who lived in supported environments considered they saw their friends outside of work. However, there was no indication in any of the small group interviews or from the interviews with the trainer/supervisors that these meetings or interactions were self-managed or self-initiated and meetings at shopping centres appear much more accidental than planned.

There were some apparent mitigating circumstances in some cases. One participant who lived in a supported accommodation and did not see her friends, works in a very small cleaning group that operates in a number of locations that are not on the main site. Several participants also reported their friends at work were scattered across the metropolitan area of Adelaide and found transport connections very difficult which impeded their socialisation outside of the workplace. Allowing for the transport difficulties that limit interaction, it could be suggested that the cohort who live with their parents do not see their friends from work outside the workplace, whereas those who live in supported accommodation are much more likely to consider they see their friends often outside the workplace. Yet throughout there is little evidence of self-management or self-initiation from either group.

Overall 9 out of the 12 considered they did not see their friends outside of work, except for events and activities organised specifically for people with a disability. For those living at home this was only possible if their parents saw value in the activity and were willing to transport them. Therefore the participant had little choice about taking part in any type of activity that required transport.

Associated with this, while the reports of 10 pin bowling (E2b), basketball and indoor cricket (E2c) organised by South Australian Sport and Recreation Association for People with Integration Difficulties (SASRAPID), sound encouraging, on further examination the majority of participants talked about past experiences that no longer happen:

> "I used to play sport with them [at school]" (E5e line 23)
>
> "I have some friends and I would miss them [but] I don't see them on weekends" (E5a line 26)
>
> "I used to [see them], but I don't any more" (E5d line 21).

Exceptions to these comments came from participants who lived in supported settings:

> "I see them [my friends] where I live … we do lots of things [together]" (E4d line 49 and E1c, E2b made similar comments).

For those living at home with their parents (8/12), they reported that their social interactions were mainly family based. Without the opportunity to move outside the familial contacts a young person with an intellectual disability may have problems developing the networks that could lead to new employment opportunities. Those employees living at home may continue to live the role of a dependant at home, yet to be successful in the workplace, independence and initiative are required. This tension between roles at home and in the workplace may suggest why employment opportunities are limited and career pathways restricted.

Using Stone et al's (2003) definition from the beginning of this Section, workers with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study appear to have established bonding social capital in the workplace that "helps people 'get by' in life on a daily basis" (Stone et al., 2003, p. 10). While this is sufficient for the maintenance of employment, there appears little transference to general life outside the workplace or enough depth in their networks necessary to develop a career pathway.

5.2.2 Bridging social capital in the workplace

> Bridging social capital in the workplace – ties other people where the relationship may be intermittent or transient, such as customers or workers from other divisions or other work groups in the organisation (Woolcock, 2001, pp. 13-14).

In the workplace, bridging social capital means building wider relationships with those in other work groups or others that are part of the wider work community. Stone et al. (2003) provide further understanding of its complex nature:

> Bridging social capital involves overlapping networks that may make accessible the resources and opportunities which exist in one network to a member of another (Stone et al., 2003, p. 10).

Professional appearance and interaction with those outside the immediate work group was identified by the workers interviewed and involved the pleasantries of social interaction such as saying good morning and good afternoon (E4b, E4d) to people they came into incidental contact with during their job. When opportunities do occur in the workplace, there was an emphatic rider on such social interactions by a number of the participants: socialisation must not interfere with work. E2d was quick to point out:

> "When visitors come we just work … we don't talk to the visitors … we just concentrate on our work, because it might disturb our work … that's what our supervisor says" (E2d lines 63-65).

Others in the group (E2a, E2b and E2c) nodded vigorously in agreement. Some of this emphatic reaction may have been in response to a problem identified by trainer/supervisors T2 and T3 shortly before the interviews took place. T2 and T3 reported there had been problems with production and some occupational health and safety issues when visitors passed through the work environment to meetings. As a result trainer/supervisors on the site were asked by management to stress to all employees they must concentrate on the job rather than interact with visitors.

When workers were asked to describe how they could present a professional appearance to 'visitors' into the work area, the responses were very limited and basic. Those who answered focussed on generic relationship skills, such as:

> "Introduce yourself" (E4d line 21)
>
> "You just say good morning, and that's all you say, keep at your work" (E2c line 54)
>
> "I say hello and keep on working" (E5c line 15).

All the participants work in areas that do not regularly have contact with visitors or members of the general public. However, there was a response that:

> "The most important thing is to keep working ... only speak to them if I'm told to" (E5d line 17)
>
> "Say hello and work too …I'm a bit of a chatterbox (E5e line 19)".

In most cases the workplace of the employees with an intellectual disability in this study severely limits the opportunity to experience interacting with people from outside their workgroup, although there was the opportunity to mix with people from other work units at break times.

5.2.2.1 The trainer/supervisors perceptions of bridging in the workplace

Trainers/supervisors saw little opportunity to develop this aspect of social capital in the workplace because most employees lack the opportunity to interact with those outside their workgroup except in breaks. However there are times when interaction with other work groups and the public was a part of the job. There had been occasions where workers had used inappropriate language or behaviour when workers were directly involved with members of the public. When inappropriate language or behaviour occurred the trainer/supervisor had a 'quiet word' or in serious cases disciplinary action was instigated (T2). However the inappropriate interaction may have consequences outside the individual as T4 reports at least one instance to his knowledge where a contract was lost because of a worker's inappropriate interaction while working in a public place. Trainer/supervisors are acutely aware of the consequences of inappropriate behaviours and employees are constantly reminded of a professional appearance in the workplace and concentrating on their job (T4). Participants with an intellectual disability in the trainer/supervisor's workgroups required constant reminding about behaviour and dress, suggesting that some workers needed persistent prompting about the expectations (the 'habitas' and 'illusio') of the workplace. This may indicate a lack of cognitive processing to link behaviours to the long-term consequences of inappropriate behaviours that may have an impact on future orders or contracts, in the same way that poor service or badly dressed employees may have an effect on future orders or contracts in open employment (Hodson & Sullivan, 2008).

In particular those working in the horticultural division of the organisation who come into direct contact with clients and the general public as they carry out gardening duties are at greater risk of jeopardising contracts if their behaviour is

inappropriate. While no employees from this division were interviewed in this study, T2 reported situations where an employee was distressed by an interaction with the general public as they cut lawns on the verges of highways and roads. T2 suggested that these workers require additional support because they may not be able to deal with interactions with the general public. To reduce the possibility of conflict with the public, workers are sometimes allocated different jobs on projects where problems have occurred before (T2). There appeared very little awareness from the workers about appropriate interaction with customers and the general public. There was anecdotal evidence from the trainer/supervisor interviews that a number of employees find it very difficult to develop appropriate behaviours when working in areas more likely to come into contact with visitors and the public as part of their normal daily routine (T2 and T3). Behaviours such as swearing at the public who walked by while a worker was sweeping up lawn clippings have been reported to trainer/supervisors from workgroups. The response to incidents such as these, in some circumstances required the transfer of an employee to another area away from public contact, or in a very serious case the threatened physical assault of a member of the public by an employee, led to loss of contracts by the institution (T2).

There are several examples where workers from different work groups socialise. They see their friends at lunch and breaks, and meet them in the dining room where everyone goes for lunch (T2). However, the mobile nature of many work groups often reflects a relationship as more of an acquaintance rather than 'linking' with people from outside their specific work unit. Trainer/supervisors recognise the need to build more formal structures to explicitly address this aspect of relationship building during induction programmes and on the job training. The induction programme developed by the organisation aimed to promote greater interaction among fellow workers and develop friendships that can expand outside of the workplace (T4), however, there is no evidence in this data set to suggest a connection of developing bridging social capital to the induction program.

5.2.2.2 Summary of bridging in the workplace

The organisation recognises the value of promoting greater interaction among fellow workers and provides formal opportunities through clubs and activities for employees to develop friendships and relationships outside their own work groups.

The policy to extend the work and social relationships of employees by creating out of work activities was a considered response by the organisation to the limited opportunity that workers with a disability have in a supported workplace to build friendships and relationships with others that are not part of their immediate work group. The building of overlapping networks and resources of bridging social capital in the workplace encourages wider social contacts and a greater opportunity to form friendships both inside and outside the workplace (Stone et al., 2003; Woolcock, 2001) that may be useful in developing networks that would be useful in career development. However there is little evidence from the small group interviews that the participants have developed the bridging aspects of social capital beyond a fundamental level.

5.2.3 Linking social capital in the workplace

> Linking social capital in the workplace – ties with people in positions of power, responsibility and authority that provide resources and income for the workgroup (Woolcock, 2001, pp. 13-14).

In the workplace, it has been argued that linking social capital means the ability to mix and interact with those in dissimilar roles who are entirely outside the workgroup and may involve connections with people who are in positions of power or authority who are able to leverage social and physical resources both within the workplace or in the wider community. This aspect of social capital in the workplace enables the employee to develop the extended networks and resources that are useful in advancement or promotional positions as well as ensuring the practical support and technical resources needed to carry out their daily duties. As Stone et al. propose:

> Linking social capital involves social relationships with those in authority or positions of power and is useful for garnering resources (2003, p. 10).

For employees on the ‘shop floor’, trainer/supervisors are the first line of power or authority. From the small group interviews, while there was2 the expectation that the trainer/supervisors had expertise and experience, the main thrust of the relationships between workers with intellectual disabilities and the trainer/supervisors reflected responsibility to the larger organisation to support employees to concentrate on the production necessary to guarantee economic viability for the business. The workers

interviewed saw the trainer/supervisors as important positive influences on their work and having expertise in production:

> "The supervisor shows you what to do at work" (E2b line 40)
>
> "She helps me do my job" (E1b line 16, nods of approval from E1a and E1d).

The recognition by participants of trainers/supervisors as holding a position of authority and power along with their expertise is illustrated in the data from the small group interviews identified as relating to problem solving and supervisory relationships. Despite the organisation's aspirational goals of building independence, the data suggests that many of the organisation's 'systems' encouraged participants to be dependent rather than independent. The continued reiteration of "go straight to your supervisor" reported by participants echo the anti-bullying training, anger management programmes and Occupational, Health and Safety policies unintentionally appears to drive home participants perception of the power and authority of the trainer/supervisor. For those with an intellectual disability the repetition of policies and practices adds to the constant worries, outlined previously, about "being bullied, losing someone they are dependent upon, failing in life, and making and keeping friends" (Forte et al., 2011, p. 408). For the employees with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study the fear of "losing someone they are dependent on" (Forte et al., 2011, p. 408) appeared directly associated to their relationship with their trainer/supervisor.

Only one participant (E1c) showed any sort of negative reaction when asked about the working relationship with her trainer/supervisors. When pressed she indicated she was late that morning. Her supervisor said that she must get up earlier so she was not late tomorrow. However she indicated that she usually got on well with her supervisor and generally she was very nice. The other participants saw their supervisors as "nice" and helpful. However, when told off, they reported often feeling short-term resentment (E1a, E1b, E1c, E2a, E4b, E5d and E5e). While this reaction would not be considered abnormal in the general workforce, the reaction of some workers to minor corrections was described by trainer/supervisors as excessive or "over the top" (T2 and T3), yet was understandable from the employee's point of view in the context of the loss of a person they depended on (Forte et al., 2011).

Getting the job "done properly" was a constant concern for participants and they relied on the trainer/supervisors to provide quality control "because they show you what to do [at work]" (E2a line 37, E2b, E2c and E2d agree with nod of head). While this is directly associated with the expertise of the trainer/supervisor (authority) it further emphasised the recognition by participants of trainer/supervisors as people in positions of power or authority.

Participants saw this as part of "getting jobs done" (E4b line 16), and ensuring an employee is competent in their job: "staying on task" (E4c line 15) and "getting on with your work" (E4d line 28) are seen as positive in building strong working relations with the trainer/supervisor. E1c drew back with "No!" (line 19 - indication dislike to being 'told off') when asked how she felt when a trainer/supervisor tells her she was doing something wrong. Her reaction was reinforced with a vigorous shake of the head by E1a (line 22) and a look of shock and a robust "No" by E1b (line 18). All participants placed high value on a positive relationship with their trainer/supervisor.

While there were times when the supervisory and management position of trainer/supervisors was construed negatively and as the supervisor being "bossy" (E2a, E2b), all employees reported good relationships with their individual supervisors.

5.2.3.1 The trainer/supervisors perceptions of linking in the workplace

While the relationship between the participants with an intellectual disability and their trainer/supervisors was about personal engagement and interaction, responses also highlighted that participants with an intellectual disability had a significant level of dependency on their trainer/supervisor – both practically and emotionally. This was described elsewhere in terms of a reliance on trainer/supervisors in problem solving, but it can also be seen in the manner in which much of the interaction with those in power (trainer/supervisors) was interpreted by the workers with an intellectual disability as rules that must be followed. It may be that the lack of experience of the workers with an intellectual disability in making decisions during their formative years has encouraged a view where the following of rules was an important part of their life (E5e).

These rules may be explicit and concerned about safe operating procedures, or implied, such as in the example of a prompt card below, but all are possibly linked to the experience of participants growing up where following any suggestion or direction from an adult considered a person in authority was encouraged (Maddison & Beresford, 2012). The embedded reliance on rules by the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed was illustrated in the common model of anger management control encouraged by the institution (T1). In this model, the individual carries a small card developed with the trainer/supervisor that serves as a reminder of the steps to follow if they become angry.

> "I've got a sheet of rules that I follow and it helps me to stay calm" (E5e line 16).

This card was proudly produced by E5e. It consisted of a number of steps, starting at 'take three deep breaths' through to 'walk away quietly and sit outside for 10 minutes'. The mere presence of these reminders may quickly become yet another set of rules to follow and inadvertently reinforces the dependency on an external locus of control (the trainer/supervisor) rather than as scaffolding to provide guidance to encourage internal control as intended (Kavale & Mostert, 2004) and may unintentionally lead to the 'learned helplessness' describe by writers such as Abrar, Taj and Malik (2010).

Rule like structures for the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed represented the reliance on an external locus of control for workplace decision making. Trainer/supervisors were expected and relied upon by the workers with an intellectual disability to give instruction and direction on all aspects of workplace life. The result appears to be a relationship that builds a dependence on trainer/supervisors (those in positions of power) to solve the workers problems not just in production matters but in wider areas of social interaction and welfare (Flore et al., 2011).

5.2.3.2 Summary of linking in the workplace

The dependence of the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study on trainer/supervisors, seen to be in positions of power or authority appears to restrict the building of linking social capital in the workplace. For the participants of this study the networks for the "garnering of resources" (Stone et al., 2003, p. 10) may be unreachable. Without these resources and the patronage from those in

positions of power or authority the linking social capital (Woolcock, 2001) necessary for advancement in this or another workplace is not developed.

5.2.4 Summary of relationships in the workplace

The workers with an intellectual disability interviewed valued employment. In their own ways, they sought to develop social capital in the workplace through bonding with workers in their immediate workgroups, bridging with other workgroups, and linking with those in positions of power or authority. All the employees interviewed appeared to identify that getting on with fellow workers and their trainer/supervisors was essential to be a successful employee, but many had difficulty with the skills necessary to build successful sustainable working relationships.

It was apparent that the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed, who lacked social opportunities to practise skills with peers outside their family group, may have narrowed the development of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and the awareness necessary to build successful social capital in the workplace. The result may be restricted friendship groups within the workgroup (bonding), with others they may come into contact with while carrying out their work duties (bridging), and with those in roles of authority (linking).

5.3 The importance of work

As discussed in Chapter 2, in contemporary Australian society, employment is an important part in building the relationships necessary to develop the social capital needed to be actively involved in the community. Participants saw work as an important part of their lives that gave connections and associations that reduced their isolation and built relationships. Simonsen and Neubert (2012) suggest that for workers with an intellectual disability to gain and maintain employment, there must be a desire to be part of the workforce and an acknowledged value in work. Work had become so much a part of their lives that many workers in the organisation were reluctant to take holidays when due and a number visited while on leave just to say 'hello' to supervisors and their fellow workers because they were lonely at home (T2, T3). There was a reluctance to take annual leave:

> "… because to go on leave is [seen as] a bad thing, not a good thing" (T3 line 503)

> "You find a lot don't want to go [on leave]" (T2 line 511).

This was particularly true of those who were living in supported accommodation (T3), and even when these employees were required to take their leave some employees would come in and visit more than once during their holidays (T2).

> "When you have a look at how much annual leave some of these guys have got. They have heaps of annual leave; sick leave and long service leave ….. [I have] one person has more than eight months paid leave available to him" (T3 lines 499-501).

The trainer/supervisors reported a number of employees in this study who had not taken annual leave when it was due or returned to 'visit' while on holidays suggesting that work had become central to their social life and to their identity.

From the data it appeared that the participants were only able to link their work identity to the current position with 13/14 unable to relate to other employment positions even when given a number of opportunities by the interviewer. Only one participant was able to compare their current situation to previous experiences. This worker had worked with a family friend who had an orchard and had helped at harvest time:

> "I had an outside job … in an orchard … it didn't pay enough" (E2a line 74).

When asked about future prospects and ambitions, only two participants indicated that they would like to explore other employment opportunities while the others avoided the question by looking away or at the floor or shook their heads. The two participants willing to explore other opportunities reflected their past experiences during successful work programmes, indicating a preference to:

> "Working in a supermarket" (E2b line 83)

> "Outside the building [like gardening]" (E2c line 68).

E2b had been involved in work experience at a supermarket and E2c had work experience in the horticultural unit of the organisation.

E4d was the only participant to project a current interest to a future position. She indicated she will:

> "Be doing a business course … they'll probably move me up to office type work, because I would love to work in an office out in the community" (E4d lines 57-59).

E4d saw doing this business course as an automatic progression in her employment that would occur simply because she was doing the course. "They'll probably move

me up …" indicated she believed that her trainer/supervisor would recognise her new skills and 'promote' her to another position. Throughout the small group interview she showed no indication of actively seeking improvement or a new position herself, rather she relied upon her trainer/supervisor.

All the participants interviewed appeared positive about their current position and their current workplace and emphasised that participation in the workforce was an important and valued part of their life. The value of work for the participants was typified in the response to a question about the factors that would make them think about giving up work. This drew 'blank responses' from most participants. Many appeared to have problems comprehending the question's intent. Those who did answer gave very quick responses that reflected they had never entertained the thought of giving up work, and why should anyone even ask this question? (E2d, E2c, E4d). Many associated staying at home with boredom:

> "I'd be bored if I stayed home" (E4d) and others agreed (E4c, E5c, and E5d).

Participants reported that seeing friends and socialising with co-workers every day at work was paramount (E1a, E1b, E1c, E4b, E4c, E4d and E5d).

> "I'd miss my friends" (E2a, line 65 with nods from E2a, E2b).

Friends at work and coming to the workplace appeared to be an essential part of life for the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed, and for many they indicated it may be the only form of social interaction outside their family circle. For a small number it may be the central part of their life that flows into areas of friendship and relationships that are part of a more fulfilling independent lifestyle that would not have been possible without the experience of the workplace. Sharing time and activities with friends at work outside of the workplace context did not appear to be even consciously considered by those who participated in this study. Indeed the very suggestion was regarded by several participants as entirely novel and unusual. Although there is limited research in this area, this observation is supported by writers such as de Urríes and Verdugo (2011) and is commonly raised in anecdotal observations made by people working in the field of supported work, including the researcher in this study.

