

## QUATSEE ON LINE COURSE OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

### LESSON 9

#### 4th STAGE OF S.E.: ON/OFF THE JOB SUPPORT- TRAINING AND NATURAL SUPPORT.

##### OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, you should:

- Have knowledge of the systematic instruction, and its processes and technical tools.
- Be able to perform on your own the analysis of the task.
- Know what is natural support.
- Know when and how the job coach must begin the fading of the workplace.

##### Introduction

We have reached the technical phase of supported employment, the phase that applies technical procedures and support tools that have proven to be effective for learning the characteristics of job tasks and duties so that people with diverse abilities can keep their jobs over time. We must not forget that these people with significant support needs, systematically are left out of the selection processes and recruitment of staff to work in the open labour market. Historically it had happened like this, until *supported employment* appeared. Perhaps this is happening nowadays in our environment, if supported employment has not fully entered as a system of choice for the labour inclusion of people with significant disabilities and other groups.

Fortunately, over the past five decades, supported employment has accumulated the necessary experimental evidence that significantly supports the effectiveness of its technologies and procedures to ensure a competitive job in the ordinary market for people who are generally gathered in sheltered workshops or in special employment centers.

One of the merits of "supported employment" is that inverted the terms of the traditional paradigm (*first train then place*), because it was not good to get a job for certain groups. Thus it proclaimed "*first place then train*", obtaining very good results in actual job, for groups traditionally marginalized from the regular working system.

This lesson deals precisely with training in the workplace, the techniques and procedures to use, for people with significant disabilities to execute the tasks of the job and to integrate with quality into the human team of the contracting company.

It should be noted that the supported employment do not always include the presence of the instructor or job coach in the workplace. For certain groups, for instance, mentally ill, deaf, or other groups from a disadvantaged situation, it is not necessary his/her continued presence in the workplace, indeed, it might even be not recommended. Therefore, with these other groups, goals and intervention procedures of this phase change substantially (read the *How to Guide n° 4 of EUSE Toolkit for Diversity, 2014, On and Off the Job Support*).

In this phase, we will focus mainly on the technical training procedures and strategies to use for people starting work experience can learn to do well their work, approach in their production to the company standard, get a good level of social inclusion and maintain, thus, their job to everyone's satisfaction.

You may apply the same technologies and tools with your real person of reference you accompany and who is already working in a company of his/her environment, thanks to your previous interventions and efforts.

Some services or programmes of supported employment in Europe, especially if they are addressed to people with intellectual disabilities, start with a period of work experience prior to the employment contract. Generally, this period of internship does not involve remuneration, although it may involve some gratification by the entrepreneur, who recognizes the efforts made by the training worker. Some entities formalize this relationship using a "training agreement" signed by the company and the entity providing support services, in which the basic criteria governing this training period are present: a) specification of a job, b) limitation in time (no more than three months), c) learning plan, d) commitment to hiring, if the candidate performs well his/her tasks, etc.

This way of entering in the labour market has been accepted by the EUSE as respecting the values and principles of supported employment, if we tie up loose ends well and if brief practices end up in an employment contract. But what is not acceptable is that the work experience is extended indefinitely in time, and after a year of practices, for example, the employer did not hire workers citing lack of productivity or any other pretext. We know that, by definition, one of the fundamental elements of supported employment is that there is an employment contract and a salary agreement by category and, therefore, starting with a long period of practices without remuneration and without ending in contract, would not be supported employment but something very close to the exploitation or charity, something to be avoided, when talking about *employment*.

Whether it starts with an internship, or with a labour contract, we should remember that every contract includes an initial evaluation period, what is common to both pathways is that now a training phase is going to start in the workplace, in which the professional, the job coach, must demonstrate some *technical competences* that will help the worker to learn the duties pertaining to this job and, therefore, be satisfied with his/her work and keep it.

## 9.1. STAGE ONE: INTRODUCTION, GUIDANCE AND INITIAL EXPLORATION

### *First day of work*

It includes the first days of work, noting especially the first, which is the most difficult. The job coach must demonstrate at this time the following **technical competences**:

### *Competences of the job coach*

- Check the teaching of *transportation skills* to the worker, to let him/her know how to get to the company independently.
- Establish a good *understanding* with the employer, managers, coworkers and family members of the worker.
- *Lead* the worker within the company and accompany him/her in exploring all relevant physical space.
- Check the *job duties* and the environmental analysis where he/she has to perform tasks.
- Identify *natural supports* and *social reinforcers* of the workplace.
- Check the *base line* of job performance of the worker.

