

People with intellectual disability continue to experience high rates of unemployment. Even when employed they experience lack of career progression and lower rates of pay. Research suggests that inadequate training is a factor that contributes to persistently high rates of unemployment and underemployment for those with disability. Therefore, vocational training staff equipped with expertise in training strategies to assist those with intellectual disability to gain and maintain employment is imperative. However, there is limited understanding of quantity and quality of on-the-job training provided to employees with intellectual disability and the factors that influence the provision of on-the-job training provided by disability vocational trainers. The aims for the study were:

1. To determine the nature and extent of the provision of on-the-job training for employees with intellectual disability receiving services from Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs previously referred to as sheltered employment) and Open employment (commonly referred to as jobs in mainstream employment).
2. To obtain views and perceptions regarding on-the-job training in Australian Disability Employment Services from staff and employees with intellectual disability.
3. To determine training strategies being taught in the Disability Certificates III & IV.

The study gathered data from vocational trainers (staff) working in ADEs and Open employment and employees with intellectual disability working in ADEs and lecturers providing the training to vocational trainers.

Using 'Job Performance' Theory as the basis, this study used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. Aims were addressed in three separate phases (1) the pilot study (2) main study (data collection) and (3) main study (data analysis). The main study was conducted in three stages. Firstly, a questionnaire was completed by vocational trainers (staff) working in nine disability employment services in two states of Australia (South Australia and New South Wales). The questionnaire examined staff use of 19 strategies known to assist

people with intellectual disability to gain and maintain employment. Forty-eight questionnaire responses were analysed using descriptive analysis. Secondly, interviews were conducted with 11 staff, about their use of these strategies, and with 15 employees with intellectual disability regarding their views and perspectives of training received. The training plans of the employees with intellectual disability were also analysed. Lastly, three lecturers from a tertiary education setting were interviewed concerning how they taught the training strategies to vocational trainers.

Staff questionnaire findings indicated that the most utilised training strategy was 'show and tell.' Staff interviews revealed that staff did not know how to utilise most training strategies presented in this study in line with literature recommendations. Interviews with employees with disabilities highlighted their desire for further training opportunities. Employees Individual Training Plans (ITPs) indicated, training provided predominantly focussed on requirements to obtain funding certification from the government. TAFE (Technical and Further Education)/RTO (Registered Training Organisations) lecturers working in tertiary education delivering Disability III and IV qualifications revealed during interviews that the training strategies examined in this study may not be taught adequately.

Overall findings indicated that vocational trainers do not utilise the majority of the training strategies because of preconceived ideas about employees' abilities, lack of experience in utilising the strategies and competing business and funding demands.

These findings provide implications for practice and policy on the factors that influence the provision of on-the-job training by disability vocational trainers. Further research with a greater number of participants is recommended.