When asked, “What makes you stay at work?” the most common answer was a variation of “the people I work with”, expressing concern about not seeing friends if they did not come to work. One comment encapsulated this:

> “More important than staying home” (E2b line 69).

The only different view came from the one reluctant respondent for whom the entire idea of working appears complex. Responses from this individual suggested that he would prefer to stay home with his Dad (E5a). However, the same individual commented:

> “I have some friends and I would miss them …. [but] I don’t see them on the weekend” (E5a line 26).

Intimately linked to the high regard in which work and the workplace was held, was the response that all would still come to work even if they were not paid. The single exception was E5a who continually said he would rather be at home with his Dad and Dad’s mates.

The initial question “Why do you come to work?” was unanimously answered in relation to the excitement of earning money and the choices that gave. The immediate follow up question “Would you still come to work if you did not get paid?” was met with signs in the video of shock and disbelief that the question of not coming to work could even be raised. Eleven of the twelve answered with variations of:

> “I’d work, I like to work” (E2c line 58).

Again, the only exception was E5a whose stated preference was to be at home with his family.

The inference was that without coming to work, they would be lonely and bored at home and supports the intrinsic value of productive work (Soltani, et al., 2011) discussed earlier in this chapter.

The interpretation of work being only related to income does not hold in the experience of the trainer/supervisors interviewed:

> “Friendship is a very big element of why our guys come to work” (T4 line 35).

There was common agreement amongst the trainer/supervisors that money was not the prime motive for working. T2 was sure it was for the socialisation:

> "It's about being here, being with their friends" (T2 line 380).

Each trainer/supervisor provided examples where opportunities to make more money in different environments was offered to workers, but they refused outright, or returned to a supported work environment from open employment after a short time because they missed their friends (T3).

This inference was reinforced by T4 who, in her role as Divisional Manager, was recently in a difficult position where contract work had dried up and the organisation was faced with redundancies. This occurred just before Christmas and the employees were acutely conscious of the importance of money at that time. Despite this pressure the workers in the packaging area unanimously voted to reduce their own hours rather than:

> "Say goodbye to some people… So all of a sudden there was something happening here, much more than money …. it was powerful to watch" (T4 line 670-671).

The social contact provided by the workplace appears equally relevant in the reasons for working, with meeting or talking to people often mentioned in the same sentence as money (E1a, E1b, E2b, E2c, E2d, E5a, E5c and E5e). Only one participant (E5e) linked work with a social life outside of work – "going to parties" (line 21). This participant was living in a supported community where the expansion of social contacts through social outings and activities was encouraged by the organisation that owns and manages the accommodation.

These examples illustrate that participants in this context put more emphasis on relationships and friendships in the workplace than their own monetary gains. While discussions about money and poor pay were reported by trainer/supervisors as common (T2, T3, T1) supporting the similar finding by de Urríes and Verdugo (2011) in their study of employees in 'sheltered' workplaces. Despite this, there was no doubt in the minds of the trainers/supervisors interviewed that income was secondary to the relationships formed in the workplace. For the participants there was emphatic and vigorous feeling against staying home even with the prospect of a similar income without working.

When balancing the value of money versus relationships, money did not appear to be the driving force to participation in the workforce for these workers. The greater prominence given to relationships and friendships developed through the workplace reinforced the concept of work as an antidote to loneliness, even for the apparently reluctant worker (E5a), further supporting the findings of de Urríes and Verdugo (2011) in their study of employees in a sheltered workplace.

5.3.1 Work ethic

Work and the workplace were also identified during the small group interviews as having intrinsic value in the lives of participants. Even though many of the discussions by participants centred on 'money' there were acknowledgements of a wider theme. Variations of "you have to work for your money" (E4b line 28) and "because it's good [to work for your money]" (E1c line 38 and E1a line 37) were agreed to with nodding of heads or minimal responders such as 'yes' or 'mm' (E1a line 33, E4c line 27) by many participants.

Participants frequently referred to a set of specific terms in relation to the personal value they attribute to work. Furthermore during the small group interviews, participants showed they took work seriously by dressing appropriately, showing interest in their work and arranging their lives to ensure they were on time and ready for work:

> "We have to come to work every day … because it's good" (E1c line 36).

Working was seen as good and enjoyable for its own sake:

> "I love working" (E5e line 25)

> "I like to work all day" (E5c line 21).

These comments by participants reflect the appeal of having a regular job and the status and good feelings that being employed brings. The intrinsic value in productive work is reflected by E2b:

> "Work is more important than staying home … because if you're at work you're doing something, if you're at home you're not doing anything" (E2b line 26).

Throughout the interviews reflections of the Protestant Work Ethic (Weber, 2001) were strong and repeated, in many ways the workers with an intellectual disability

reiterated that they expected to work for their money and not have it given to them. Theory and research into roots of motivation of those with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties is a growing field (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Brouwer, 2012). Soltani, Roslan, Abdullah and Jan (2011) suggest that individuals with an intellectual disability have a particular benefit from activities that involve intrinsic motivation. This finding links with the views of the participants in this study that productive work provides some form of intrinsic value for them.

5.3.2 Memories of starting work

When asked about memories of starting work, responses were limited as many participants were unable to remember clearly the time when they started work. However there appeared to be general memories of being scared that they would not know what to do and a general tiredness when they first started work. The issues raised reflect the wide range of emotions that would be expected of a general population beginning work for the first time (Beyer & Robinson, 2009). Although worries about being bullied and failing in life and not being able to make or keep friends appear much stronger in young people with an intellectual disability than the general population (Forte et al., 2011). The key difference for the workers with an intellectual disability who entered this supported workplace for the first time was that many already knew fellow workers either through work experience placements through school or a transition programme they attended in their later years of formal schooling (E1b, E2a, and E2d). In many cases the work experience programme at school in this workplace began the building of bonding social capital well before they entered the workforce.

A number remembered emotions, such as being nervous, “shy and scared” (E1c line 44). Similar reports came from E2c, E2d, E5a, and E5c. The emphasis appears to be, that most were more anxious about meeting new people than their ability to carry out the tasks required. However, some commented on being concerned about not being able to fulfil requirements in the work place “learning how to do it [the job]” (E4b line 53). Others gave similar responses (E4d, E5a, and E5d).

The fear of not being able to learn was evident in the collection of personal data prior to the group interviews where participants were asked to describe their disability. Several participants talked about their learning difficulties and problems they have

reading, writing and with mathematics, projecting a feeling of inadequacy about their performance in the schooling system (all employees interviewed attended special education facilities throughout their schooling). These feelings of failure and inadequacy developed in school may have a profound effect on feelings about entering the workforce:

> "[It was] a bit scary from the people" (E5c line 24)
>
> "Getting into the routine … fast pace" (E4b line 37)
>
> "Learning how to do the job" (E4c line 36).

These examples show the range of emotions that participants recall from starting work for the first time. Despite these feelings most reported establishing friendships with co-workers very quickly:

> "Didn't take me long to get a couple of good friends … once I got my friends I was OK" (E4d line 55).

This comment by E4d highlights the importance of bonding social capital with fellow workers as an integral part of maintaining employment.

While work experience had already alleviated some of the concerns about the noise, size of buildings and the number of people around, those interviewed talked of an anticipation of the workplace as scary when they first entered employment:

> "[For] a young person coming [directly] from school this can be a really threatening environment" (T4 line 119)
>
> "I was a bit worried about the noise from the machines and a bit scary from the people [sic]" (E5c line 24)
>
> "I was shy and scared" (E1c line 44)
>
> "It [starting work] was alright … they showed me round, that helped" (E2c line 64)
>
> "I didn't know anybody when I started … I was a little nervous" (E2a line 69-70)
>
> "Getting up early … [I got] tireder" (E5d line 25).

The experience of these workers was little different from their peers in open employment but the intensity of the fears of starting work may have been greater (Forte et al., 2011). The concerns of workers with an intellectual disability

interviewed about starting work were reiterated by the trainer/supervisors interviewed.

All trainer/supervisors highlighted that work can be a threatening environment. The employees also identified "being scared" as an issue, with E5a summarising some of their fears:

> "The machines were big ... some are big and dangerous, WOW… forklifts coming in are scary ... I was worried about people picking fights, spreading rumours" (E5a line 34).

A number of other participants (E1a, E1c, E2a, E2b, E5c and E5d) also raised points about being scared and frightened when they first started. The worries were associated with both physical and social concerns. In the larger units these fears are addressed by the organisation through a common induction programme 'Job Ready', where six or seven new workers take part in a 10 week programme, learning work and social skills in the training area and spending increasing time in the workplace with a buddy (T4). Only the larger sections of the organisation use this formal induction programme because many of the units are small enough to allow trainers to work individually with new employees 'on the job'.

> "We [Trainer/supervisors] do a lot of matching [the jobs] to help [the new worker] fit in" (T4 line 138).

While there are variations in the actual process, all sought to 'buddy' the new worker with someone who 'knew the ropes'. The hope was that by providing a guide, mentor and friend for the first few days the new employee may develop the confidence to start building relationships with their new workmates. The role of these buddies was to show the new worker where they needed to be at various times of the day, and ensure that at morning tea and lunchtime they knew what to do and felt comfortable in the new environment. When a new worker arrives in smaller groups the trainer and employees:

> "Sit down and go through [as a group], how we need to look after their [new worker] safety, we look after them, we sit with them at lunch time until they get used to….sort of make them very welcome" (T2 line 83).

For new workers becoming "familiar with the role and expectations of the work setting" (T1 line 594), was potentially overwhelming, and each work department has systems in place to provide an appropriate induction into the work of that area.

Participants reported the machines as scary and dangerous (E5a, E5d), being concerned about the noise (E5c) and the fast pace (E4c).

Despite the trainer/supervisors reporting, many workers "Don't understand what quality is and how it impacts on our contracts" (T1 line 597). Only two workers interviewed (E4c and E4d) were concerned that when they started work they were worried about learning how to do the job. For most workers interviewed there was an implicit trust that the supervisor showed you what was needed to do be done at work (E2a, E2b, E2c and E2d).

The organisation encourages trainer/supervisors to adjust the workload of the new worker to ensure their capability was matched to the job. For some new workers with an intellectual disability this may mean a 'work-hardening programme' where some individuals start by working two or three days per week with a gradual increase as the individual progresses (T1). Establishing this approach was part of the organisation's desire to make a new worker feel comfortable, know what to do and consider themselves part of the organisation (T4). The aim to provide opportunities to bond with fellow workers, bridge with the wider work community and link with the trainer/supervisors encourages the new worker to develop the social capital in the workplace that was necessary to feel part of the workplace and maintain employment.

5.3.3 Selection and induction of workers

Knowing the concerns new workers have when beginning work about being scared, being picked on and not being able to do the job, the organisation has implemented a process that recognises individual needs early in the selection and recruitment process (T3 and T4).

No participant identified or recalled being part of a formal transition process into their current position. This is despite the organisation's long adoption of a formalised selection and recruitment process and extensive formal transition programmes for those entering the workplace from school or other organisations. The usual form undertaken is a short work experience two years before leaving school and extended work experience in the last year of school, plus involvement with parent/caregivers and the school. Although there was little doubt that most of the workers with

intellectual disability interviewed in this study participated in some form of transition from school to the workplace, none recognised it as part of their transition process or remembered the program as a discrete part of a their transition to work. From the data, it was difficult to identify if this was because they had little input into the process which was done around them or for other reasons that separated school and work in the minds of the participants.

In the selection process for new employees, the Human Resources Department looks for people:

> "Who are willing to have a go, willingness to try, willingness to learn" (T4 line 680).

Particularly for students attending special education facilities the selection process usually starts in the last two years of schooling. Working with the school, work experience and work trials in different areas of the organisation are arranged. As all participants interviewed attended a special education facility their transition and induction into the workplace started during the last two years of school.

Once recruited, ongoing training provided by the employer ensures that employees are able achieve individual production and quality control targets. The trainer/supervisors for each workgroup take responsibility to deliver and tailor the training for their group:

> "Because mine [the cleaning group] is such a little group … everyone comes to the training … we go through getting on with each other and being good team mates … and the skills they need" (T2 lines 77-79).

For a larger group:

> "I basically take on all the new employees and it's my role then to bed them into the business … I need to make an assessment of where they are at [and make provisions]" (T3 lines 112-114).

5.3.4 The operational and symbolic trappings of work

The participants in this study reported feeling part of the workforce, and made a connection between coming to work and the accessories associated with being a worker. For the participants "[having] a shower" (E1b line 31), dressing up in "clean clothes" (E1c line 32), "wearing hairnets, gloves and coats" (E1a line 35) and "clocking in and out" (E2c line 58) were seen as important.

These activities and accessories can be described as the operational and symbolic trappings of work and of being employed. Participants reported that these attributes were valued by their employer and conforming to them contributed to their self-worth (E1a, E1b and E1c). It was part of participants feeling part of the workplace. To dress and act like the other workers encouraged bonding with fellow workers building social capital in the workplace and providing a place in the community. Despite money providing an incentive to work (E1a, E1b, E2b, E2c, E2d and E5a), the trappings, behaviours and symbols associated with going to work may have greater value for those interviewed. They became part of the 'doxa', 'habitus' and 'illusio' (Bourdieu, 1986) in the workplace that is part of learning to become a worker, and builds social capital in the workplace.

5.3.5 Behaviour – an impediment to maintaining employment

Maintaining the friendships and relationships developed at work were central in all the interviews with participants. Despite reporting that many felt worry and concern about starting work, only one participant (E5a) identified a specific aspect they did not like about work, but he did not see it as an impediment to working. The reluctant worker, E5a, wanted to "just catch up on the sleep I've been missing since I started working" (E5a line 30).

Another participant recognised that she:

> "Gets niggly when I'm tired … I tell people to let me alone" (E2b line 76).

Other participants highlighted aspects of their job that were less attractive. These included: "getting up in the morning" (E4c line 34) and "travelling to work" (E4d line 63). These aspects were identified as dislikes, but not a reason to stay home:

> "I only stay home when I get sick" (E5c line 21)

> "I wouldn't like to stay home at all, I'd miss everyone" (E5d line 23).

These comments sum up the feelings of the participants interviewed and show the enthusiasm to be at work.

E5a was the exception to a general enthusiasm for working and the workplace. He described coming to work as taking time away from his family and being with his Dad's friends. He saw his place at home with his Dad and the workplace took him

away from this. While his family history does not support participation in the workforce as he was the only person with regular employment in his extended family, his sole expressed reason for coming to work was:

> "Just here to get a bit of cash" (E5a line 24)

> "I'd like to stay home. At home I could do housework, help mum and dad, mow my lawn, I miss mowing the lawn, cleaning my dad's car…. and drinking with my dad's mates, I miss that to … and spending time with my family" (E5a lines 29-32).

Being the only one in his family that had regular employment could be an impediment to his desire to work, but work appears to provide him with a feeling of value and worth within the family because he was bringing in "a bit of cash" (E5a line 24). As described earlier he was a regular attendee at work, but sometimes displayed behaviours that suggest he was there under duress from the family, perhaps for "the bit of cash" (T2). E5a exhibited aggression that led to a suspension and involvement in an anger management course in the first three months of starting work. During the interview, he showed little interaction with the others and answered begrudgingly. He displayed little indication that he had formed any friendships with his fellow workers or connected with his supervisors or managers and claimed he was likely to give up this employment in the near future, despite the extra cash. However, he displayed contradictions: "I have some friends here and I would miss them … [but] I don't see them on weekends" (E5a, line 26). He also expressed feelings that "the supervisors were bossy" (E5a line 35) and he felt "anger" toward supervisors at these times. E5a was the only participant to disclosed that he was "very scared" (E5a line 38) when he initially started employment and recognises he has trouble controlling his anger. Despite this, most times:

> "I just take it all in and get on with me work … [but] sometimes I get angry with them [both fellow workers and trainer/supervisors]" (E5a lines 18-19).

E5a was not the only participant to raise the problem of controlling anger. Behavioural issues emerged during a number of interviews with some participants indicating that they were undergoing anger management programmes because they could not control their behaviour (E1c, E2b, E4d and E5a). A number of the participants indicated that if they did not have access to the anger management programme they would not be able to control their anger and would not be able to

keep their job. For workers like E2a, the moderating of her anger was recognised as vital to retaining her job:

> "Me and [supervisor] had a big blue a couple of weeks ago, [the Personnel Officer] spoke to me and sent me home to talk to my Social Worker about it. …. It helped a bit. …. I had to work out if I wanted to keep this job or lose it…I want to keep the job" (E2a Line 33).

Of the nearly six hundred workers on site, the numbers that have displayed inappropriate behaviours that impact on the workforce was large enough for the development of ongoing anger management programmes (T4). Those identified for anger management programmes are distinct from the needs of individuals whose behaviour was a safety hazard to themselves or others who require increased supervision and training. In the main extra training was required because of difficulties with concentration, attention or memory issues associated with intellectual disability (T1). The programmes are clearly labelled Anger Management courses so that employees are obviously aware and able to name the issues that are being addressed (T3). The emphasis of these courses was summarised by E2b:

> "But you don't have to get angry …. That's what I've been taught, because on Friday it's my last week of Anger Management course … it helps me get on ….. I've been told if anyone picks on me ... just ignore it and walk away" (E2b line 28).

The feeling about behavioural issues within the workers with an intellectual disability was summarised by E4d, a participant with self-identified 'anger issues':

> "Do your work, no fighting or arguing with anybody else. Just pay attention to yourself ... If you're the one who gets on with your work, you're the one not getting into trouble for arguing. It will be the other person" (E4d Lines 29-31).

While the participants interviewed recognised that not everyone gets along all the time, some participants had behavioural issues that were being addressed because they impacted on the workplace. For example E5a's commented:

> "There are some people here I don't like … [I] just yell at them and swear at them" (E5a Line 6).

These statements disclose some of the behavioural issues that limited the building of bonding social capital in the workplace and may result in the loss of employment if not addressed.

The focus of intervention for the trainer/supervisors on the 'shop floor' in the first instance was firstly how the behaviour impacted on production and then how the relationships affected bonding social capital in the workplace in the work unit. Those in a managerial position (T1 and T4) only became involved in the workplace issues if the problem affected the long term employability of the individual or if the problem became widespread.

5.3.6 The importance of work – summary

The reasons for wanting to continue in the workforce even without payment reflected the significance of 'bonding' with fellow workers and the paramount value of relationships built in the workplace. Overall, there was almost unanimous (11 out of the 12) support for coming to work, the exception is E5a who displayed mixed messages about his support for work. The responses were often emphatic, indicating they would be "bored" if they did not go to work and would go even if they did not get paid. In all cases, there was an emphasis on seeing friends and a distinct feeling that workplace was important and valued and provides a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. On the other hand, there was little evidence of an appreciation that the work they did was important outside pleasing the trainer/supervisor.

