

TUTORSHIP AS A CONDITION OF VOCATIONAL INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

AUTHORS' DATA

Tatyana Makarova, PhD in Psychology

Chief specialist at the Institute of Medical and Biological Technologies

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Russian Federation

Contacts: makarova-ty@list.ru

Iuliia Melnik, PhD. in Pedagogy,

Lead specialist at the Center for the Development of Regional Systems

Inclusive Vocational Education, State Institute of New Learning Modes, Russian Federation

Contacts: melnik_stav@mail.ru

ABSTRACT

The process of supported employment for people with disabilities is described in the article. Tutor and assisted support are considered as one of the conditions of professional inclusion of disabled people. The necessity of full-time employment of tutors and assistants at enterprises is justified. The psychological and pedagogical characteristics of the foundations of such activities as well as promising techniques for the specialists when constructing activities for organizing tutorship and other types of support for people with disabilities during the process of promoting their employment have been proposed.

Keywords: people with disabilities, tutorship, proximity, supported employment, vocational inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Every year, both globally and in the Russian Federation, the number of people with disabilities is increasing. Such tendency may be explained by demographic trends and an increase in the number of chronic diseases.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 1 billion people (about 15% of the world population) have some form of disability (WHO, 2021). According to the data on January 1, 2020 (FSSS,2021a) there are 11,875 thousand persons with disabilities in the Russian Federation. 3,456 thousand of them are of working age (2,157 thousand men and 1,299 thousand women) Considering the total number of citizens of the Russian Federation (82,678 thousand people), the persons with disabilities of working age amount to 4% (FSSS,2021b).

Citizens' employment is an essential issue that directly influences the economic development of the country. In this situation work of people with disabilities assumes special political, economic, social, and psychological importance, thus facilitating personality's self-

fulfillment, eliminating community stigmatization and discrimination, improving the financial situation of people with disabilities and their families.

In this regard, an issue of creating conditions for people with disabilities of various nosological groups arises.

Professional development of a person starts with the process of choosing the future profession and continues during the stages of professional education, establishment as a specialist, and further expertise development. Support and assistance for persons with disabilities are essential at all these stages.

One of the trends in the promotion of employment for disabled people today is supported employment. According to the Law of the Russian Federation No. 1032-1 "About employment of the population in the Russian Federation" dated 04/19/1991 (as revised on 12/08/2020), during the process of promotion of disabled people employment, special attention should be paid to their support. Herewith the "support for promoting the employment of a disabled person means individual assistance to an unemployed disabled person in his/her employment, the creation of conditions for him/her to work and accelerate his/her professional adaptation at the workplace, and the formation of a route to the place of work and back home and on the territory of the employer."

Such support may be provided by population employment services. Assistance in traveling to/from the place of work may be provided by non-public organizations.

The aforementioned law states that "the employer with the consent of some employees may appoint mentors, who will provide support for the promotion of the employment of a disabled person by: 1) assisting him/her in mastering his/her job duties; 2) making proposals to the employer on issues related to creating conditions for a disabled person to access the workplace and with additional equipment for his/her workplace."

In our opinion, in addition to the indicated areas of support, the provision of tutor support and assistance for people with disabilities in the process of fulfilling professional tasks, the tasks of which are significantly different from the functions of mentors, is of particular functional importance. Our study aims to analyze the basic directions of such assistance in the working process at enterprises.

EXISTING CHALLENGES

After ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012, the Russian Federation assumed obligations to provide disabled people with all their rights. Some principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities include respect for the inherent dignity of persons, their personal autonomy, including the freedom to make their own choices, and independence; non-discrimination; full and effective involvement and inclusion into the community; equal opportunities; accessibility, etc (UN CRPD, 2006). However, as the preamble of the mentioned Convention says "disabled people continue to face barriers in their participation as equal members of society and violations of their human rights in all parts of the world".

Unfortunately, in terms of realizing the right to work and having just and favorable conditions of work, not all requirements of the aforementioned Convention are met. Oftentimes, at different pretexts, employers do not hire people with disabilities, limit their rights, and make some types of inaccessibility for work due to the physical inadaptability of people with disabilities for various types of activities.

Employers often refuse to hire disabled people because of the absence of knowledge and skills in communicating with this category of citizens. The employers do not want to understand the problems of people with disabilities and create for them the required conditions of work considering special equipment for the workplace, the required free space, work reduction or special work schedule, etc. These things play a key role in the employment of this category of the population.