Schematically, we could say that the job coach must make, during these early days, the following actions:

### *Presentations*

### *Spatial orientation*

### *Basic information*

### *Understanding*

### *Natural support*

### *Initial evaluation*

- a) **The first day of work**, accompanying the worker in the obligated introductions to company managers and team mates; the job coach teaches and directs the worker within the company, to learn the internal and external routes and all rooms and spaces. The manager will inform the new employee of his/her job duties, the use of tools, how he/she is expected to do the work, schedules and breaks, and also features on the company standards and customs, especially *what he/she should not do*. The job coach will verify that the employee understood everything, completing and adapting the information necessary.
- b) The job coach promotes good **social relations** and identifies resources of natural support of the environment. This aspect is extremely important to get a good start. The job coach must have many natural supports, to deliver a good level of social integration of the worker who accompanies and co-workers will have better availability, if there is a proper understanding and there are mutual social relations. The job coach must identify at least one co-worker or “tutor” to serve as a positive natural support.
- c) The job coach **gets the base line** of the actual execution of the tasks for the job, in time and skill, taking into account the difficulties and possible solutions. This operation should be performed prior to any training, therefore, the first day of work we must check how the worker performs the assigned tasks independently, to start, if required, the period of

systematic instruction. It is important taking all data. In addition, the base line should be got at least once from each working skill to be trained.

- d) The job coach **checks and adapts to reality the analysis of tasks** maybe made previously. This exercise is of great importance, because on it all the instructional programme will be built.

For more information on the role and competences of the job coach read the British *National Occupational Standards for Supported Employment*- United Kingdom Learning and Skills Improvement Service (2012).

## 9.2. SECOND STAGE: SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING OF JOB DUTIES: TASK ANALYSIS

Once established the bases and the tasks accurately confirmed, the job coach is engaged, during this second stage to systematically instruct the worker, so that he/she gains the skills involved in performing the tasks and job duties. It is the most technical period of the intervention. Here we are going to use effective methods to teach the worker to perform his/her work with quality and also, with the record of the data on the evolution of learning and with the reports and with other instruments, the job coach will support the capabilities of his/her worker and will have supporting documents that will serve to advocate the worker on the job, if necessary.

### *Typical procedures*

Whenever possible, the most convenient thing is to include natural supports in instruction and in teaching procedures that are used, so that our method is as less intrusive as possible.

### *Technical competences of the job coach during the instruction*

The *technical competences* of the job coach during this crucial stage, will be the following ones:

- Training the natural supports to properly apply the techniques of reinforcement during the learning of tasks.
- Develop a training programme that includes instructional and reinforcement procedures, as well as data system to be used.
- Crumble into small steps or elements each of the tasks that the worker has to learn (this is called the *task analysis*).
- Describe the different types of technical support that will be used: physical, model, verbal, etc.
- Perform work accommodations that are reasonable to meet the needs of the worker.
- Apply and use technical aids and compensatory strategies that are appropriate for the worker to perform tasks independently.

### *Task analysis*

With regard to systematic instruction **the analysis of the task** is the most basic competence. First, the exercise of analysing all the steps of a task may help us to know in detail the method used in this company to perform this particular task, which may not coincide with other methods used by us elsewhere. For example, I can be used to clean the windows in a certain way, but when I go to a cleaning company I find that there they have their established method and a different instrumental. So I should write the details of all the steps that

### *It will help the job coach to follow the company's method*

this company follows to perform the task of window cleaning to the satisfaction of the employer.

Second, the task analysis will help the job coach to find out which steps are having more difficulty in our worker and which ones, therefore, need more time of learning and more support.

Thirdly, this analysis will guide us with objective data to know in which step of learning the worker is and if he/she is ready or not to work alone, without the instructor. Therefore, it will be a tool that will be useful for us to know when to initiate the fading from the job, with security guarantees. Daily, if we wish so, we can have data and a progress graph of learning.

The analysis of the task is actually a sequence of a chain of responses in which each response serves as a discriminative stimulus to the following response, and usually it starts with some explicit or implicit verbal instruction. The important thing is to teach one step after another and not wanting to teach many at once. When you are sure that the worker runs fine that step, then we will teach him/her the following one. During the learning period, the job coach normally completes the rest of the sequence of steps that the worker does not know how to run.

The chain of responses of a task would begin, for example, when we are said, "Make me, please, three copies of these" and would end when the employee provides the applicant three copies plus the original document. If the worker makes it properly on his/her own, he/she can surely be thanked and told he/she can do photocopying.

During the systematic instruction, multiple observations are made, the steps that generate major difficulties are found, several supports are used and then they fade, peers are involved, different procedures are tested, etc.

*Objectives of the instruction*

Instructional objectives must be very clear, and generally should include: a) an observable behaviour or job skill, b) that is produced under specified conditions, and c) there is an evaluation criterion (for instance 100% of correct execution in three sessions of consecutive polling).

*Record data and make graphs*

It has been said that one of the competences of the job coach during this phase is the collection of objective data through relevant records and, if necessary, make graphs. This is essential for the progress of the worker in the learning, to inform about the development to family and immediate superiors and to defend/advocate the job of our participant where necessary.

### ***Programme the reinforcement***

One of the most important components of the training is *positive reinforcement system* we are going to use, so that the worker learns in a motivated way his/her work. This is the most effective method of instruction: positively reinforce the correct behaviour of the worker during learning tasks.