5.4 Relationships with the organisation – entity and support

The underlying tensions that define a supported workplace are found in the aims and mission statements of all not for profit organisations. They are diametrically opposed to the 'for profit' general employment sector. For example, there is a difference in attitudes to profit that sees profitability in the not for profit sector as an opportunity to provide more services, as opposed to profit as the motivation for existence in the general sector. The tensions are different to the tensions found in the general sector, such as conflicts between people, personality clashes, misunderstandings or power struggles. The differences in a supported workplace are identified through an ever present tension between productivity and relationships, and are expressed in very different ways to a profit based business (Beyer & Robinson, 2009). The tensions impact on the relationship a worker with an intellectual disability has with the employing agency, but the tensions are rarely discussed, and even more rarely identified by the worker themselves in their relationship with the organisation.

5.4.1 Unique tensions within the organisation

None of these tensions were raised in any part of the employee interviews except in terms of productive output. “Getting jobs done” (E4b line 16) summarises the major aim of employees yet no worker with an intellectual disability interviewed questioned the sustainability of the supported workplace to provide employment for them or raised issues about the institution’s role in their current and future employment.

However, the basic aim of the training for workers with an intellectual disability was a divisive issue amongst the trainer/supervisors interviewed. For example, trainer/supervisors on the ‘shop floor’ saw training based on production needs whereas those in ‘management’ argued strongly for industry based accredited training that provided opportunity for future pathways or ambitions. Despite this all trainer/supervisors were concerned about the lack of ambition shown by employees, seeing it as a limiting factor to personal growth and independence.

No mention of the institutional relationship with parents was raised by any employee with an intellectual disability interviewed however it was at the forefront of trainer/supervisor considerations.

5.4.2 Institutional relationships with family and caregivers

As stated earlier, from the first contact there was a fundamental difference between the general population and those with an intellectual disability entering the workforce. For the general population, entry into the work force usually involves a protracted process, beginning with the identification of an advertisement for the position, writing an application, attendance at an interview, deliberation by a selection panel and, if selected, placement in the position. The process for those with an intellectual disability was very different and usually involved a placement with an Australian Disability Enterprise, or Disability Employment Services after eligibility was confirmed. In informal discussion about the recruitment of new employees with T1, a trainer/supervisor in a management position, reported that despite attempts to change the process there was little involvement by the individual with an intellectual disability, apart from participation in an interview and possibly a short work experience placement. Despite this there is constant and increasing involvement of

parent/caregivers in the gaining of employment, even if the process is protracted and sometimes reliant on vacancies within the organisation through illness or retirement.

T4, a trainer/supervisor in a senior management role, introduced the concept that a worker's life was much more stable if the triangle of relationships between trainer/supervisors, organisational support and parents/caregivers was stable and solid. She drew a triangle (see Figure 1):

> "If we've got the triangle working together, and everyone is reinforcing the issues, then in theory, it's going to be much easier" (T4 line 376).

Unlike the general population where the inclusion of parents into workplace discussions is unheard of, those with an intellectual disability are seen as requiring special considerations that necessarily will involve parents/caregivers. T4 suggests that the success of employment in a supported workplace was dependent on a strong balance between the organisation, parents/caregivers and employees.

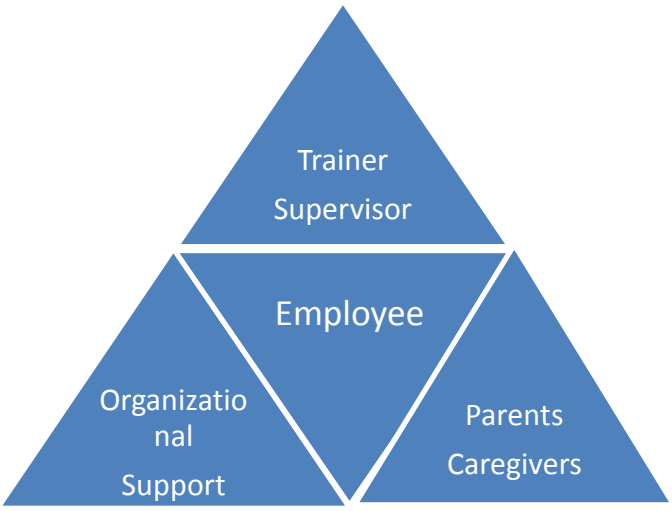


Figure 1: Triangle for the success of workers with an intellectual disability

(Drawn by T4 during the interview)

T4 explicitly talked of the 'Employee, Organisation, and Family Triangle' (above) as being the key to a successful transition into and sustained participation in the work force. She used the analogy that if the organisation and family can provide a solid base then the employee will have the best chance of success in the workplace. Therefore, family involvement in the process of their child's employment was

encouraged in a similar way to involvement in residential planning for the employee (T4).

The unique role that the parents/caregivers of workers with an intellectual disability have, means that 'linking' with them, as figures of authority and power, requires a different relationship to the general population, or even other disability groups. Notably no employees interviewed mentioned parents or caregivers during their discussions except E5a who, as reported before, expressed the desire to be at home with his family rather than working.

In contrast, parent/caregiver support was among the first issues raised by all trainers/supervisors interviewed. Even with the provisions of the Privacy Act, parents/caregivers have a unique relationship and function in the life of a person with an intellectual disability that must be respected (T1). One trainer mused that those who have younger parents have different expectations to those whose parents are older (T4). These differences are not only about the family role, but in the way that the children who have a disability interact within the wider family group, family friends and the larger community. As a result there is a new tension that is emerging where parents are demanding more information and involvement in decision making that may go against the provisions of the Privacy Act (T1). These tensions are likely to increase in the next few years as parents become more vocal (often through social media) and seek a wider range of services than previous generations of parents of children with intellectual disability (T4).

5.4.2.1 Nature of training for workers with an intellectual disability

The opportunities for employees to participate in education and training in this workplace appeared to be sharply divided between accredited and utilitarian training. Accredited training encourages transferable work based skills that could lead to the opportunity for open employment and appear strongly supported and encouraged by those in administrative roles in the institution (T1 and T4). Those who work directly with employees on the 'shop floor' (T2 and T3) emphasised utilitarian training that directly related to the current production needs and the employee's present position in the production process.

Animated discussion during interviews with the trainer/supervisors occurred about the changing expectations within the supported workplace of the value of accredited training for workers. While there were no differences of opinion about the value of training and ensuring that employees had access to training programmes, there was division regarding the nature and form of accreditation that the training could provide. For those in administrative roles (T1 and T4) there was an insistence that workplace training must aim to be accredited as far as possible in accordance with industry standards. The argument was based on industry standards applied to production standards, where contracts relied upon quality output, on time and on budget. The point made during visits to the organisation prior to the interviews was that contracts are won and kept for producing quality work, ready on time and on budget, regardless of whether the workers have an intellectual or other disability (T2). The business community "does not cut any slack because the workers have a disability and in hard economic times contract bidding is highly competitive and repeat business essential" (T2) and as such training should be production focused.

Those in management and leadership roles (T1 and T4) within the institution focused more on accredited training for individuals whereas those working directly on the 'shop floor' (T2 and T3) appeared more concentrated on productivity and 'basic life skills'. Differences between administrators and production supervisors are not unexpected as tension between production and the personal growth from accredited training reflects the ever-present underlying strain that exists in a supported workplace.

The tension within administration and production was ever-present in the wider community of the workplace. When talking about accredited training, T4 was particularly adamant that she could not recall:

> "An employee telling me they can't do it. ... [but] I do recall many, many situations where a parent said my child can't do that … you're expecting too much" (T4 Lines 262-263).

T1 and T4 commented about accredited certification in Business and Horticulture at Certificate II and III level being offered to employees who had been working in the appropriate divisions of the organisation for a number of years. They reported:

> "[Initially there was] phenomenally high levels of resistance … Why are you making my child do this? Whereas now, because we have had 700 or 800 people going

through the programme (and succeeded) … it's becoming much more normalised" (T4 lines 299-301).

T4 reported that parents feared that accredited training would result in their child experiencing failure and were worried about how their child would react. The comments from T1 and T4 suggested that some parents felt anxious that their child was currently in a stable position and it was best not to 'rock the boat' in case life became more difficult at home (T4).

The ideas from the trainer/supervisors who were based on the shop floor, were in stark contrast to those in administrative positions. Those on the 'shop floor' had strong feelings that accredited TAFE training in the current form was perceived as a day off and the benefits of increased training at this level did not transfer back into their specific production task:

> "We send them to TAFE, they learn all sorts of technical stuff which would have no value to them whatsoever in their daily working life" (T2 line 114).

Their argument was that training must be directly relevant to the work done and "[in most cases] local training was more useful than a Certificate II in TAFE" (T3). These trainers saw usefulness of training only if directly related to the present working situation of the employee. T2 conceded that there are two reasons why accredited training could be valuable:

> "One, because there is self-worth [intrinsic personal value in the programmes] … and [two] for those who are going to leave, and go outside to work ... in an open employment situation" (T2 lines 948-950).

T2 argued that there were "maybe four employees in the seven years (of T2's involvement) that have gone on to work [outside]" (T2 lines 951-952) and questioned the value of accredited training for such small numbers.

On the other hand, T3 raised the issue of a number of individuals in her cleaning team who could not read or write:

> "[I don't mind them] going to literacy and numeracy … but going to TAFE?" (T3 line 903).

T3 was supportive of personal training when it had intrinsic value in general life skills. The trainer/supervisors directly associated with production (T2 and T3) were very concerned with improving current production outcomes and saw accredited

training as taking time away from the job. Migliore (2011) reports that supervisors interviewed in his study also expressed a similar concern about the value of training for workers with intellectual disabilities. Their concerns were similar. They saw little use outside a specific job/worksite as the training did not transfer across different work/life environments.

There was criticism by the trainer/supervisors directly involved on the 'shop floor', of the organisation sending groups of employees to engage in Certificate II and III TAFE programmes:

> "There are individuals who on their own would ace Cert II, but because we send them as a group … it's like when we go hiking, you hike to the slowest walker … so you would have to teach to the slowest learner …they would find it boring and then there are others that struggle" (T4 line 936).

While this recognises that some individuals would be able to handle the programmes:

> "Some guys are really smart but couldn't read or write … they would have no difficulties dealing with Cert II but can't put that into physical writing but they can verbalise and explain it" (T2 lines 906-908).

The implication drawn by two trainer/supervisors from the 'shop floor' (T2 and T4) was that the written component of accredited training was more valuable than the practical understanding and developing competencies. The emphasis from a 'shop floor' trainer/supervisor was that:

> "A lot of our guys would do so much better if they were focussed in things that are actually going to make them better employees [of the organisation]" (T2 line 1122).

This reflects these trainer/supervisors attitude to the position of workers with an intellectual disability in the system and clearly brings the productivity versus personal development argument sharply into focus.

5.4.2.2 Employee career expectation

During the interview process all participants appeared willing to openly talk about their work and share the enthusiasm they have for the workplace. Interestingly, no employee talked about the details of the job they were doing. It could be that the questioning emphasised relationships rather than production. However experience over a number of visits and observations as part of the preparation for this research

would tend to suggest that the discussion was rarely about the product rather it was about people and their relationships within the organisation. This was the discussion on preliminary visits, both on the 'shop floor' and in the canteen.

As highlighted earlier, two interviewees expressed interest in changing jobs or even moving into open employment. E2b would like to work in a supermarket, and E4d would like to "work in the community" (line59), while E2b appeared interested in pursuing other options. Her responses conveyed an awareness that the effects of her disability may limit her opportunities for work. For example she commented:

> "I can do typing and filing, the only thing I can't do is answer the telephone because of my hearing. I can't take the message on the phone properly" (E4d line 60).

However, there was no indication she wanted to leave her supported accommodation which is linked to her employment because "we do lots of things (together)" (E4d line 49).

While her response about socialising appeared representative of those living in supported accommodation, and indicated some social interactions outside the workplace predominately organised by the organisation, the line between social interaction and workplace may be blurred. This may mean that while this group do engage in more social interactions with fellow workers, there is no evidence to suggest it is anymore self-determined than those who live at home. However this blurring may encourage thoughts about working in other environments, feeling safe that their social interactions will not change, whereas those living at home would not entertain working elsewhere because that workplace is where their friends are. As such when asked may report a desire to work elsewhere, but this does not extend outside the organisation.

From the interviews with the trainer/supervisors it is also clear that despite inducements, such as increased income, the participants express no interest in taking positions of greater responsibility within the organisation, content to remain in their position with their friends.

5.4.2.3 Summary of the unique tensions of the workplace

By its very nature, an institution established to provide employment for those with a disability develops a unique inbuilt tension between productivity and the personal

development of employees. The tension was manifest in the pull between developing a revenue stream that can provide the services required and the social responsibility for supporting people with disability or disadvantage. However, this tension appears to be only felt by trainers/supervisors. It was not evident in the responses of the participants interviewed.

All the trainer/supervisors interviewed in this study revealed a tension in this workplace that is unique to the employment of people with an intellectual disability. In many cases the family/carers of participants were closely involved in their working life. On occasions, however, this conflicted with the requirement of privacy for employees that is part of legislation for all workers. This tension is identified in the literature as a common trait of organisations employing people with intellectual disability but remains unresolved (Forte et al., 2011; Beyer & Robinson, 2009).

The participants were a direct reflection of Burrows et al's (2001) earlier findings: all are in low skilled positions, experiencing low wages and often had little prospect of advancement. Their position in the organisation and the lack of prospects or ambition for advancement could reflect the tensions experienced by those interviewed between dependence and independence, and between ambition and complacency. While there was some evidence of ambition in some interviewed it was more around the workplace rather than the work. Those interviewed appeared to be content to remain in the safety of the institutional environment rather than the uncertainty of open employment or a new position.

Arguably, responses which revealed contentment to remain within the support structures of the institution suggests that the workplace was more important than the work for participants. This was different from the general population who often look for stimulation in their work and often seek change to encourage their interests (Cimera et al., 2011). The focus of workers with an intellectual disability on social interaction compared to the stimulation of the work itself for the general population may be a major indicator of difference in satisfaction with work between those with an intellectual disability and the general population.

Flore et al. suggest:

> ... supported employees may rely to a greater extent on their direct supervisor to obtain social support and to solve any challenge from a psychological point of view.

> On the negative side, an excessive focus on supervisors may prevent employees in supported employment from developing meaningful social relationships with their co-workers, which is one of the main sources of satisfaction at the workplace (Flore et al., 2011, p. 139).

For the participants interviewed as part of this study building meaningful relationships with a variety of individuals each having a different role to play in the workplace was the most common reason for wanting to gain and maintain employment. Key to this was the building of social capital in the workplace to bond with fellow workers, bridge with the wider work community and link to those in power or authority.

5.5 Key findings

The aim of this study is to examine the aspects of social capital that employees with an intellectual disability have developed in this supported workplace that helped them to gain and maintain employment. From this three research questions were asked to focus this research to work and the relationships in the workplace:

> *1. What relationships are formed by workers with an intellectual disability in the workplace?*
>
> *2. How important is work for workers with an intellectual disability?*
>
> *3. What relationship do workers with an intellectual disability form with the employing organisation?*

In this chapter each of these questions were addressed through the analysis of the dataset collected using the research design outlined in Chapter 3. The key findings to each of these questions are summarised here.

5.5.1 Research question 1: What relationships are formed by workers with an intellectual disability in the workplace?

Participants in this study talked extensively about the relationships they formed with fellow workers and the importance of 'getting along' and working together in the workplace. This is part of the bonding social capital required to build meaningful relationships within the immediate workplace. While the data provided strong evidence that the participants in this study had well developed relationships with their peers in their immediate workgroup, the annotated transcripts from the

interviews indicated only a functional level of bridging with other groups and a limited development of linking with those in positions of power or authority.

While acknowledging the importance of bonding with fellow workers for current workplace situations, it could be suggested that without well-developed bridging and linking social capital participants may have a restricted ability to leverage the resources necessary for progress in their current situation and may restrict their ability to move into the general workforce.

The situation of the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study matches the workers with disabilities that were described by Burrows, et al. (2001) more than a decade ago. In this aspect little appears to have changed, and it may be that the underdevelopment of bridging and linking social capital by workers with an intellectual disability is a factor in workers with an intellectual disparity remaining in areas of low responsibility, receiving low wages and with little prospect of advancement throughout their working life (Burrows, et al., 2001).

5.5.2 Research question 2: How important is work for workers with an intellectual disability?

For this cohort of workers with an intellectual disability the workplace was a central aspect of their lives. The workplace, not necessarily the work, was an antidote to loneliness and provided a setting to develop social capital in the workplace and build self-esteem through their work that carried into the community.

The main attraction of the workplace for participants was the social environment, but any development of social capital in the workplace appears to be limited to a particular workplace and may not generalise into other workplaces or the wider community. This reinforces the findings of Migliore et al. (2008) where long term placement, safety and the social environment were key factors in the preference to gain and maintain employment.

5.5.3 Research question 3: What relationship do workers with an intellectual disability form with the employing organisation?

The major tension in any organisation specifically established to provide employment for a particular disability group is the balance of care, personal growth

and productivity. This tension represents the relationship of the organisation with the employees with a disability, and is an ever present focus within the organisation.

In the interviews with trainer/supervisors, the tension between care, personal developmental and production was reported as a constant issue. There were particularly noticeable tensions amongst trainer/supervisors that focused on training. Those in 'managerial' positions saw accredited training as having the most impact for employees, whereas those on the 'shop floor' saw training directly linked to production of greater value. The differences between 'management' and the 'shop floor' reflects the tensions at the various levels of the organisation between care, personal development and production. Ultimately, this tension has practical implications for the participants in their daily work life.

Despite this, during the small group interviews participants showed no overt indication of a relationship with the organisation outside of production. Care and personal development were not mentioned by participants, but it was evident that there was an implied trust in the organisation to provide care and personal development.

This relationship between the participant and the organisation appeared to be based on an expectation of trust in the organisation and that care for the individual was implicit in the participant's faith that the trainer/supervisors would 'fix' any problems either with production or relationships between individuals. This faith by participants imbued the trainer/supervisor with the power to solve the individual's problems, suggesting a model of reliance on the trainer/supervisor rather than a more democratic relationship. The reliance on, rather than a relationship with, the trainer/supervisors could be described in terms of underdeveloped 'linking social capital' between the participant and people in positions of power or authority and may be connected to the concept of 'learned helplessness' discussed in Chapter 2 in terms of challenges individuals with an intellectual disability face moving toward independence and adult status (Mill et al., 2010).

The linking aspect of social capital appears to be the least developed aspect of social capital in the participants of this study. As such, the resources and patronage that are part of developing linking social capital may not be sufficient to reach the milestones

of independence and responsibility that are part of adult status. This result is reflective of the findings of Mill et al's 2010 study of the transition of young people with intellectual disability toward adulthood:

> For young people with intellectual disabilities such milestones are often difficult to attain, and adult status therefore remains illusory (2010, p. 195).