A person with a disability has several psychological factors reflecting his/her position on the employment market and forming his/her attitude to the community. Disabled people belong to the category of people with limited mobility and are the least protected as well as the most vulnerable part of society. First of all, it is associated with the defects of their physical condition, caused by diseases that resulted in a disability. Psychological problems arise in the case of isolation of disabled people from the real world due to the existing illnesses and as a result of their inadaptability to the environment. The absence of specialized equipment for disabled people and the breakage of day-to-day communication play a key role.

While the absence of supported employment of people with disabilities and health limited abilities in different regions of the Russian Federation just aggravates the situation.

PROBLEM SOLVING

To increase the efficiency of promotion of employment of people with disabilities, it needs to work both with disabled people themselves and employers on improving their knowledge in the field of communication and creation of conditions for persons with disabilities of various nosological groups. Full-time employment of tutors and assistants to provide technical assistance for persons with disabilities and health-limited abilities will significantly increase the efficiency of employment of this category of citizens and allow providing them with favorable work conditions.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL BASES OF WORKING

Issues of inclusion of persons with disabilities are deeply studied both by modern foreign and Russian scientists and are reflected in the existing psychological and pedagogical theory and practice.

The modern understanding of inclusion is based on the belief in the advisability and possibility of joint learning/activities if the necessary support and assistance are provided. The group of researchers (Nevzorov, Zaguzina & Bokov, 2016) determine the continuity of the implementation of inclusive practices as a central condition for obtaining a quality education

and ensuring further opportunities for the effective implementation of the labor potential of people with psychophysiological disorders (Nevzorov, Zaguzina, Bokov, 2017, pp. 29-30).

Many researchers consider the inclusion problem through the lens of changing the attitude to people with disabilities. Typically, the problem of forming a positive attitude towards “others” has been developed in the field of optimizing interethnic interaction. The scientific literature often defines the positive attitude as "tolerance". The meaning of this term is usually interpreted as "conciliation" and "toleration" but not as "acceptance". In our opinion, the most adequate term to describe the essence of “acceptance” of the “other” is the term “proximity” (Rayfshnyder (Makarova), 2015. pp. 972-973).

Modern researchers in the tutorship are based on a description of its functions in the educational field and describe the main strategies of a tutor's activities to involve students with special educational needs in educational activities. Thus, for example, D.O Doherty, H. Mc Keague and other researchers point to close coordination of the tutor's work when supporting students with disabilities, where the support specialist does not offer ready-made solutions but creates the necessary prerequisites for conscious and independent work, achieved through the active student involvement in search and dialogue activities to address psychological, pedagogical and social difficulties (Doherty, Mc Keague, Harney, Browne & McGrath, 2018). While developing the idea of the continuity of the provision of support services in various fields of the life of an individual with exceptionalities, M. Grove and T. Croft justify the need for tutor support at the stage of obtaining postgraduate education by a disabled person and his/her further professional development (Grove & Croft, 2019, pp. 229-234).

In addition to this, in E. Zappella's opinion, an initiative to provide information and psychosocial assistance to a person with a disability during his/her initial employment is a key factor in the adequate adaptation and high-quality socialization of such an employee in a new place, which, in turn, contributes to the achievement of cognitive flexibility in the performance of his/her job functions and the development of a creative and analytical approach to solving non-standard work tasks (Zappella, 2017, pp. 217-219). This is another task of the tutor support.

In our opinion, such understanding of the continuity of a disabled person's support contributes to the effective educational and further work socialization of a person with psychophysiological disorders and the formation of successful life paths in general. At the same time, we consider it advisable to describe certain techniques of tutoring that can be used in the process of supported employment of an employee with a disability, and during the full-time employment of labor tutor at enterprises to provide the disabled person with the necessary assistance in performing professional functions:

- the technique of continued duality, when the various specialists, including an assistant and a tutor, provide support for exceptional students both directly during the educational process and in the course of practical training within the educational process to reinforce the necessary production skills;

- the technique of reliance on multiple intelligences, when a tutor, having psychological and pedagogical professional competencies, builds a system for providing support in the workplace, taking into account the psychophysiological and personal characteristics of an employee with a disability;
- the technique of constructing a personal life path, which implies the fundamental possibility of developing multiple positive life scenarios for any person, regardless of any present health disorders and social position, but which is in direct interrelation with the person's desires, preferences and leading motives of activity;
- the technique of exposure associated with the conscious immersion of a disabled person in an initially not completely comfortable environment in order to develop the necessary skills of adaptability, stress resistance, and independence when solving various difficulties at the workplace or during the course of study;
- the technique of conductive influence, which involves the work of a labor tutor or other specialist in the field of education through the closed social environment of a person with a disability;
- the technique of positive normalization of exceptionality, focused on the creation by a tutor together with a psychologist of acceptance of any types of exceptionality both of the person with special needs and of employers, teachers, and the broader society in general;
- the technique of providing an alternative choice, associated with the creation by the tutor of multiple variabilities of decision-making by a disabled person, which contributes to the formation of integral and logically-based thinking both in educational and work activities;
- the technique of resistive dialectics, characterized by the stable support of the tutor when the disabled person him/herself or his/her closed social environment refuses from the stagnant system of views and stigmatizing attitudes;
- the technique of predictive design, expressed in the joint development by a tutor and a disabled person of the path for the implementation of his/her labor activity, both in the direct performance of job functions and in the context of broader prospects.

The listed tools of tutor activities will allow creating the needed prerequisites for employees with disabilities solving various challenges in their labor activities, including at the stage of their transition from direct educational activities to the employment process and successful functioning at their workplaces.

CONCLUSIONS

In the conditions of economic development of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, the problem of employment of persons with disabilities and health limited abilities is emphasized quite sharply. The process of promotion of employment of persons with disabilities involves organizations of different institutions (employment services, professional educational organizations), non-commercial organizations, etc. Currently, these activities are

limited only by the process of employment and support of disabled people at the first stage of their work. These are clearly not enough. The data show that often employees with disabilities quit the job immediately after the probation period or before the end of the 6-month period because they can not perform their job functions or the enterprise lacks the required conditions.

Full-time employment of tutors and assistants at enterprises can help increase the efficiency of the supported employment process and create conditions for employees with disabilities to perform their job functions throughout their work at the enterprise. The tutor functions include help in explaining the work assignments, assistance in professional development, organization of a high-quality support process using psychological and pedagogical techniques, etc. The assistant's main tasks are to provide technical assistance in the performance of job functions, movement in the building, on the territory of the enterprise, and on the way from home to work and back.

The formation of the practice of professional inclusion of disabled people through the organization of tutors and assistive support makes it possible to ensure a comprehensive personal fulfillment of an employee with a disability, and not only to positively influence political, economic, social, and psychological processes but also to create the foundation for the development of civil society in general.

REFERENCE LIST

1. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), 2006.
2. FSSS, 2021a. Data from the website of the Federal State Statistics Service - URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/13964> (reference date 02/24/2021).
3. FSSS, 2021b. Data from the website of the Federal State Statistics Service - URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/12781> (reference date 02/24/2021).
4. Doherty, D.O., Mc Keague, H., Harney, S., Browne, G., & McGrath, D. (2018). What Can We Learn from Problem-Based Learning Tutors at a Graduate Entry Medical School? A Mixed-Method Approach. *BMC Medical Education*, 18 (96). Retrieved February 22, 2021, from: <https://bmcmmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12909-018-1214-2>.
5. Grove M., & Croft T. (2019). Learning to Be a Postgraduate Tutor in a Mathematics Support Centre. *International Journal of Research in Undergraduate Mathematics Education*.
6. Law of the Russian Federation No. 1032-1 "About employment of the population in the Russian Federation" dated 04/19/1991 (as completed and amended on 12/08/2020) - URL: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_60/ (reference date 02/24/2021).
7. Nevzorov B.P., Zaguzina N.N., Bokov A.V. (2017). Nepreryvnost' kak osnova kachestva inklyuzivnogo obrazovaniya (Continuity as the foundation of quality inclusive education, in Russian). *Vestnik Kemerovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Seriya "Gumanitarnye i obshchestvennye nauki"*. №3. = Bulletin of the

- Kemerovo State University. Series "Humanities and Social Sciences", in Russian. No. 3.
8. Rayfshnayder (Makarova) T.Y. (2015). Formation of proximal attitude towards people living with HIV in the education system of the Russian Federation. / BBRA - Biosciences, Biotechnology Research Asia (India, ISSN 0973-1245, SCOPUS), Vol. 12(1) – P. 965-974.
 9. Zappella E. (2017). Workplace Inclusion for Workers with Disabilities: An Italian Experience. In F. Dovigo (Ed.). Studies in Inclusive Education: Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices. An International Perspective. The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
 10. WHO, 2021. Disability and Health//World Health Organization - URL: <https://www.who.int/ru/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health> (reference date 02/24/2021).

Copyright © 2022 Published by Khachatur Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University & the Authors

The article submitted and sent to review: 15.09.2021

Accepted for publication: 27.01.2022