5.6 Summary

The results of this study outlined in this chapter suggest that little has changed in the situation of those workers with an intellectual disability from that described by Burrows, et al. (2001) over a decade ago. The participants in the current study were in areas of low responsibility, receiving low wages with little prospect or interest in advancement, similar to those described by these writers more than 10 years ago.

In this chapter, the findings from this study were categorised to reflect the research questions outlined in Chapter 3 which provided the framework for analysis described in Chapter 4. The key findings in this study imply that:

- Well-developed bridging and linking social capital in the workplace is necessary to maximise career opportunities for participants in this study
- The workplace and not the labour/work-role itself were important for participants in their motivation to seek and to maintain employment
- There is a major tension within the organisation between the balance of care for employees with an intellectual disability (including the aim to help individuals achieve personal growth) and the productivity necessary for the commercial viability of the employing organisation.

Data from the interviews suggested that relationships between participants and their trainer/supervisors were often affected by this major tension between balance of care for employees and commercial, organisational needs. This is best illustrated through the trainer/supervisors on the 'shop floor' when employees care needs affected output at peak production times. These times are reported by more than 25% (4 out of the 14) of the participants in terms of their direct trainer/supervisor becoming bossy or short with them in order to meet production needs.

There was an added, problematic, expectation, from nearly 75% (10 out of the 14) of participants who directly expressed that they had an expectation that their

trainer/supervisors would ‘fix’ any problems with production, their personal life or relationships between individuals. All the trainer/supervisors described this as a problem and frustration, but those on the ‘shop floor’ reported they often resented how much of their time this involved.

Further analysis of data in light of the bonding, bridging and linking concepts showed that participants in this study achieved different levels of progress in each of the areas described by these terms in their workplace and were not uniformly successful across all three dimensions of social capital. For example, participants appeared to have achieved well-developed bonding with their immediate peers whom they worked with and who had a disability but their bridging and linking dimensions of social capital were far less evolved. The level of bonding is illustrated by the common agreement of participants “I come to work to be with my friends” clearly supported by the trainer/supervisors observation that many still come while on leave “just to say hi”. Whereas the level of linking social capital can be illustrated from the interviews with trainer/supervisors that despite encouragement and increased income, no trainer/supervisor can recall an employee with intellectual disability taking on a position of authority and suggest it is because the employees feel they would lose their friends if they move into a position of power or authority.

The implications of this finding for participants’ opportunities for advancement within the workplace and regarding their wider personal development are highlighted in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

From the outset any summary of research in this field must acknowledge that the current time is a period of intense change. The concept of disability is changing; it vacillates between the medical approach of fixing and curing, to a social approach that has a greater understanding that often it is society that is disabling. As well there are major changes in the Australian political scene with the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) (2012), rebadged as Disability Care Australia by a new government in 2013, only to return to its maiden name a short time later. Pilot programmes were rolled out throughout Australia in mid-2013 (Disability Care Australia, 2013), and the result of these pilot programmes will influence the service provision for people with intellectual disabilities in the near future. Despite these political and economic changes in the provision of services the basic discussion as to why individuals with an intellectual disability actively seek to gain and maintain employment will not change.

Although the findings cannot be generalised beyond this workplace, the results discussed in Chapter 5 suggest that the development of social capital in the workplace, is the foundation to gaining and maintaining employment.

While those workers with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study showed they had developed the basic skills and knowledge to bond with fellow workers, the growth of the bridging and linking aspects of social capital appear to be more limited. This conclusion leads to a discussion in this chapter that the failure to develop bridging and linking social capital may limit full integration into the workforce, restricting progress and expectations of promotion and advancement in workers who have an intellectual disability.

6.2 What the study was about

This study aimed to expand knowledge about why workers with an intellectual disability are actively involved in gaining and maintaining employment.

The experience of transition into adulthood for all contemporary adolescents is different from any previous generation (Mortimer, 2012), leaving school remains a key milestone in the lifespan and personal development for young adults, with and without a disability, across the developed world. Studies such as Settersten's (2012), show that the traditional markers of adulthood such as financial, social and housing independence have changed for current generations, and changed the notion of adulthood in contemporary society throughout the developed world. Settersten (2012) suggests that the role of the family and of the formal education system has changed, as the expectations of familial support during the schooling years is now extended for the whole population into young adulthood. This is even more so for the intellectually disabled, which was reflected in the increased tensions between the organisation and the parent/caregivers highlighted by the trainer/supervisors in this study.

The nature of schooling in Australia expects all students (including those with an intellectual disability) to participate in 12 years of schooling and move to employment or further study at the end of this time, usually around 17 years of age. In the last ten years the increase in the retention of students until Year 12 in South Australia has increased from 68.2% in 2003, to 91.9% in 2012 This change is due to raising of the school leaving age and other policy changes that reflect the changed community expectation that all students (including those with a disability) will complete 12 years of schooling. Over the past decade, the completion of Year 12 for those with an intellectual disability has become similar to their peers without a recognised disability (DECD, 2013). This change was mirrored in the experience of the participants in this study.

What differs for those with an intellectual disability is the nature of the process. In contrast to the more typical selection route of their peers without a disability, where individuals follow an interest or skill that they hope will turn into a career, for a young person with an intellectual disability, placement in a position is much more common and was the common process of gaining employment for all participants in

this study. The beginning of a work placement designates a new phase of life that is very different from school and is often the first tentative steps into adulthood.

The results from this study support the social and cultural importance of entering the workforce for the first time as a marker and milestone of transition to adulthood for participants. The results also recognise that this maybe an anxious time for the individuals and their families experiencing this milestone. However, the increased complexity of contemporary life means that such a social and cultural milestone cannot be studied in isolation (Stewart et al., 2012) and must be examined more to reflect the gaining and maintaining of employment rather than the single event of obtaining the first work engagement.

This research drew on the experiences of workers with an intellectual disability and used a narrative approach (outlined in Chapter 3) to examine the relationships that are crucial to seek active participation in employment.

The three research sub-questions provided the analytic framework used for this study:

1. *What relationships are formed by workers with an intellectual disability in the workplace?*
2. *How important is work for workers with an intellectual disability?*
3. *What relationship do workers with a disability form with the employing organisation?*

The overarching conceptual framework to investigate these questions came from the bonding, bridging and linking aspects of social capital (Woolcock, 2001) discussed in Chapter 2.

This research sought to add to the knowledge and understanding of workers with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace through their development of social capital in the workplace.

As outlined in Chapter 2 the lack of research about why workers with intellectual disability seek to gain and maintain employment, and the little generally written about the place of social capital in the workplace, encouraged this study to examine

the experiences of those with an intellectual disability to work and their responses to the expectations of, and engagement with, work and the workplace.

6.3 Work and the workplace

Work is an integral part of contemporary Australian life and the expectation of the typical life cycle that any Australian individual would expect to move through as part of the passage to adulthood (NCVER, 2011) and appears universally valued as providing the base for individual social and emotional development with family (Kuchinke, 2011).

While employment is considered an important rite of passage to adulthood for those with an intellectual disability, there is an underlying difference from their peers without a disability. For those with a disability, it appears that presumed independence of adulthood gained by peers from entering the workplace does not necessarily transfer for them into the workplace. This is illustrated by the participants in this study consistently reporting that when a problem arises there is an expectation 'they' (the trainer/supervisors) will do something about it. The reliance on trainer/supervisors to solve problems was reinforced throughout the small group interviews and may be indicative of a self-belief about their lack of ability to independently solve their problems. The participants interviewed appeared willing to abrogate their individual responsibility and to depend unquestioningly on the support structures (trainer/supervisors and Personnel Officers) from within the supported workplace. The limited data collected in this study also suggests that this was also true in the general lives of participants where significant others (for example, extended family) were relied on to solve problems and make decisions about their placement and future. This reinforces Maddison and Beresford's (2012) questioning of the involvement of individual participants in the planning and decisions about their transition from school to post-school options. It is uncertain this response from the participants of this study was a conscious decision or a reflection of the 'learned helplessness' that Abramson et al. (1978) suggest occurs throughout their childhood and adolescent years.

This study concentrated on the development of relationships of workers with an intellectual disability in this supported workplace and reflected in the research questions that provided the analytic framework for the data collected.

6.3.1 The relationships formed by workers with an intellectual disability in the workplace (Research question 1)

The participants in this study constantly referred to a tension in the workplace between their need to socialise and the imperative of productivity levels demanded by the supported workplace to acquire and sustain the contracts necessary to provide ongoing employment for employees. Balancing relationships and productivity was recognised by many workers interviewed who talked about ignoring distractions and getting on with your own work as indicators of being a 'good worker', who is valued by the trainer/supervisors and respected by their peers.

Schools and training groups often identify concentrating on 'your own work' as an essential work skill as preparation for the workplace which is constantly stressed in employment skills programs that are part of transition to employment plans for individuals with intellectual disability (Stewart et al., 2012). Unfortunately, for those with an intellectual disability it is problematic that the employment skills taught in these programs may not transfer from training to work practice. This was highlighted by Grossman and Salas (2011) who found a strong correlation between cognitive ability and transfer of training. As such, the effectiveness and transfer of much social skills training for those with an intellectual disability could be questioned in light of the data from this study and the recent findings of other studies in this area, such as Mostert (2013) who found mixed results of social skills training at best and very little evidence of success of social skills training in the literature reviewed.

Throughout the data there is a predominant expectation by the participants interviewed that those in charge will solve problems. This expectation by the workers interviewed perpetuates a power relationship where the workers may appear dependent on benevolent adults to ensure security, safety and protection from harm. The attitude reflects an understanding of the nature of intellectual disability reported in the literature by writers such as Migliore et al. (2008) that invokes an extended 'duty of care' in the workplace by those in positions of power or authority that would not normally be required, expected or demanded in open employment.

6.3.1.1 The development of social capital in the workplace

During the small group interviews, the social characteristics of the workplace and not the work itself emerged as important for the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed. The 'workplace' is where the participants interviewed develop the relationships and networks that contribute to their social identity and have been collectively described in this study as social capital in the workplace. These relationships contribute to the 'workplace' and are characterised by the goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social relationships that make one social unit different from another (Field, 2003; Smith, 2007; Uslaner, 2011).

Social capital developed in the workplace has to do with the characteristics of the networks formed with fellow workers (bonding), the people they come into contact with outside their workgroup (bridging) and with those who are in positions of power and/or authority (linking) (Woolcock, 2001).

6.3.1.2 Bonding social capital

All participants interviewed in this study reported friendships within their workgroup (bonding social capital). However, few reported developing these friendships outside the workplace. Opportunities to pursue the relationships beyond the workplace may have been limited by the lack of understanding of interpersonal skills or the practicalities of transport and an understanding of time that are required to independently be at a prearranged place at an agreed time. Without the skills and abilities to independently manage their recreational time, developing deeper relationships outside the workplace was challenging. Meetings and interactions outside work between participants and their friends were not self-initiated or self-managed: this is often different to the general adult population where meeting work friends outside is a choice that is usually self-initiated and self-managed. This observation supports the findings of Tipton, Christensen and Blacher (2013) who found a significant difference in the number and quality of friendships of adolescents with an intellectual disability in comparison to their typically-developing peers.

The lack of interaction among participants and with their peers may be traced to the isolation and the lack of quality relationships reported by children labelled with intellectual disability or learning difficulties during their school years (Armstrong & Squires, 2014; Mowat, 2014; Riddick, 2012).This is not a new phenomenon with

Riddick (2000) associating feelings of loneliness at school with being labelled as having an intellectual disability or a learning difficulty more than a decade ago and the practice of segregating children with a disability into separate classes and special schools (Winzer, 2013). The negative reactions felt by those with a disability from their peers without a disability as they sought to build relationships in the school setting are well reported. Less is known about their relationships as adults, but as Stewart et al. (2012) found the transition to adulthood is "extremely challenging".

Stewart et al. (2012) reiterated the complexity of the transition to adulthood discussed earlier in Chapter 2 and illustrated in this study through the individual and unique pathways participants travelled to develop the social capital necessary to maintain employment. Linked to this, despite the strong movements to deinstitutionalisation from the 1990s in South Australia, the schooling experience of all participants were in settings segregated according to disability, with no opportunity to develop friendships outside of their peers who were also identified as having a disability. There was no evidence from the interviews with participants in this study that indicated relationships outside of those with a similar disability, and underlies the common disconnection between youth with and without disability found by Stewart et al. (2012).

These complexities support the concept of disability as a social construct with feelings of loneliness and isolation that are felt from an early age by people with an intellectual disability and reinforced by the non-inclusive practices of key institutions (schools, clubs and workplaces). As a result, people with intellectual disability may feel isolated or excluded in the wider society, yet could explain why in a socially supportive area (such as a supported workplace), they are able to bond with their fellow workers. The participants in this study all reported the workplace as a place to develop friendships, without it the option of staying home raised fears of loneliness and isolation.

Participants who did develop relationships outside the workplace indicated a reliance on family or a work/organisational based social group to arrange and provide opportunities for activities to meet and interact with friends. The 35% of participants who did report prearranged and purposeful contact with fellow workers outside the workplace all lived in supported accommodation established and maintained by the

employing organisation. On closer examination most contacts were reports of activities organised through the social and sporting groups arranged by support staff or other organisations, such as Special Olympics, specifically established for providing activities for those with a disability, but none appeared self-initiated or self-managed. As such, even in this group, little appeared spontaneous or instigated by the participants, suggesting very little interaction amongst the participants in this study was self-initiated or self-managed.

Despite the complexity and difficulties, all employees interviewed saw employment in this institution as a valued and integral part of their lives; one which gave them connections and associations. The collective response "I come to work to see my friends" reinforced that many would be lonely without work. For the participants in this study, the workplace was central to their life, so much so that the trainer/supervisors reported that many are reluctant to take holidays when due and will often visit while on holidays just to say 'hello' to their fellow workers. The results from this study support Pitonyak's (2010) contention that it is the feeling of isolation and not the disability per se that causes the distress and anguish for those with an intellectual disability, and that to some extent, the development of bonding social capital in the workplace provides an antidote to loneliness.

6.3.1.3 Bridging social capital

Participants in this study often had little opportunity during their working day to interact with other workgroups. The exception is the morning tea and lunch breaks when all employees on the site are encouraged to meet in the very large lunchroom. During these times the trainer/supervisors reported that several participants met with others working on the same site but outside their work group. While there were some who knew each other from school or from training programmes conducted within the organisation, those who met more often, joined fellow residents from the organisation's accommodation units. Even with this, the participants interviewed in this study did not report a wide circle of friends outside their immediate workgroup. While the cohort had developed the basic relationship skills to function in a small workgroup there was evidence to suggest that few were able to develop the skills necessary to bridge to those who were outside their immediate work networks to develop relationships with people in the wider work environment (bridging social

capital). The pattern in this workplace appears similar to findings of researchers such as Widmer et al. (2008) that those with intellectual disabilities are likely to have narrower relationships than those who do not have a disability.

6.3.1.4 Linking social capital

Relationships between employees and those in positions of power and responsibility (linking social capital) are about the provision of resources and patronage that advance an employee within the workforce. This is represented within this workplace by the relationship between employees and those in the role of trainer/supervisors.

The trainer/supervisor's role involves the development of effective support for employees on the 'shop floor' to ensure the consistent and high quality production output required for commercial success. However, there is always a tension between this economic imperative and the employing organisation's primary aim: to provide the best opportunity for the development of individual employees.

This aim of providing a supportive setting for employees and the unique nature of intellectual disability introduces a third player not usually present in the general commercial community. Few business organisations outside the disability sector need to consider the views of the parents/caregivers of their employees as a matter of course. Developing linking social capital, for those with an intellectual disability in a supported workplace, is not just about those in power or supervisory roles within the organisation, but usually includes a parent/caregiver that has a direct influence on the outcome on employment options and a strong influence on attendance and enthusiasm for working (Flore et al., 2011).

The importance of developing relationships with the trainer/supervisors was recognised by participants in this study, but only identified as providing skills for production (trainer) and a wider pastoral type role overseeing the wellbeing of the work environment (supervisor). In most case these roles in this organisation are combined as a trainer/supervisor. While the dual role of trainer/supervisors are important to the smooth day to day running of the workplace and the current status of the employee, they have a part in future placement and situations for the participants particularly through allocation of training resources and patronage.

Without resources and patronage the opportunities for advancement by participants within the organisation could be limited.

While the trainer/supervisors clearly identified that some employees could move into positions of responsibility such as leading hands, they reported that despite inducements of extra income and status the acceptance by employees was "very disappointing". As a result the participants in this study remained in the same low paid positions with little opportunity for advancement as the cohort describe a decade earlier by Burrows, Ford et al. (2003).

6.3.1.5 Developing social capital in the workplace

In the preparation of people with a disability for the workplace, the building of social capital has often been over-simplified as the learning of social skills with the corresponding development of a multitude of courses to teach these 'basic skills' (Settersten, 2012). However, while 'Social Skills' programmes have aimed to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes, the traditional social skills programmes have often shown to be limited in helping students develop higher order thinking skills about social interactions (Daniel et al., 2003; Vaughan, Bos&Schumm, 2007). Higher-level thinking is part of developing awareness about work, relationships and the workplace; it is better expressed as the building of multi-facetted social capital rather than the one dimensional social skills common in 'work preparation' courses. Developing social capital is reliant on building an awareness of relationships in the areas of bonding, bridging and linking with those in the workgroup and the wider work environment. Failure to develop appropriate social capital may mean that the potential of individual employees may remain unfulfilled. For those with an intellectual disability, it may be the limiting factor in the advancement in their chosen position, and a restriction to possible participation in open employment and an insight into why individuals with an intellectual disability remain in the low paid positions, with little prospect for advancement described by Burrows et al. (2003) and Taanila et al. (2005).

6.3.1.6 Workplace social capital defined

This research has shown that the aspects of social capital required in gaining and maintaining employment for those with an intellectual disability in this study are unique and should be recognised with its own definition as workplace social capital:

> Workplace social capital is the aspects of social capital that pertain to the workplace. It is based around the continuance of employment and growth of the individual, and is inexorably linked to successful production that ensures the continuation of the commercial unit.

The characteristics of workplace social capital are unique to each workplace but reflect relationships between the individuals in the different roles that are necessary for the continuance of that business.

For an individual employee workplace social capital involves bonding with fellow workers, bridging with others that workers may come into contact with during the working day and linking with those in positions of power or authority in order to carry out the tasks necessary for the workplace to be productive and the business economically viable.

6.3.2 The importance of work for workers with an intellectual disability (Research question 2)

The gaining and maintaining employment was shown in this study to be complex and challenging for those with an intellectual disability, yet much of the research in this area has been carried out in a disconnected and uncoordinated manner (Stewart et al., 2012).

As a result there are few insights into the potential aspects that reflect why work and the workplace is so valued. This study is able to confirm that the positive attitude found in the participants of this study towards working provides the organisation with a workforce dedicated to the workplace more than to the work, and for the employees a sense of being part of the workforce and the feeling of belonging in the workplace that is valued in the wider community.

Even for participants who identified as having ‘anger management’ problems, their desire to work encouraged them to moderate their behaviour in order to keep their job. The participants’ reactions to any possibility of losing their job, by saying a very loud ‘no’ or by shaking their heads, were an indication that they would find the event to be traumatic, even unthinkable. This absolute commitment to work has been noted in other studies with employees identified as having an intellectual disability such as Banks, Jahoda, Dagnan, Kemp and Williams (2010), and is indicative of the high value that the participants in this study put on being employed.

6.3.2.1 Participants' involvement in the decision to work

The small group interviews and the interviews with trainer/supervisors in this study supported the finding by Stone et al. that "family and friends were relatively important in finding employment" (2003, p. 23). More importantly for the participants in this study it was the family connections with service providers that were reported as very important in finding employment. Those interviewed relied on their family and carers, while they were in the schooling system, for the professional contacts with service providers to help them find suitable employment. But, without the extended relationships provided by support agencies many families would not have the necessary networks and connections to find appropriate employment for their son or daughter.

Nevertheless this says little about the involvement reported by participants in the decision to be part of the workforce. There was no data in this study to suggest that the participants had any more involvement in the decision making process than those in the studies by Maddison and Beresford (2012) or Concannon (2005). In this study there was no evidence of ongoing purposeful involvement by participants in the employment placement process describe in Chapters 1 and 2. Where there were small indications of involvement they appeared, as Concannon (2005) suggest, largely tokenistic.

6.3.2.2 Participants' experiences of work

Despite work experience at school alleviating some of the concerns about entering the workforce, participants still talked of anxiousness and fear about the workplace being scary when they first entered employment. These concerns align with the findings of Forte et al. (2011) who found that worry about being bullied; not being able to do the job; making and keeping friends were all major issues for young people with an intellectual disability when they first entered the workforce. While these concerns may be experienced by the general population, the depth of concern and distress caused by these issues differentiated them from their peers and other individuals in the workforce with a disability (Forte et al., 2011).

The employees interviewed reinforced that, without work, they expected they would feel isolated and lonely. Yet, throughout the small group interviews all participants expressed their feelings in the more positive frame of 'being with friends' rather than

the negative ‘being lonely’. Participants felt that in the workplace there were prospects of making friends and, although the reality appeared limited, there was the possibility of these relationships extending beyond the workplace.

The expectation that working would develop the relationships they needed to cultivate friendships appeared a stronger motivation than the income it provided. None of the participants interviewed were in areas of responsibility on the ‘shop floor’ even though the trainer/supervisors identified a number who were capable but unwilling to take on responsibility. This research shows little has changed in the last decade and reinforced the findings of Burrows et al. (2003) who found that the majority of employees were in areas of low responsibility, receive low wages and have little prospect of advancement. The trainer/supervisors suggested during their interviews that the workers with a disability who were capable of increased responsibility often refused promotion because they saw it as isolating them from their friends. Despite support from the trainer/supervisors on the ‘shop floor’ to encourage workers to move to a position of responsibility or to a position outside the organisation no trainer/supervisor from the ‘shop floor’ could remember any worker with an intellectual disability having long term success in a position of increased responsibility within the organisation. The trainer/supervisors also reported that those who did attempt the change quickly went back to be with their friends. This supports Pitonyak’s (2010) contention that fear of loneliness is the greatest disability and is a key to the greater worry, distress and anguish that was experienced by those with an intellectual disability when compared to their peers without a disability (Forte et al., 2011).

6.3.2.3 Participants’ reasons for working

Work was seen as an essential and valued part of life for the participants of the study. When first asked ‘why do you work?’ the participants in this and other research such as Migliore (2011) firstly raised money as a primary motivation. However, deeper questioning and observational reports during the interviews with trainer/supervisors suggest money was not the prime reason for working. Being able to look like a worker and do the things a worker does like catching a bus to work are fundamental parts of the way the participants in this study defined who they were. The participants of this study were ‘learning to play the game’ (illusio) within the

social context of the workplace (field), taking on the regular process and practices of the workplace (habitus) and developing a core set of values and principles (doxa) valued and validated in the workplace (Bourdieu, 1986) and are key to developing workplace social capital.

Nevertheless the income received from working provided a form of independence that was valued by the individual and gave status, a place in the wider society and provides a statement about the worker's continually emerging role in the family and community (Mill et al., 2010). While the independence provided by the income from work was a stimulus to work, the difference in disposable income between a Disability Support Pension and a working income in this supported work environment was not sufficient alone to account for the enthusiasm to be suitably employed.

By far the greatest reason for working reported during the small group interviews as discussed in detail elsewhere in this chapter was the premier importance of friendships in the workplace. Therefore while the independence provided by income and the community status provided by being employed are important, the development of friendships in the workplace remains the main reason reported by participants for working. This is supported by the findings of Migliore (2011) who found a great resistance by workers with a disability to change the people they worked with once relationships were formed. Thus placing specific friendships as the centre for the reasons to maintain employment may explain why the trainer/supervisors interviewed report that some employees may consider giving up work if a friend in the workplace moves on or retires due to age or health conditions.

6.3.2.4 Participants' transition into work

In the general population, young people are expected to be part of the investigation, application, interview and selection process for employment. In contrast despite some encouraging changes in the education system an individual with an intellectual disability appears at worst omitted from the process entirely or at best given token involvement in investigating, applying, and being selected for employment (Lotan & Ells, 2010). From the participants of this study the most likely path to employment for those with intellectual disability is being offered a placement in a supported workplace through a 'work education programme' during their final years of school.

The programme is often developed in conjunction with a supported workplace or employment broker, and is often dependent on the relationship the individual has with the school (as a student) and the networks the school (and family) has built and developed with employment brokers, other service providers and supported workplaces. The individual and their family, through the school, have access to the school's network of support agencies, providing resources and opportunities the individual and family alone may not be able to easily access. Where strong relationships have been developed with the school, and where the school has developed strong relationships with service providers, the individual will more easily be able to build relationships with the service providers. Working with the service providers the school and family can plan transition programs to appropriate post-school pathways and develop employment options through the wider networks offered by these relationships.

For people without a disability post-school planning always involves discussion about interests, a career path and a vocation, often starting at an early age with the question 'what would you like to be when you grow up?' (Crockett & Hardman, 2010b). As found in this study and supported by Timmons et al. (2011), for those with an intellectual disability there seems to be much less choice and discussion appears to be much more about placement. This placement tends to be considered in terms of a lifelong commitment from the organisation/institution and a parallel long-term commitment from the prospective employee, as distinct from the stepping stone approach to career development of their peers without a disability. The small group interviews and the background data collected suggest that this was the pattern of transition to work experienced by all participants in this study.

6.3.2.5 Training for participants

While in recent times some supported employment groups have begun to provide formal accredited training for their employees to gain a sense of 'career'. The belief by senior management is that by undertaking training that is recognised within the wider business industry, it allows those who were capable and willing the opportunity to seek employment in the wider community. As a result this and many other supported workplaces have provided TAFE accredited courses for their

employees at Certificate I, II, III level, particularly in the areas of Business, Hospitality and Horticulture (Griffin & Beddie, 2011).

So far more than 400 employees with a disability have graduated from the TAFE accredited courses offered by the supported workplace of this study, all in the areas of business, hospitality and horticulture. Most were at Certificate I and II level with a very small number at Certificate III. This focus on training for formal accreditation divided the trainer/supervisors in this study. Trainer/supervisors working on the 'shop floor' saw 'life skills' and 'on the job' training that improved production as more important than the accredited training and qualifications seen by those in management roles as providing future transferability and value.

The trainer/supervisors report that the employees in the organisation were caught in the tension between the two groups of trainer/supervisors. The encouragement of accredited training through the TAFE sector in Australia has provided a focus for concentration on a vocational area and provided an increase in skills, knowledge and self-esteem among the workers with a disability taking part (Polidano & Mavromaras, 2010). Despite these gains, the trainer/supervisors working on the 'shop floor' question the value of accredited training, reiterating that no employee with a disability has undertaken a leadership role since the introduction of accredited training to the organisation. They suggest moving to more formalised training has not changed the willingness of employees with a disability to take on positions of responsibility or seek advancement elsewhere, and as such the focus on accredited training is misplaced.

6.3.2.6 Summary of the importance of work

The participants in this study showed a recognition that work was worth pursuing and valuable. Although indicating some difficulties in comprehending the nuances of some concepts the participants showed an understanding that work involved rules, customs and traditions, the 'illusio' as described by Bourdieu, (1998). Perhaps it was the difficulty of participants to appreciate the nuances of the 'illusio' of work, beyond their immediate situation, that defines the problem of developing linking social capital with those in positions of power or authority that could provide the resources and patronage necessary for advancement. Without workplace resources and patronage, involvement in the workforce may remain limited to the low skilled

positions, with low wages and little prospect of advancement reported by many studies (Banks et al., 2009; Dempsey & Ford, 2009; Taanila et al., 2005; Burrows et al., 2003).

While it has long been recognised that work provides a sense of belonging and worth that was beneficial to overall good health (Rocco et al., 2011; Yamamura, 2011; Cacioppo et al., 2003; Hafren, Karren, Frandsen & Smith, 1996), the responses from participants in this study underline the part which loneliness and isolation play in their wellbeing. Pitonyak believes those with any form of disability may more often experience profound loneliness more than physical health issues. He goes so far as to suggest, "loneliness is the only real disability" (2010, p. 5). The participants in this study reflected loneliness as an issue through the important part the workplace played in developing friendships that were often quickly formed and enduring, but rarely extended into time outside of the workplace. The workplace and not the work appears to provide an antidote to Pitonyak's (2010) loneliness. For the participants of this study it was the people not the product that encourage them to gain and then maintain employment in this supported workplace.

6.3.3 Relationships of workers with an intellectual disability with the employing organisation (Research question 3)

Because it was the workplace and not the work that was important for the participants of this study, the unique position of the supported workplace must be considered a central part of a potential worker with an intellectual disability seeking to gain and maintain employment. Unlike general businesses, this sector of the economy is not for profit and faces a constant tension between the needs of individual employees and the economic reality required for growth and economic viability. This tension arises from the very reason for the supported workplace's establishment and existence: individual support versus productivity.

While the participants of this study did not differentiate between trainer/supervisors and the organisation, the expectation of care and concern for them as individuals was implicit throughout the small group interviews. As a result the same long term commitment to the organisation and an expectation of the organisation providing a safe work environment with opportunities for organised social activities found by Migliore et al. (2008) were supported in this study.

6.3.3.1 Tensions within the supported workplace

The underlying tensions within the workplace identified in the interviews with the trainer/supervisors were at first not evident in the small group interviews, but on closer inspection much of what the participants had to say about their relationships with trainer/supervisors (linking social capital) reflected an underlying tacit identification of the trainer/supervisors as 'the organisation'. During the small group interviews participants talked of the trainer/supervisor's role in terms of production and personal support, often mixing the two where personal issues impacted on productive output (for example behavioural issues). In these cases the interviews with participants highlight the reliance on the trainer/supervisors solving their problems no matter the production relationships or social origin of those problems. As such, trainer/supervisors were often seen as 'the organisation' reliably mediating any of the problems experienced by participants. Such confidence in the reliability of support could suggest a reason for the contentment in the workplace expressed by participants and explain the limited necessity for advancement in the participants of this study who, similar to those in studies such as Stone et al. (2003), Luecking, (2011) and Wehman (2011), who remain in the one organisation for most of the whole of their working life in low level positions.

Throughout the small group interviews, there appeared to be an implicit trust from participants that the workplace will always be there, providing continuing employment for them. What also became evident was that the workplace provided a valued identity to the worker, as well as offering a place to meet with friends. No participant questioned the existence or ongoing viability of the supported workplace or their on-going employment within the organisation.

From a wider perspective, there is a constant tension in many supported workplaces that emanates from their central purpose for existence: Do they exist for the work or the employees? There is little doubt that the answer to this question for the workers with an intellectual disability and their families would be for the employees, but the political and economic environment regularly creates a tension between the sustainability of the business as a viable organisation and the feasibility of individual support for the employee. This tension is encapsulated in Torre and Fenger's contention that "sheltered work is increasingly considered to be an expensive

solution for the inclusion of disabled people" (2014, p. 69) suggesting that in the Netherlands supported workplaces are being "required to transform from being the providers of traditional on-site production facilities into organizations that stimulate and facilitate the inclusion of disabled people in the regular labour market" (p. 69). However they concede that supported workplaces may remain the only opportunity that many individuals with a disability have to gain and maintain employment but it should change to be seen to exist to provide a preparation for the open labour market (Torre & Fenger, 2014).

No discussion about the reason for the organisations existence would occur in a workplace that was not established primarily to provide employment for people with an intellectual disability. However, in interviews with trainer/supervisors in this study these tensions came to the forefront, and were reported as permeating the day to day working of the organisation, and creating serious discussions at all levels of the organisation. While not being immediately recognised by the participants in the small group interviews, on-going tensions were manifest in two major areas by the trainer/supervisors that are unique to a supported workplace established to provide employment for those with a disability:

- The relations of the workplace with family and caregivers, and the Privacy Act
- The aim of workplace training: productivity OR personal growth and development.

Each has a direct effect on the employees. The first questions the independence of the employee while the second affects the very opportunity for employment.

Relationship with the family and caregivers

Similar to the findings of Forte et al. (2011) the trainer/supervisors in this study reported that the role of parent/caregivers was most powerful during the placement period where employment outcomes for a person may be more reliant on familial associations with service providers and expectations of parents than the skills and aptitudes of the potential worker. As outlined earlier, while this involvement may be different to the wider population (Cappellari & Tatsiramos, 2011) the differences came in the process of obtaining the position. For the general population the process is based on application/interview/selection, while for those with an intellectual

disability it was, more often than not, placement in a position often with little or no input from the individual (Lotan & Ells, 2010). While there could be an expectation that those who have been identified as having an intellectual disability would be under some form of guardianship order or power of attorney relationship that explains this practise, the majority of participants in this study were not and represent the increasing numbers who are seeking autonomy and control of their own lives (Wills & Chenoweth, 2005). Despite this, this study shows that while there is an overall positive outcome for individual participants, for many there were similar challenges experienced by families and institutions around the individual's competency, capacity and independence found by Dowse (2009).

Not unexpectedly, the trainer/supervisors reported direct challenges to relationships with families when health or work information was withheld at the request of the employee. They reported that tension between families and the organisation may build and a breakdown of a previously harmonious working relationship may follow. The trainer/supervisors appeared well versed in the responsibilities of releasing information and ignoring the principles of privacy outlined in the Privacy Act (1988) which places the trainer/supervisor and ultimately the supported workplace in breach of the Act with severe consequences.

While issues of privacy are serious at times the trainer/supervisors interviewed in this study reported that the relationship between the workplace, family and worker with an intellectual disability in this workplace are reportedly more likely to be harmonious. Nevertheless an experienced trainer/supervisor, in line with the general observation made in Chapter 2, suggested that younger parents perceive their role as very different to parents of previous generations. He suggested that many contemporary parents that he deals with see their primary role as seeking resources for their child rather than personally providing care. As such a number of trainer/supervisors suggested contemporary parents are more likely to encourage their children to be involved in extra activities beyond that provided by the school and at the time of transition to post-school options, and later expect that this will be taken up as a role by the employing organisation. As a result trainer/supervisors reported that the parents/caregivers in all sections of the supported workplace are seeking greater involvement in work placement, accommodation and other activities

than previous generations. They report that even for those individuals who do not have any form of guardianship order, the demand by parent/caregivers to be more included in the working life of employees has increased as parents are more informed and vocal about their demands for their children with a disability. Increased tension is reported when the demand for involvement by parents does not match the wishes of the employee under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

It could be suggested that contemporary parents could be seen more as 'resource hunters' for their children rather than accommodating 'carers' that was common in previous generations.

Productivity or personal growth training

With the expectation that those with an intellectual disability are able to work, comes expectations about opportunities for training that enables adaptation to the changing demands on a contemporary workforce. Already, this supported workplace has recognised the need to be competitive in its own right in difficult economic times and has invested in high quality technology to meet the high production demands of customers.

The prime purpose of a supported workplace was deconstructed by trainer/supervisors during their interviews resulting in the recognition of an on-going tension between maintenance of the revenue stream to meet economic realities (business model) and the expectation of providing options and opportunities for employment for people with disability or disadvantage (philanthropic model).

The tension between a business and philanthropic model of institutions to improve the lives of people with a disability has its origins in the 19th century social reforms based on protection, separation and dependence (Winzer, 2013). The establishment of these workplaces was based on providing employment for employees who were:

> … disabled and dependent … as opposed to the able-bodied and productive … Practical instruction in trades and domestic skills turned consumers into producers and disabled people into productive, law abiding citizens (Winzer, 2013 p. 25)

In the ongoing critical commentary of the sociocultural drivers of philanthropy towards individuals with intellectual disability remnants of this history can be seen today in some community attitudes toward organisations established to provide

employment for those with a disability. There are still many examples of patriarchal patronising, and sometimes repressive attitudes throughout society, and even more concerning, there is the evidence of these attitudes in the organisations themselves. Low level representations of these attitudes were raised during interviews with the trainer/supervisors in this study and focused on the understanding of the business or philanthropic purpose of the supported organisation. The trainer/supervisors from different areas of responsibility in the organisation saw the purpose differently, those from the 'shop floor' focused on the business model, while those in management and administration concentrated on a much more philanthropic model as the reason for the existence of the supported workplace.

During the trainer/supervisors interviews those in administration or management roles reiterated that they must carefully balance the economic imperative to provide a revenue stream that was sufficient to provide the funds to deliver meaningful work for employees, with the long established charter at the foundation to provide productive activities for individuals with a disability. Trainer/supervisors on the 'shop floor' arguably saw the purpose of the organisation more narrowly. Data from this study indicated that for them, production targets and work output often appeared as more concrete expressions of the resolve of the institution to meet the board of management's intentions to remain the viable business necessary than to provide the desired services to their employees with a disability. Economic success was therefore perceived, by several trainer/supervisors interviewed as a necessary state for continued philanthropic support for employees with intellectual disability. This is best illustrated by the opposing views to training held by the trainer/supervisors from the 'shop floor' to those in areas of management. Those working on the 'shop floor' insisted during the interviews that training should be closely aligned to direct production needs, whereas those trainer/supervisors working in management saw accredited training as more important because it provided greater personal growth and opportunities for the employees.

Changes in the board's direction because of refocusing of aims or changes in government policies have a direct and profound effect on the 'shop floor'. As an example, the supported workplace in this study was no longer selecting only the best production workers as new employees. While trainer/supervisors on the 'shop floor'

are gradually coming to grips with a change in the ability levels of employees, there is a particular impact on training to ensure a balance between productivity and personal development. At the same time trainer/supervisors responsible for production outputs must deal with a recruitment policy, endorsed by the board of management, that reflects the developing contemporary community expectation that, apart from exceptional circumstances, those with intellectual disabilities can, with appropriate support, participate in the workforce (Social Inclusion Board, 2011).

Consistently throughout the interviews, trainer/supervisors from management and the 'shop floor' areas alike were torn between requirements to meet quality, delivery and budget targets of the business side of the organisation and the individual, personal needs of employees. Unlike open employment, the constraints of government funding and community support necessitate formal financial indicators of profit/loss to be balanced against quality of life indicators for their employees. As a result of this tension, the attitudes of the trainer/supervisors in both administrative and 'shop floor' roles interviewed during this study appear similar the findings of Flore et al. who found:

> Supervisors in sheltered workshop could be overprotective with their co-workers, which in turn, could reduce the opportunities of these employees to develop decision-making or problem solving skills (Flore et al., 2011, p. 139).

Despite Polidano and Mavromaras' (2010) evidence that, in Australia the completion of an accredited industry certificate through TAFE increased the likelihood of a person with a disability gaining employment by some 20%, the trainer/supervisors directly involved on the 'shop floor' queried the organisation's concentration on accredited training for employees with an intellectual disability. For the trainer/supervisors on the 'shop floor' the expressed opinion was that the participation of those who could not read and write in an accredited TAFE programme devalued the accreditation and certification process. Interestingly, the trainer/supervisors working on the 'shop floor' had Certificate II and III in the same TAFE system as their highest personal qualifications. Further examination would be needed to determine if these trainer/supervisors concerns are more about the inclusion of those who they considered did not have similar intellectual abilities to themselves undertaking Certificate II and in some cases III, and if they thought this practice devalued their own qualification.

The highly competitive nature of supported employment services for people with disabilities in South Australia means that regardless of the disabilities of employees the workforce must perform (and in many cases exceed) general Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the organisation to be competitive in open tenders. To do this requires a workforce that has the skills and knowledge to consistently meet the KPIs. The expectation of performance outcomes may create tension between the needs of production and the needs of individuals that are defined in the goals of the institution.

It is this tension that may explain the different views of administrators and managers interviewed and those trainer/supervisors on the 'shop floor' about the focus of training. Was productivity or personal growth more important for the trainer/supervisors in this study? The answer is split; those trainer/supervisors working on the 'shop floor' were firmly focused on production, while those in administration and management were decisive in their support for personal development and accredited training.

6.3.3.2 Employee expectations: Ambition or contentment

De Urríes and Verdugo (2011) argued that if the workplace was fulfilling for a worker with an intellectual disability then there would be a contentment and a willingness to stay in that place. This begs the question: does the continued acceptance of the current workplace reflect a habit or a lack of ambition? Or is the lack of movement due to a perceived lack of autonomy to change the situation rather than contentment? This is perhaps a point of difference for workers with an intellectual disability and their peers without a recognised disability who are more likely to change positions or organisations in search of a greater challenge in their work.

For the general population the connection to work "are negotiated relations between the individual's orientation to work and the particular organisational culture of the employer" (Laws, 2011, p. 2). As such there is an ambition to follow the work to new opportunities, fresh places and with an ambition to become more involved in the business of production, even if that means changing workplaces. The participants interviewed in this study appeared content in their current positions within the workplace, displayed little ambition to take positions of responsibility and did not

show an interest in moving away from the current organisation and workplace. This finding is similar to Migliore (2011) who found that employees with a disability whose interests do not focus on the work, may be content in their current position and resist changes to the workplace and the people they work with.

6.3.4 Summary of work and the workplace

The employees with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study showed they valued the relationships formed in the workplace more than the work carried out. All demonstrated they had developed aspects of workplace social capital, displaying strong evidence of bonding with fellow workers, and developing a functional level of bridging with others in the working community, but presented only limited evidence of linking with those in power or authority in order to leverage the networks they have developed or displaying the independence necessary to advance in this or another workplace. The limited development of linking social capital in the workplace, and general independence, by the participants in this study may go some way to explaining why those with an intellectual disability remain in the low skilled, low paid positions with little prospects of advancement described by Burrows et al. (2003) a decade ago.

This raises some questions that are beyond the scope of this study but which are potentially significant for further research in this topic: 'Is ambition only a trait for those who have gained independence?' and 'Is the apparent contentment to remain in this position, despite offers for advancement, a reflection of learned dependency?'

6.4 Summary and recommendations

This study set out to add to the knowledge about what makes workers with an intellectual disability gain and maintain employment. Through small group interviews with employees with an intellectual disability it examined the importance of work for them, their formation of relationships in the workplace and their attunement with the employing organisation and their trainer/supervisors.

6.4.1 Summary of the key findings

The results of this study are summarised below. Each of the three supplementary research questions is considered before a final consideration of the aim of this study

and an examination of the overall research question: *What aspects of social capital have employees with an intellectual disability developed in this supported workplace that help gain and maintain employment?*

Research question 1: *What relationships are formed by workers with an intellectual disability in the workplace?*

The relationships formed by the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed can be described in terms of the development of workplace social capital using the concepts of bonding, bridging and linking as described earlier in this thesis, based on the concepts of social capital by Woolcock (2001). As such, the workplace social capital developed by the participants interviewed in this study can be described as having:

- Developed bonding workplace social capital with their fellow workers
- Functional bridging workplace social capital with others in the work community
- Limited linking workplace social capital with those in positions of power and authority.

Having developed bonding workplace social capital means that the participants were able to build relationships with fellow workers in their immediate work group to become part of a work team. Participants were able to use the less developed but still functional bridging workplace social capital to interact with others from different workgroups or the general public, depending on the job. However, the limited development of linking workplace social capital with people in positions of power and authority in the workplace may restrict the opportunity of participants to use these relationships to build the network of resources and patronage that is necessary for advancement in the workplace. Therefore, the limited ability to develop linking workplace social capital may be an obstruction to opportunities for advancement and suggest a possible factor to why workers with an intellectual disability remain in low skilled positions with low wages and little opportunity for advancement.

Research question 2: *How important is work for workers with an intellectual disability?*

Working was very important for the participants interviewed in this study. Despite the social status that being employed carried, it was the workplace rather than the work that was seen as important. Participants reported that they came to work to be with friends and if they did not come to work then they would feel very lonely staying at home. This finding was strongly supported by the trainer/supervisors who agreed that 'seeing friends' was the major reason why the participants in this study came to work.

Research question 3: *What relationship do workers with a disability form with the employing organisation?*

The participants interviewed showed they were not attuned to the purpose and objectives of the supported workplace in which they worked. They were unaware of the economic imperatives that ensure the sustainability of the supported workplace as central to their continued employment. They spoke of the organisation more in terms of a support agency in their own lives and not an employer who needed to have a product that would provide an income so the business could continue. The employing organisation appeared to be perceived as synonymous with the workplace and embodied in the trainer/supervisor, and may suggest why participants saw 'doing what the trainer/supervisor says' as the key factor in retaining their employment. The question of capability of participants to understand the factors associated with a sustainable business model and the organisation's willingness to encourage interest in this understanding, are interesting but beyond the scope of this research.

6.4.1.1 Summary: Workplace relationships that help gain and maintain employment

For the participants in this study the relationships with workplace, not necessarily the work, became an integral part of their life and provided the opportunity to develop relationships that would counteract the loneliness they expected if they stayed at home. The workplace was seen as the setting in which to build the relationships and develop the social capital necessary for their daily lives in the workplace and provided the status and recognition afforded the working community.

The relationships of bonding and bridging social capital formed by participants within this workplace appears to provide the motivation to gain and maintain employment, however, the dependent nature of the relationships formed in linking social capital in the workplace may be a limiting factor for their advancement in this or another workplace.

6.4.2 Research appraisal

From the outset this study recognised the potential difficulties of research involving people with intellectual disabilities. Discussion of these issues in the Research Design (Chapter 3) identified the problems of capacity of individuals with intellectual disabilities to provide reliable information raised by researchers such as Gudjonsson and Joyce, (2011) and Bull (2010). The opportunities offered by specific methodologies and approaches from researchers such as Turk et al. (2012), Nind (2011) and Cameron & Murphy (2007) were also discussed. With these matters in the forefront of consideration, the chosen methodology of this study used small group interviews with workers with an identified intellectual disability in the workplace (Cambridge & McCarthy, 2001), allowing Woolcock's (2001) concepts of bonding, bridging and linking social capital (outlined in Chapter 2) to be used to add to the knowledge of the factors relevant to gaining and maintaining employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Interviews with trainer/supervisors who knew the worksite well were used to provide background knowledge and highlight general issues that arose from the responses of the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed.

The narrative approach adopted by this study used what Gergen and Gergen (2011) describe as 'relational constructivism'. This technique allowed the responses of participants to be described in terms of the social context of their workplace. As outlined in Chapter 3, the methodology adopted to frame the research questions addressed by this study at the same time facilitated the use of an analytic framework enabling thematic analysis of data.

The active listening encouraged by Gergen and Gergen's (2011) methodology encapsulated in the 4Ps approach (Pause, Prompt, Praise and Paraphrase) provided assurance that the participant's responses were being accurately captured to become

the story of individual experiences of gaining and maintaining employment. The research methodology and subsequent analysis enabled the researcher to:

> … reach out to under-represented stories … Small stories in this respect can enable the shift from the precious lived and the told to the messier business of living and telling (Georgakopulou, 2006, p. 129).

6.4.3 Study strengths

This study draws on the work of writers such as Georgakopoulou (2006), Boje (2001) and Bamberg (2012) who follow Lyotard's (1984) ideas of small stories/grand narrative in order "to flesh small stories out" (Georgakopoulou 2006, p. 122) thereby developing insight, from the perspective of participants, into the role of workplace social capital necessary to gain and maintain employment. Interviews with the trainer/supervisors enriched this enquiry. Data from the trainer/supervisors interviews: provided a form of triangulation to evaluate insights highlighted by participants with an intellectual disability; offered a different perspective on these issues; and/or focused in further, and provided a more detailed, insight into some of the specific issues raised by participants. The trainer/supervisors also gave an overarching understanding into wider institutional factors of the environment where the research took place. For example: the trainer/supervisor's emphasis of the systemic tensions within this supported workplaces, between the demands for productivity and the needs of employees with a disability for personal growth training, was not immediately evident in the small group interviews with participants.

Using small group interviews, instead of individual interviews, as recommended by Cambridge and McCarthy (2001), provided opportunities for participants who had difficulties in expressive communication to indicate agreement (or disagreement) with those peers who were more articulate or do not have expressive language difficulties. Using video recording to capture the responses of those with communication difficulties in this study allowed enhanced participation in data capture for those whose immediate responses might have been more difficult to ascertain: the recording could be carefully checked post interview to evaluate responses and check that any interpretation of their meaning was, as far as possible, valid and represented their intention.

By using the 4P approach (after the question, Pause, Prompt, Praise and Paraphrase) in a small group environment, the major strength of this study was that the data collected could confidently be considered as reflective of what each participants with an intellectual disability wanted to say despite any communication difficulties.

6.4.4 Lessons learned about interviewing people with an intellectual disability

The major lessons learned about the interviewing of people with an intellectual disability was the use of small groups rather than one-on-one interviews and the importance of supplementary video recordings to capture the responses of those with an expressive communication difficulty.

As outlined as part of the research design in Chapter 3, this study followed the recommendations of Nind (2011) and Cambridge and McCarthy (2001), to use small group interviews in preference to one-on-one interviews. This approach was chosen to encourage participants to communicate experiences that they may not usually discuss in one-on-one situations through increasing confidence by providing a feeling of safety in a less threatening situation (Cambridge & Forrester-Jones, 2003).

The choice appears justified in two interviews times, when only one participant attended. Each of these interviews were abandoned because it became obvious to the interviewer that the single participant lacked confidence and was not giving considered responses. The answers given by each participants, in what became one-on-one interviews, kept changing as the interviewer tested understanding by paraphrasing, asking the same question in a different way or asking a clarifying question. The answers indicated that each participant was seeking to meet what they perceived the interviewer wanted, rather than delivering a considered response. Both these interviews were terminated because the interviewer was certain the responses would not stand up to analysis.

The small group approach also allowed a number of participants with limited communication skills to react to the responses of other small group members during the interview. For a number of participants the nod of the head, or some other physical action indicated their feelings about what was being said. Without being able to see the shake of a head, or the shrug of a shoulder the transcripts of the small

group interviews, would not have recorded a number of the responses from those with limited communication skills. The video recording of each small group interview allowed the non-verbal responses of participants to be considered. Without the video these responses would not have been able to be captured in a usable form.

Reflection on the data gathering process and on the methodology also supports the value of an interviewer who has built trust, was experienced in working with people who have an intellectual disability, and was respectful of the individual, but also acutely aware of the signs of confusion and misunderstanding (Schalock et al., 2002). Pre-interview visits by the interviewer to the workplace provided an opportunity to build relationships with potential participants. This not only provided an understanding of the unique nature of the worksite for use during the interviews, but also gave further insight during analysis of the data.

Throughout the small group interviews the answers to questions sometimes had an 'imitative' quality, where the employee restated the questions to show that they agreed (never disagreed) with what the interviewer said. At other times the employee answered so simplistically that the interviewer became suspicious that processing of the question hadn't occurred. The problem for the interviewer then became – should the question be restated or reframed again or should the question and response be omitted for this employee? (Lotan & Ells, 2010). At these times the experience of the interviewer in working with people with intellectual disabilities and the adoption of the 4P approach (Pause, Prompt, Praise and Paraphrase), as discussed in Chapter 3, gave direction to the researcher during the interview process.

The experience of this study also supports the importance of a researcher well practiced in working with people with an intellectual disability is more able to capture data that reflected considered responses of the participants to the questions asked. Experience working with people with an intellectual disability then becomes central in analysis and drawing conclusions from that data. Lloyd et al. (2006) highlighted that experience of working with those with an intellectual disability can be a valuable foundation for further research within such a varied population. They suggest that:

> The key to success appears to lie in a willingness to adapt methods appropriately and to modify expectations to hear the voice of respondents with expressive language deficits. (Lloyd et al., 2006, p. 1399).

The aim of the methodology used in this study is expressed in this sentiment and is encapsulated in the use of video as a supplementary device and the implementation of the 4P approach to listening to the responses of those with an intellectual disability who were interviewed. While keeping these points in mind, the key lesson learned about interviewing people with an intellectual disability from this study remains the value of small groups above one-on-one interviews to collect data that the researcher can be confident reflects the views of the participants.

6.4.5 Future research possibilities

The findings from this study suggest there are areas for further research and opportunities for a number of methodologies in qualitative, quantitative and mixed method studies.

The supported workplace in this study has an extensive social programme that was considered well supported, yet none of the participants reported taking advantage of the programme. This may mean that people with intellectual disability are underrepresented in these groups:

> *Are people with intellectual disability underrepresented in institutional social activities and programmes?*

This research indicates that many workers with an intellectual disability have very few friends they see outside the workplace, even those who did, indicated these meetings often were not self-initiated or self-managed. While most participants reported being involved with at least two support agencies that provide programs to improve social skills and provide opportunities to build relationships, few of the employees interviewed reported friendships outside the workplace. If the success of these programmes can be reflected in the number of friendships formed that extend outside the workplace, then:

> *How effective are agencies programmes in improving the quality of relationships and friendships of adults with an intellectual disability?*

Behavioural issues arose during a number of interviews. A number of participants indicated that they were undergoing 'anger management' programmes. These participants indicated that they would not be able to work if they did not have access to this programme:

> *How successful are 'anger management' programmes in the workplace for employees with an intellectual disability in maintaining employment?*

The reflections of participants whose family history does not support participation in the workforce become relevant to further study of the influence of family expectations on workforce participation. Cusworth (2012) has already found that family work history and employment expectations have been found to be a major influence in the attitudes to employment by children of the family. In light of this insight and of the focus of this study future research in this area could, for example, consider:

> *Does familial history of employment affect the participation in the workforce by those with an intellectual disability? And if so, are there any significant differences from findings in the general population?*

The role of early socialisation for attitudes towards employment by participants was raised by all the trainer/supervisors during the interviews. The issues raised in these discussions by the trainers/supervisors centred on dependency and the relationship the individual had developed within the wider family circle and supported Mill et al's (2010) finding of two distinct types of relationships between parents and their offspring who have a disability. Data from the trainer/supervisors reinforced Mill et al's (2010) proposal that where the young adults relied on their parents to manage their everyday lives there was often what might be characterised as a dependent relationship. In contrast those who handled most of their daily lives relying on their parents only in times of crisis had a much more independent relationship. The latter group are more likely to take the increased opportunities for socialisation offered in South Australia during the last two decades as leisure and sporting groups that have been specifically set up for young children and adults with disabilities (Disability Information Resource Centre, 2013). While there is a wide variety of early socialisation opportunities that can be directly attributed to the disability support groups for parents (Cook & Oliver, 2011) there appears little research into the effect

of parents' encouragement of a pattern of wider socialisation for the child as they move into adolescence, then onto gaining employment or another post-school options. Therefore, while accepting that the type and severity of the disability will affect individual perceptions/attitudes toward about being part of the workforce (Blacher et al., 2010), in light of this insight, a question for future research in this area could centre on:

> *What difference does increased opportunities for socialisation in childhood make in the employment options for workers with an intellectual disability?*

This study highlighted the lack of research for workers with an intellectual disability in general and more specifically that which pertains to female workers with an intellectual disability. This relative neglect in literature and research was highlighted in Chapter 2 and indicates that this might be an important possible avenue for future research. In light of this study, future research might explore:

> *What are the experiences of female workers with an intellectual disability? And do their experiences differ from their male peers?*

The field of workers with an intellectual disability was so underrepresented in the literature that many more specific recommendations could be made, but the gap can be summarised in the lack of 'voice' that those with an intellectual disability have in setting the research agenda and being involved themselves as researchers in the field. As Ashby (2011) asks in the title of her study; "Whose voice is it anyway?" For people with an intellectual disability to be researchers not just the researched, there needs to be "appropriate design, strong research partnerships, adequate and flexible resources, promotion of teamwork and a strong task focus" (Turk et al., 2012, p. 9). The aim to include people with an intellectual disability as fellow researchers in future studies will add to the literature that will provide the 'voice' of those with a disability to deliver unique insights in their experiences of work.

6.5 Conclusion

This research set out to examine what motivates workers with an intellectual disability to gain and maintain employment. It examined the importance of work and relationships formed with fellow workers at different levels (bonding, bridging and linking), and the relationship with the supported workplace using a theoretical

framework of workplace social capital developed from Bourdieu (1986) and three aspects of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking) developed by Woolcock (2001) and adapted in this study for the workplace.

The findings of this study indicate that relationships formed by the participants in this study appeared strongest with co-workers (bonding social capital) where the participants formed friendships with their fellow workers, but typically these friendships were not generalised and did not, typically, carry over to self-initiated or self-managed interactions outside the workplace. While the development of relationships with other workplace groups (bridging social capital) appeared to be functional, connected directly with work requirements, the relationships with those in power or authority (linking social capital) were not sufficiently developed to provide the incentive and support that is used by workers in the general community to seek advancement, either within the workplace featured in this study or through changing workplace.

The study found that the participants interviewed considered work to be an important part of their life. Productive work was perceived by the participants: to have a value that gave social status; contributing to mental and/or physical health; and providing an income which gave them discretion and choice. However, it appears that the workplace and not the work was most important. It was the workplace not the work that was valued and provided the opportunity to build relationships and develop friendships.

The workplace provided the reason that the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study wanted to work. It allowed them to be with friends and avoid the fear they had that they would become profoundly lonely if they stayed at home. As such, the isolation and loneliness that participants associated with staying at home may be the motivation for seeking to be employed.

The gaining of employment by participants in this study appears primarily motivated by the desire to avoid the lonileness they feared if they stayed home. For them it was the workplace and not the work that provided the opportunities to develop the ‘friendships’ that encouraged them to maintain their employment. Despite difficulties, the employees with an intellectual disability interviewed in this study

have developed sufficient workplace social capital to avoid loneliness and enjoy the psycho-social benefits that the workplace and the general community afforded those who are employed.

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Appendices

A.Research tools

- Background questions for workers with an intellectual disability
- Focus questions for workers with an intellectual disability:
- Background questions for trainer/supervisors
- Focus questions for trainer/supervisors.

B.Information and Consent forms

- General invitation for workers with an intellectual disability
- General invitation for trainer/supervisors
- Easy English information sheet for workers with an intellectual disability
- Information sheet for trainer/supervisors
- Consent form for workers with an intellectual disability
- Consent form for trainer/supervisors
- Readability of letter, information sheet and consent form for workers with an intellectual disability.

C.Attributes and background of participants

- Location of the study
- Employees
- Trainer/supervisors
- The researcher

Appendix A - Research tools

a) Background questions for workers with an intellectual disability

b) Focus questions for workers with an intellectual disability:

c) Background questions for trainer/supervisors

d) Focus questions for trainer/supervisors:

a) Background questions for workers with an intellectual disability

Background Information was collected from the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed, using a form that recorded the information gained from asking the questions in the central column. The results are outlined Appendix C where the details of each participant are recorded.

Focus	Questions Asked	Data collected
Age	How old are you?	Age group
Gender	Are you male or female?	Gender
Length of service	How long have you been working?	Employment maturity
Educational background	Did you attend a Special Class Unit or Special School	Educational experience at school.
Residential location	Which suburb do you live in?	Residential location (Postcode)
Residential type	Are you living: Independently or in a supported place or with your parents?	Level of residential independence
Level of disability	What is your disability?	Level of disability
Perceived level of disability	Tell me about your disability?	Individual perception of the level of disability
Past work experience	What jobs have you had? What work experience did you do at school?	Experience of the workplace
Type of organisation	Who is the main group who helps you with your job?	Type of support agency
Level of support from the agency	How much help do they give you?	Level of support from the agency
Perception of level of support	Do you need more or less help from them?	Individual's perception of the level of support

b) Focus questions for workers with an intellectual disability:

These questions were asked individually to each participant during the small group interviews with the workers with an intellectual disability. The participants were able to add to another person's answer through nodding, shaking their head or adding a comment of their own that was triggered by another's answer. All responses were documented using audio and video recording and used together to form the transcription used in the data analysis.

The questions in the table below are indicative of the questions asked, providing the basis of the information gathered during the small group interviews.

Focus	Questions asked	Data collected
Bonding	• Tell me how you get (got) on with fellow workers. • What do you think helps you build good working relationships with your fellow workers?	An indication of the level of understanding the employee has about the importance of **Bonding** with workmates.
Bridging	• Tell me how you get (got) on with your supervisors. • What do you think helps you build good working relationships with people who are your supervisors?	An indication of the level of understanding the employee has about the importance of **Bridging** between themselves and those in authority.
Linking	• Tell me how you get (got) on with other people you come into contact with during your work time (e.g. the general public, or delivery people, or people from different work units) • What do you think helps you build good working relationships with people you come into contact with from outside your work unit?	An indication of the level of understanding the employee has about the importance of **Linking** with others they come into contact with in the workplace.

Supplementary clarifying questions that the interviewer may pursue with the workers with an intellectual disability if required:

- What do (did) you like about coming (going) to work?
- What don't (didn't) you like about coming (going) to work?
- What was it like for you when you first started working?
- What problems did you face when you started work?
- What things make (made) you think about giving up work?
- What helps (helped) you to stay on?

c) Background questions for trainer/supervisors

Background Information was collected from the trainer/supervisors interviewed using a form that recorded the information gained from asking the questions in the central column. The results are outlined Appendix C where the details of each participant are recorded.

Focus	Questions asked	Data collected
Age	Age grouping	Age group
Gender	Are you male or female?	Gender
Length of service	How long have you been working in the disabilities area?	Employment maturity
Educational background	What formal qualifications do you have?	Educational background
Past work experience	What positions have you had?	Experience of the workplace
Type of organisation	What type of organisation do you work in?	Type of support agency

d) Focus questions for trainer/supervisors

These questions were asked individually to each trainer/supervisors during the small group interviews. The trainer/supervisors were able to add to another person's answer adding a comment of their own that was triggered by another's answer. All responses were documented using audio and video recording and used together to form the transcription used in the data analysis.

The questions in the table below are indicative of the questions asked, providing the basis of the information gathered during the interviews.

Focus	Questions asked	Data collected
Bonding	• Can you describe some examples of good interactions between workmates? • What do you think helps a worker build good working relationships with their fellow workers?	Working operational definition of the skills of **Bonding** that can be used to develop a rubric to identify instances of Bonding to build scenarios that reflect this focus.
Bridging	• Can you describe some examples of good interactions between workers and supervisors? • What do you think helps a worker build good working relationships with people who are in supervisory role?	Working operational definition of the skills of **Bridging** that can be used to develop a rubric to identify instances of Bridging to build scenarios that reflect this focus.
Linking	• Can you describe some examples of good interactions between workers and people who they may come into contact with (e.g. the general public, or delivery people, or people from different work units)? • What do you think helps a worker build good working relationships with people they come into contact with from outside their work unit?	Working operational definition of the skills of **Linking** that can be used to develop a rubric to identify instances of Linking to build scenarios that reflect this focus.

Supplementary clarifying questions that the interviewer may pursue with trainer/supervisors if required:

- What makes a good worker?
- What helps employees remain on the job?
- Are there any factors that help employees stay on the job?
- What factors stop employees staying on?
- What do you look for in a potential worker?
- What processes are in place to help employees stay on when they face problems?
- What problems do new employees face?

Appendix B - Information and Consent forms used in this study

a) General invitation for workers with an intellectual disability
b) General invitation for trainer/supervisors
c) Easy English information sheet for workers with an intellectual disability - page 1
d) Easy English information sheet for workers with an intellectual disability - page 2
e) Information sheet for trainer/supervisors
f) Consent form for Workers with an intellectual disability
g) Consent form for Trainer/Supervisors
h) Readability of letter. Information sheet and consent form for workers with an intellectual disability.

General Invitation for Workers with an intellectual disability

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences



game2WORK project

An invitation to help people, just like you, get and keep a job.

April 2008

Hello,

My name is Greg Carey. I have worked for many years trying to find ways of helping people with an intellectual disability get and keep a job.

I am interested in helping new workers like you get and stay in the job

You can help by being part of a small group to tell me about your experiences when you started work and your ideas about making things better.

I have some questions that I want to ask you about your feelings and behaviours at work.I will also ask the supervisors in your workplace. Your answers will help me find out what is important when you start work.

I have the permission from the staff and the University of South Australia to ask you these questions in a small group of 3 or 4.This should take about 1 hour.

The answers I get will help me work out how many people are having problems, what sort of problems they are and how we can make things better.

If you have any questions, please call 81218177 and I will be happy to answer them.

If you would like to be part of this group please fill in the consent form I have included, and put it in the envelope that is included.

Thank you for your time,

Greg Carey



If you don't like something about what I do or say you can make a complaint.

You or your helper can phone 08 83023118 and ask to speak to the Ethics Committee of the University of South Australia about the game2WORK project

General invitation for Trainer/Supervisors

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences

game2WORK project

April 2008

An invitation to help find out what makes workers with an intellectual disability become game to work.

Hi

I would like to invite you to be part of a group interview to discuss the issues that are faced by workers with an intellectual disability. Through this research I aim to find indicators that may help the preparation of workers with an intellectual disability so that they are able to maintain and flourish in employment.

I would like to draw on your experience as a trainer/supervisor to identify the aspects that are important for a worker with an intellectual disability entering the workforce.

I will be interviewing workers identified as having an intellectual disability who have successfully completed between six and 24 months of continuous work. As well I will be talking with those who have left employment before completing six months; this group will not include those with chronic health issues or where transport proved to be a major influence in their continuation.

The study is part of my PhD research into the factors that affect people with an intellectual disability gain and keep employment. This study has the support of the CEO and the Human Resources Department. The methodology used and questions to be asked have been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of South Australia.

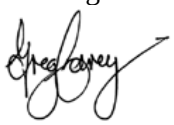
Your participation will be confidential and your name and any details likely to identify you in any publication or report will be removed.

I envisage it will take about one hour of your time.

If you have any questions, please call 81218177 and I will be happy to answer them.

If you are able to be part of a small discussion group, please complete the consent form I have included and use the envelope supplied.

Kind regards





Greg Carey

If you have any concerns about this project you can make a complaint to:

The Ethics Committee of the University of South Australia 08 83023118
This project is called game2WORK

Easy English Information Sheet for workers with an intellectual disability - page 1

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences

game2WORK project

Information sheet

(please keep this form)

I want to find out what you thought about when you started work for the very first time and how that has changed.

	I have some questions that I want to ask people and their supervisors about feelings and behaviours at work. The answers I get will help me to work out how many people are having problems, what sort of problems they are having and how we can make things better. I want to know these things because I am trying to find better ways of helping people to start work in the future. My study is called the "game to work project" because I am trying to find ways of helping people start work and do the things that help them keep their job.
	I can do this work because I am a student at the University of South Australia and they have checked that what I am doing will not hurt you.
	I want to ask you and your supervisors with some other people in a small group about what you do and how you feel at work. I am going to be asking the same questions to lots of people. It should take about 1 hour of your time. I will use a video camera to record the small group and keep the tape in a very secure place for 7 years.
	What you tell me is private, that is, it's just between you and me. What you or your supervisors tell me will only be seen by the people working on this project.

Easy English Information Sheet for workers with an intellectual disability - page 2

	Sometimes the things I find out might get written in a book or magazine. If this happens, I will take your name out so that it remains PRIVATE. No one will know that the answers to the questions were about you. After 7 years, I will destroy all the papers and videotape. Before that they will be kept in a very secure place.
	If you do not want to help with this project, that's OK. If you change your mind and don't want to finish the questions that I ask, that's OK. If you want to stop don't be frightened to say so.
	If you have any questions, please call Greg on 8121 8177 and I will be happy to answer them. My supervisor is Associate Professor Kathryn Moyle (phone 02 6201 5649)

You may keep this form.

Here is a picture of me, so you can see what I look like.
I have worked for many years trying to find ways of helping people with an intellectual disability get and keep a job.



Complaints



If you don't like something about what I do or say you can make a complaint.
Details how to do this are at the bottom of the Consent Form

Information Sheet for Trainer/Supervisors

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences

game2WORK project



Information sheet

If you have any questions, please call Greg on 8121 8177
and I will be happy to answer them.
My supervisor for this research is Associate Professor Kathryn Moyle (phone 02 6201 5649)

My study aims to find out what people who have an intellectual disability

- Thought about and how they behaved when they first started work
- How their thinking and behaviours have changed since then.

For some these thoughts and behaviours resulted in continuing employment. For others their thoughts and behaviours for whatever reason were not compatible with continuing employment.

I will be interviewing workers with an intellectual disability who have completed at least 6 of continuous employment

As trainer/supervisors your perspective about workplace behaviour and attitude will be invaluable in locating the employees understanding against your view of generalised workplace behaviours and attitudes.

The discussion should take no longer than an hour of your time and will be conducted in small groups of three or four trainer/supervisors.

The discussions will be confidential and any recordings of the group interviews will only be available to the researchers involved in this study.

All names will be removed and identifying comments will be coded and only available to the study team. The annotated transcript will be kept in a designated secure place within the University for 7 years, after which all data will be destroyed.

A video camera and a shotgun microphone will be used during the interviews, as they are much less intrusive, than a recording device on a desk. If you feel uncomfortable about this, then a normal tape recorder can be used or written notes only can be used.

At the end of this study an executive summary of the findings will be available for you if you wish (please indicate at the bottom of the consent form).

If you feel uncomfortable about any aspect of the study please ring me on 8121 8177.

Participation is purely voluntary and you are able to remove yourself at any time before or during the group interview.

If you don't like something about what I do or say you can make a complaint.

Consent form for workers with an intellectual disability



Consent Form

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences

UniSA

game2WORK project

If you have any questions please call Greg Carey (81218177)
Researcher: Greg Carey **Supervisor:** Associate Professor Kathryn Moyle

I understand that:

- What I talk about is private
- What I talk about will only be seen by people working on the game2WORK project.
- If the results are written in a book or magazine my name and anything that can identify me will be taken out.
- No one will know the answers to the questions that I give.
- A video will be taken of the interview and the group's answers will be written down without my name.
- The written answers without my name will be kept for 7 years in a safe place then destroyed. The videotape will be destroyed at the same time.
- I can change my mind anytime and stop answering the questions.
- If there is something I do not like then I can make a complaint



I will give you a copy of this consent form to keep

I consent to be videotaped during the group interviews. YES ❑ NO ❑

Would you like a copy of what I find out when I finish YES ❑ NO ❑

I consent to be a participant in the game2WORK project.

Name of Participant _____

Signed _____/2008 **Parent/guardian**_____/2008 (if applicable)



Complaints: If you don't like something about what I do or say you can make a complaint.

You or your helper can phone 08 8302 3118.
Ask to speak to the Secretary and tell him or her that you would like to talk about the **game2Work project**.

You could also write to the Secretary:
The Secretary, Ethics Committee (HREC),
University of South Australia, Mawson Lakes SA 5095

I have provided information about the research and believe he/she understands what is involved.
Researcher's signature _____

Consent form for Trainer/Supervisors

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences



game2WORKproject

Consent Form

If you have any questions please call Greg Carey (8121 8177)
Researcher: Greg Carey **Supervisor:** Associate Professor Kathryn Moyle

I understand that:

- What I talk about is confidential and will not be available to my employer.
- What I talk about will only be seen by researchers on the game2WORK project.
- If the results are published in a book or magazine my name and anything that can identify me will be removed.
- No one will know the answers to the questions that I give.
- A video will be taken of the interview and the group's answers will be transcribed without names.
- The written answers without my name will be kept for 7 years in a safe place within the University, and then destroyed. The videotape will be destroyed at the same time.
- I can change my mind at any time and not continue.
- If there is something I don't like, I can make a complaint (see box below)

Do you consent to be videotaped during the group interviews? YES ❑ NO ❑
You will receive a copy of this consent form before your group interview.
I consent to be a participant in the game2WORK project.

Name of Participant _____
Signed _____/2008

Complaints:
If you don't like something about what I do or say you can make a complaint.
You can phone 08 83023118 to talk about the "**game2Work project"**.
OR write to: The Secretary,
Ethics Committee (HREC)
University of South Australia
Mawson Lakes SA 5095

I have provided information about the research and believe he/she understands what is involved.

Researcher's signature _____

Readability of Letter. Information Sheet and Consent Form for workers with an intellectual disability.

To ensure understanding by participants, the Invitation Letter, Information Sheet and Consent Form were measured for readability and suitability using the Flesch Reading Ease scale and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level test as recommended by the University of South Australia Learning Connection, (2008) and checked for reliability against the SMOG Test of Readability (McLaughlin, 1969).

The aim was for the communication to be written so that it could be read and understood by a person having a functional reading age of a student around the upper limits of Primary School in Australia (grade 6 or 7).

For those whose functional reading is below this, the correspondence was structured so that it could be easy read to the potential participant and discussed with them by a parent/guardian.

Readability levels

Introductory Letter to workers with an intellectual disability:

Flesch Reading Ease Score = 72.4

Flesch-Kinkaid grade level = 7.4 (educational level approximately Grade 7 in Australia)

SMOG Analysis = 8.81 (educational level approximately Grade 6 or 7 in Australia)

These scores suggest that the readability and ease of understanding is in the acceptable range.

Information Sheet workers with an intellectual disability:

Flesch Reading Ease Score = 83.1

Flesch-Kinkaid grade level = 4.9 (educational level approximately Grade 4 in Australia)

Smog Analysis = 6.71 (educational level approximately Grade 4 or 5 in Australia)

These scores suggested that the readability and ease of understanding is in the acceptable range.

The Consent Form workers with an intellectual disability:

Flesch Reading Ease Score = 71.54

Flesch-Kinkaid grade level = 7.86 (educational level approximately Grade 7 in Australia)

Smog Analysis = 7.86 (educational level approximately Grade 5 or 6 in Australia)

These scores suggested that the readability and ease of understanding is in the acceptable range.

These scores suggested that the readability and ease of understanding for the Introductory Letter, Information Sheet, and the Consent Form for workers with an intellectual disability used in this study were suitable for potential participants with an intellectual disability.

Appendix C - Background of participants

a) Location of the study
b) Employees
c) Trainer/supervisors
d) The researcher

Location of the study

The supported workplace in this study was established early in the twentieth century by concerned citizens following a severe outbreak of an infectious disease in South Australia after the First World War. Initially it was a place of respite for victims of these diseases, but soon after the end of the Second World War the organisation changed its focus from respite to providing employment for those recovering from disease. Since the 1960s the organisation has expanded and now includes all forms of disability and has added recreational and day activities, training and life skills development, community housing and other support services to its charter. Participants in this study came from a number of divisions within the organisation.

The furniture division employs around 200 people with varying disabilities. The area is highly automated with large computer controlled machines that cut and drill the panels for the organisation's range of furniture sold through large nationwide retail groups. The sophisticated nature of the production process is controlled by a specialist technician and the employees with an intellectual disability are involved in collecting, packing and stacking the completed parts of the furniture from the automated machines. The high level of automation ensures constant high quality output and the ability to quickly reset the machinery for orders, guaranteeing a quick delivery time to customers. The major customers for this unit are a large national hardware supply chain and an associated large national retail furniture chain. This work division supplies cupboards, kitchen and laundry units to these customers in flat-packs to be assembled by the home owner. The contracts for the supply of these units are highly competitive and the quality of work and delivery schedule is paramount for return and ongoing contacts. No concessions are given (or expected) because the workers have a disability. Workers in this area tend to be recruited from other divisions of the organisation because of their ability to be consistent and reliable. The work skills and attitudes of an employee are considered more important by the organisation than the disability type when recruiting. Four workers from this area were interviewed.

The hospitality division is spread across the main worksite and the organisation's accommodation and associated day conference centre nearby. This division is under the direction of a catering manager with associated trainer/supervisors responsible

for smaller workgroups. The division's employees provide a fully catered canteen at the main worksite for the nearly 600 employees on that site and catering for residents and conference participants in the accommodation and conference centres. Around 15 people are employed in this division on the main worksite. Most employees with an intellectual disability in this area are classified as having a mild disability and are selected to work in this area because of their ability to perform routine procedures with less support and supervision than those usually in other areas such as packaging. One employee was interviewed from this area.

The packaging division employs some 360 people; the majority of these are recognised as having an intellectual disability as their primary category that was classified as mild to severe requiring ongoing supervision for safety and personal well-being. Many also have secondary health issues that impact on their lives. Like the furniture division, all contracts are subject to a highly competitive tendering process requiring the product to be delivered 'as ordered, on time and on budget'; no leniency in the quality of work is given by customers. Major clients include large airlines, toiletry companies and international wine labels. Many of the packaging processes are simplified and involve the use of shadow boards and jigs to ensure simplicity, accuracy and ease of operation for the workers. Seven workers from this area were interviewed.

The mail management unit is a small unit employing six employees with different disabilities. The two employees interviewed from this area are responsible for sorting incoming mail before delivery around the worksite. In the afternoon these employees collect mail from different areas on the main site and sort it into destination postcodes, ready to be taken to the local Post Office at the end of the day. Supervision was low key but all distribution was checked by the trainer/supervisor before delivery in the morning and in the afternoon outgoing mail was checked before being taken to the Post Office.

This organisation was selected as the focus for this study because of the high standards gained in governmental and independent audits of the business and service plans, gaining a prestigious 'Employer of the Year Award' against all local, national and international employers in South Australia. This success of this Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE) provided confidence that the location would be suitable

to examine the research question in this study. This study does not treat this organisation as representative, rather it was selected because of perceived good practice in work and human relations as recognised by Government and independent audits.

Employees

A total of 24 invitations to attend a small group interview were offered to those who expressed interest and met the criteria of receiving the Australian Disability support Pension with a primary classification of intellectual disability. Groups were arranged to fit in with responsibilities on the 'shop floor'. As a result 6 groups of 4 were planned. Absence and change of mind resulted in 3 groups of 4 participants, 1 group of 3 and 2 groups of single individuals.

This section describes the background and the interview of each worker with an intellectual disability who attended the small group interviews.

Group 1 (3 participants – 1 did not attend)

Participant E1a

Participant E1a was an 18 year-old female in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability. She was identified by her trainer as having severe communication difficulties as well as an intellectual disability. One of her trainers, not interviewed in this study, reported during identification of possible participants, that although able to hear and understand speech very well, her articulation severely limited her communication. During collection of the background data and the interview she indicated agreement or not with questions by nodding or shaking her head.

Background data

During the collection of background data she indicated she attended a special class in a local secondary high school.

She lived with her parents, and shook her head when asked if she met with the people she worked with outside of the workplace.

She worked in the packaging section of the organisation beginning work directly from school. She nodded when asked if she took part in work experience while still at school and indicated that the work experience was in the same areas she now works.

During the collection of background data she was unable to articulate her understanding of her disability. When given a number of options by the interviewer she indicated by nodding in agreement to the statement that her disability made it difficult for her in the workplace.

She indicated she is given some help through support agencies, nodding or shaking her head to indicate the names of the agencies who supported her. She also agreed by nodding that she would like a little more help from them.

The interview

During the interview she nodded or shook her head in agreement or disagreement with what was being said by others in the group. She appeared to follow the interview questions and the answers given by other members of the group. Direct questions to her were answered with attempt at speech accompanied by head and body gestures.

In most cases she answered with a yes or no responses to the questions asked by the interviewer or to comments from other participants by nodding or shaking her head. She made animated responses to other members of the group, making sure her 'comments' were noted by the interviewer by making a noise until the interviewer acknowledge that she had something to add.

To each of her gestures and responses the interviewer checked with her to ensure that her intention was clear for the transcript. Using this approach, the interviewer ensured the response was her considered opinion rather than simply echoing of the others in the group.

Participant E1b

Participant E1b was a 21 year-old female in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data

During the collection of background data she reported she attended a disabilities unit in a private Adelaide school.

She lived with her parents and indicated that she does not meet with any of the people she works with outside of work time.

She said she worked in the mail management section of the organisation and started about three years before, entering directly from school, after taking part in school work experience at local supermarkets, stacking and packing shelves.

She described her disability as 'learning difficulties' and was unsure about how it affected her in the workplace. She received some help through the organisation's

support systems and indicated that she needed more help both at home and in the job.

The interview
During the interview she sat back, listening intently to the others, only giving responses when directly asked. She took a little time to process the question, compose her answer, suggesting to the interviewer she considered and reflected on each of the questions asked.

Participant E1c

Participant E1c was a 22 year-old female in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data she reported that she began working in this industry less than a year before and previously worked for another supported industry in Adelaide. She said her family were very keen on her transferring because this organisation provided an opportunity for her to live in supported accommodation and the possibility of moving into independent living accommodation later (A condition of residency in these accommodation options is employment within the organisation).

She works in the office section of the organisation and indicated that she often meets the people from her workplace for socially and recreational activities that are organised within the supported residence. She believed she was given a great deal of help in her accommodation through the organisation's support systems, but felt she needed more help in doing her job.

She described her disability as “global something”, indicating an awareness of the problems, but was unsure about how it affected her in the workplace.

The interview
During the interview she was lively and chatty, displaying some nervous characteristics and giggled a little each time she spoke.

Group 2 (4 participants – all attended)

Participant E2a

Participant E2a was a 39 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data he reported that he had been working in the packaging area of the organisation for just over 18 months. Previously he sold newspapers.

He attended a suburban special school and lived independently close to the worksite.

He perceived his disability as affecting his moods and control of his anger and took medication to help keep him calm. He reported being tired in the morning and sometimes needing to take a later bus to work and was often late. He reported his Personnel Officer was helping him work through this problem.

He identified the organisations support services as the main group that helped him, saying that he felt he was getting all the help he needed to live independently, including having his meals delivered to him in the evening.

The interview
During the interview he appeared relatively confident but offered no eye contact or direct answers without being prompted or asked directly by the interviewer. He appeared to follow the conversation and often nodded in approval when others mentioned something he agreed with.

His input was limited but he appeared to understand the questions and his responses reflected the conversation at the time.

Participant E2b

Participant E2b was a 21 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data he reported he had been working at organisation for two years. He attended a Disability Unit in an outer suburban High School during his schooling, and entered the packaging area directly from school. At school he did work experience at a Nursing Home.

He lived in supported accommodation in a residential unit associated with the organisation. He described the staff of the residential unit as being his greatest help in living away from home and believed they gave him a lot of help. But he saw he needed more help with money and organising his medication.

He described his disability as “seizures” and “having problem with his anger”, but felt that it was under control through medication.

The interview
During the interview he appeared interested and offered comments. He appeared to give considered opinions, but sometimes appeared swayed by the comments of others and the interviewer found it necessary to directly ask a supplementary question(s) in order to ensure his responses were considered and reflective of his own response.

Participant E2c

Participant E2c was a 21 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data he reported he had been working in the furniture construction area for one year. He attended a Disability Unit at school and lived with his parents, about a 30 minute bus ride to work.

At school he did work experience at a local supermarket and as a kitchen hand at a nearby café run by a group supporting people with special needs. As part of this work preparation at school he attended a South Australian Education Department Work Training program.

He described his disability as being 'intellectually disabled' and said the disability as causing trouble handling his anger. He says he was supported by his work supervisors and personnel officer who give him a great deal of help.

The interview
During the interview he appeared attentive, listening very carefully to other participants. He considered his answers to each question asked but did appear to be swayed by some comments from the other participants. At these times the interviewer asked supplementary questions to clarify the responses.

Participant E2d

Participant E2d was a 20 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data he reported he had been working for two years in the furniture construction area. He attended a Disability Unit at school and did work experience in another supported workplace in their packaging area. He says he did not attend an educational work training program while at school.

He lived nearby with his parents, walking about 10 minutes to work each day.

He was unsure of his disability but thought it was an "intellectual problem, possibly Asperger's". He was unsure of his needs but was confident that it affects his speech and spelling. He identified that support from his workplace supervisors and personnel officers was very important.

The interview
During the interview he appeared to follow the other participants unless directly asked a question.

Group 3 (1 participant – 3 did not attend)

Participant E3a

Participant E3a was a 42 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
From the beginning of the interview E3a demonstrated he experienced major communications difficulties.

During the collection of background data he reported he had been working in the Packaging are for about four years after the closure of his previous highly supported workplace outside this organisation, where he did cleaning and gardening.

He attended an Independent Special School that is located on a campus that he said had no connection or interactions with mainstream students. During his schooling he did work experience in a number of Aged Care facilities. He indicated he did not attend a specialised work education program while at school.

He lived in supported accommodation with a great deal of support and identified he had support from his supervisor and personnel officer, a care worker and support worker. He believed this support was "good" and "about right" for what he perceived as his needs.

He described his disability as "Intellectual" and was sure it did not affect his work in anyway.

The interview
No other invited participants attended the interview. Despite repeating and rephrasing a number of questions it was clear to the interviewer that the answers were not aligning to the questions asked.

The interview was terminated after 15 minutes and the data collected omitted from the study.

Group 4 (4 participants – all attended)

Participant E4b

Participant E4b was a 20 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data he reported he attended a Disability Unit co-located in a large suburban High School. He remembered doing work experience at school within the organisation he worked. From his responses it appears he only undertook work experience at the one site and was offered a placement from that placement.

He entered the workforce directly from school and has been working in the hospitality area for about a year. In that time he worked mainly at another site catering for conferences, but transferred to the large lunchroom at the main campus because of bus timetable changes that meant he could not being work on time at the old site.

He lived at home with his parents, a 40 minute bus ride from his employment.

He was not able to describe his disability, but said he had some problems and felt the organisation supported his problems well.

The interview
During the interview he answered the questions put to him directly, often nodding in agreement with comments from other participants.

Participant E4c

Participant E4c was a 22 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data he reported he entered the packaging area directly from school. He attended a Disability Unit attached to a small suburban High School and did not recall participating in any work experience or work readiness program(even though this is an integral part of the curriculum in the Disability Unit he attended).He lived with his parents close to the workplace.

He understood he had “Asperger’s Syndrome” and “intellectually my brain’s a little slower and takes a little longer to think”.

He reported his only involvement with support agencies were the connection with his employing organisation. He thought he needed a lot of help and needed more help to do his best.

The interview
During the interview he answered the questions directly put to him and appeared interested, often nodded or said "yes" as others were answering.

Participant E4d

Participant E4d was a 33 year-old female in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data she reported she had recently joined the organisation in the packaging area. She said she had previously worked for another supported employment organisation in the house cleaning division. She indicated that the change of organisations was so she could move into a self-contained unit supplied by this organisation, with a number of other workers.

At school she was in a District Special Class and took part in some selected mainstream subjects and undertook a work experience program at two supported employment sites.

She received support from within the organisation through the residential support units and although she said she still needed a "little bit of help" she was gradually "getting there" with the support she had.

She described her disability as "Chromosome 16, or something" and said she found it hard to concentrate and became tired easily.

The interview
During the interview she was outgoing and "not at all fussed that I'm the only girl". She spoke up, often adding to the comments made by others or nodding in agreement.

Group 5 (4 participants – all attended)

Participant E5a

Participant E5a was a 19 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data he reported he had recently joined the workforce directly from school. He attended a large Disability Unit attached to an outer suburban High School. While at school he undertook work experience in a number of extended family businesses but was guided into a supported workplace by members of the extended family.

He lived with his parents and had a 45 minute bus trip to and from work.

He identified as having Aboriginal heritage and was supported by an ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission) team Counsellor as well as the local Health Support team and the organisation's support team. He believed he received reasonable help from these groups but needed more help.

He described his disability in terms of difficulty remembering things, but it didn't bother him, although he said he did have problems reading and using a measuring tape.

The interview
During the interview he initially only answered the questions that were directed to him, but as the small group interview continued he added small comments or nodded in agreement to the comments made by the other participant.

Participant E5c

Participant E5c was a 37 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data he reported he had been with the organisation for just over two years. He attended an outer suburb Disability Unit attached to a large High School and could not remember doing any work experience while at school. He remembered being at home for "sometime" before he started work.

Before joining this organisation he said he worked for "more than 10 years" with a small supported work organisation that specialised in house cleaning and car detailing. (This business ceased operations when a change in Government policy cut funding and arranged for the transfer employees to this organisation.)

He lived with his parents, a short bus trip away from the organisation,

He was unable to describe his disability, but knew that he had high needs and needed a lot of help from the organisation.

The interview
During the interview he was outgoing and willingly answered all the questions asked directly to him. As well he often added his own comments to the other participant's replies.

Participant E5d

Participant E5d was a 32 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data he reported he had been working for more than 5 years at another supported employment agency that had closed.

He attended a special class located a medium size suburban high school and cannot remember taking part in work experience or a work education program.

He lived at home with his parents a 30 minute bus ride from work. He said that he and his family used the organisations support services and recreation groups. He reported his support needs were high but believed the support offered by the organisation is 'about right'.

He identified as having Downs Syndrome but did not think it had an effect on his work in packaging.

The interview
During the interview he appeared interested and often nodded at comments from the other participants. He answered the questions with a little hesitation, but appeared to consider his answer before he spoke.

Participant E5e

Participant E5e was a 24 year-old male in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

Background data
During the collection of background data he reported he worked in the organisation for about one year.

He attended a disability unit collocated in a small suburban high school, and did not remember taking part in a work experience program in the latter years of his schooling. However, while at school he remembers undertaking work experience, collecting shopping trolleys and stacking shelves in a local supermarket. He worked in the packaging section of the organisation

He lived with his parents at home a short bus trip from the worksite.

He reported having an intellectual disability and trouble with reading, writing and maths, but did not see it as having an impact on his work in the furniture area.

He remembered he needed a lot of support when he started working from the organisations support services and felt he "could do with a little more now".

The interview
During the interview he answered the questions directed to him in a slow considered manner, but he had little interaction with the other participants.

Group 6 (1 participant – 3 did not attend)

Participant E6c

Participant E6c is in receipt of the Australian Disability Support Pension, with a primary identification as intellectual disability.

E6c was the only participant to come to the room. He arrived late and was agitated. He was asked a few background questions but continued to appear upset. He was thanked and the interviewer walked back with him to the work unit where he seemed much more settled and happy to go back to work.

From the conversation on the way back it appeared he thought he should be back working rather than talking to someone while the others were working.

His data was omitted from the study.

Summary

From the 24 invitations offered, 16 participants attended six different small groups. In two groups, only one participant attended at the time set. In both cases the interviewer attempted a one on one interview but both were abandoned because the interviewer decided that the information collected was not representing a considered answer to the questions asked. The data collected from these two participants was not included in this study.

Trainer/supervisors

A general invitation to be involved in the study was posted in a general bulletin to all trainer/supervisors on the site of potential participants with an intellectual disability. Four trainer/supervisors indicated a willingness to participate and were interviewed, Due to time constraints and availability two trainer/supervisors were interviewed together in a small group and the other two in individual interviews.

About the trainer/supervisors

The trainer/supervisors in production roles work on the 'shop floor' directly with employees and are expected to train employees so that production targets are met. Many of these trainer/supervisors are the first contact for the support of employees in wider issues beyond production. Two trainer/supervisors (T2 and T3) worked directly with employees in the production area. Each had considerable experience working outside the disability area before they joined the organisation. While their employment background was diverse both had been in supervisory roles before joining the organisation. Both T2 and T3 apart from their trade qualifications have completed Certificated III and IV in Disability Work through the local vocational system (TAFE).

T2 (female, aged 41-50) is 30 Supervisor/Manager of the Cleaning Team at the main worksite. She has been involved in the disability area for less than five years, but has completed Certificate III and IV in Disability Work. Before entering the disability's service area she worked as a veterinary nurse then for many years in the cleaning industry.

T3 (male, aged 41-50) is a Personnel and Training Officer with seven years' experience in the disability field. He has TAFE qualifications in the trade area of automotive mechanics. He works in the property and garden maintenance division, based about 15 km from the main worksite. The property and garden maintenance division is a separate arm of the supported employment organisation, often catering for the more able employees who have a mild intellectual disability and are able to operate independently in some areas.

Trainer/supervisors who are in support roles do not work on the 'shop floor' but provide a variety of services to employees in areas outside of production. While conventional Human Relations issues are part of the role, the demands on these support services are more diverse as the organisation meets it obligations to a workforce with a disability. Two trainer supervisors in this role volunteered to be interviewed (T1 and T4).

T1 (female, aged 41-50) is a very experienced senior organisational psychologist based at the main worksite and has been working in the field of disability for nearly 25 years. She is had oversight of personnel and training officers and overview of the recruitment of new employees. She has a Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Applied

Psychology, Graduate Diploma Psychology, Graduate Diploma Social Science: Educational Counselling, Graduate Diploma Social Science: Health Counselling. Before joining the supported employment industry she worked as a pharmacy assistant and occasional carer in the disability field.

T4 (female, aged 31-40) has been employed in the Disability Services area for more than 7 years, after completing a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) and a Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management. Her managerial position oversees Housing, Day Options, Employment Services, Training, Occupational Health and Safety, and Quality Assurance. Before working for this supported employment business she worked in the Hospitality and Human Resources industry.

The researcher

The researcher in this study has more than thirty years' experience as a teacher of students with learning difficulties and intellectual disability. He has a long association with this organisation and a long established relationships with many of the employees, having taught them at school often helping them transition into the organisation when they left school. Other employees and trainer/supervisors were used to seeing him around the workplace during organised tours, accompanying local and international visitors. However, with this in mind the researcher was very careful not to involve the organisation in the study. So, apart from an initial letter of support for the University Ethics Committee and the at-arms-length logistic support provided by an unknown member of the organisation who collected and checked the consent forms to ensure volunteers met the recruitment criteria, no further discussion or correspondence occurred during the study.

The organisation provided a convenient location and appropriate rooms for the interviews to take place with no interference. The only additional input was delivering communication about the information sessions and interview times and informing volunteer participants they were free to take part in the research during working hours at a time convenient to the researcher.

Before the recruitment of participants the researcher attended a number of 'employee voice meetings'. At these bi-monthly employee meetings where employees and the managers of each division gave reports about activities, occupational health and safety issues and discussed any problems that had been raised during preliminary employee meetings in each division.

Each section report given by an employee was taken very seriously by the management team and action plans established to deal with any issues raised by the workers in that section. The problems of those with an intellectual disability and/or communication difficulties were evident in the employee forum. Many did not have the skills to present their case in a public forum. To practice the skills to present at a forum, the organisation provides small sectional meetings where the employee representative was able to tell their fellow workers what happened at the last meeting and ask what issues they would like to be raised at the next meeting. The worksite representatives work with the trainer/supervisor to ensure accurate information was given and the representatives are given training to be able to present the issues raised by their workmates.

The long experience of the researcher in working with people with disabilities and involvement and understanding of the organisation assisted in the recruitment of participants and the conducting of interviews. The experience of a long association with people with intellectual disability allowed the researcher to establish rapport with the workers with an intellectual disability interviewed and encouraged a number to become involved in the study. The researcher's long experience was also valuable

in identifying times when answers did not match the questions asked, restatement and further questions assisted the interviewees to focus. The trainer/supervisors who agreed to participate identified the researcher as a regular visitor and appeared comfortable and expressed confidence that the data would be treated sensitively and in confidence by the interviewer, while the organisation was confident the process would be carried out professionally and independently.