### ***Features of reinforcers***

We must take into account some characteristics of the reinforcers and their application: the first is that they interest to the learner (if we use as reinforcers some stickers from a collection, whose album has already been completed by the subject..., these reinforcers will have little power), on the other hand, they should be associated, if possible, to natural elements of the environment, so that when the job coach fades from the scene, they continue to work naturally, for example, praise, which is a social reinforce, administrated by a co-worker will be more effective, rather than the praise administered only by the job coach. Another feature of the reinforcement, and that increases efficiency, is its immediate application, after that has occurred the correct behaviour.

### ***Questionnaire of reinforcement***

A *questionnaire of reinforcement* may be useful to better understand which stimulus will influence over the behaviour of the worker. But we also should ask the people who know best the worker about his/her interests and hobbies.

### ***Natural reinforcements***

If artificial reinforcements are used during the learning, added to the natural environment, we must remember to remove them and therefore we must program their fading. For this reason, it is better to use natural reinforcers that are in the environment and when the instructor disappears, they will continue there.

### ***Compensatory strategies***

Depending on the support needs of our worker, it will be advisable using other strategies to increase the effectiveness of learning and autonomy in executing tasks. Among the most used ones are the so-called *compensatory strategies* that are effective when lapses in concentration or memory are given, for example in people who have a brain injury or intellectual disability. Examples of these strategies are: put posters placed in strategic points to remember any employment obligation; or use a small pocket notebook with accurate pictures, indicating the sequence and time of work environments where our worker must perform his/her daily tasks; or place distinctions inside a box, for a worker who cannot count to complete twelve bottles in each box, without error; etc.

### ***Self-management strategies***

Finally, the strategies of *self-management* can be very helpful, which may refer to very different behaviours, such as self-observation, self-reinforcement, self-assessment, self-

instruction, etc. All these strategies are aimed for the worker to be more autonomous and to get by without the technical support of the job coach, although often they involve the participation of natural supports of family or co-workers.

### 9. 3. STAGE THREE: INCREASE THE RATE OF WORK UNTIL THE PRODUCTION STANDARDS OF THE COMPANY.

#### *Competences of the job coach*

The technical competences that the job coach must demonstrate at this stage are:

- Review learning programmes and make modifications, if necessary.
- Assess the worker regularly and the maintenance of his/her attention to the task.
- Know the standard of production of the company for the tasks performed by the worker.
- Control the production rate of the worker and, if necessary, increase it.
- Review the reinforcement system using natural reinforcers.
- Use the strategies and technical help that are more effective to increase in each case the job skills of workers with diverse abilities.
- Start fading systematically.

#### *Stabilize the production*

The job coach, with natural supports, at this stage will focus on increasing the level of production of the worker and make it more stable, until it reaches the standard set by the company for each task. This is done systematically with each of the duties of the job. The aim is that the worker performs the tasks independently and keeps interest in the job. After getting this, the job coach may initiate the process of fading from the job site.

#### *Tools for the data collection*

During the three stages mentioned, we continue using the collection of objective data, and using the appropriate technical tools to make decisions of maintenance or alteration of the learning programme in progress.

#### *Determine the production standard of the company*

The first thing we should know is which the standard of production of the company is, for the tasks and work duties of our worker. If the company has not set it, the job coach will have to determine this by observing the rate of production of co-workers in the same tasks. The production standard will be a specific time taken to complete a task, or a number of units per time.

#### *Assess the production rate of the worker*

In relation to the fixed standard, we will evaluate the

*Regularly in the job*

production rate of the worker, and if it is low, we will apply a specific training programme and other strategies, for them to increase it.

*Measuring regularly will defend the job*

Another aspect to consider during this stage is the percentage of time attention to the task, to verify the regularity of the worker. Sometimes we may adduce lack of concentration or of attention in tasks assigned, as an excuse for not renewing the contract to workers with diverse abilities. In order to avoid this argument we will have to measure the regularity and attention of the worker to the task. We have said that the job coach is the advocate of workers he/she accompanies, but to defend them well, he/she must have data and objective evidence.

*Report of the supervisor to defend the job*

Another key instrument to be used is the *evaluation report of the supervisor*, to whom the job coach will ask for his/her cooperation to fill it regularly. This report can play an important role over time, as the argument of progress of the individual in the performance of his/her duties and in his/her adaptation to the workplace in general.

#### **9. 4. FADING FROM THE JOB**

Although the fading of the job coach begins in step 3 of the instructional stage, we wanted to highlight it for its relevance. The technical support provided by the job coach in the workplace is going to disappear sooner or later, and this is an element that professionals should take into account, from the beginning of their planning.

Supported employment does not keep the job coach along side the worker during the whole life of the contract, not because it does not concentrate all the support in this figure, but it tries to identify natural supports (co-workers) that will play a crucial role in maintaining the support that workers with different abilities need. On the success in identifying, developing and strengthening these co-workers, for them to participate in the inclusion of the new worker, will depend the success in the fading, making the worker not notice his/her absence.

But the job coach is not going to fade from the scene irresponsibly, but when the main indicators direct him/her to start the fading with security guarantees, and these indicators are: the increase of the worker's ability to perform his/her tasks, the level of natural support in the workplace, and the

limited need of these natural supports about the presence of the job coach.

Thus, the job coach must be based on reliable data to begin the fading. For this, he/she will have powerful tools that will provide the needed information.

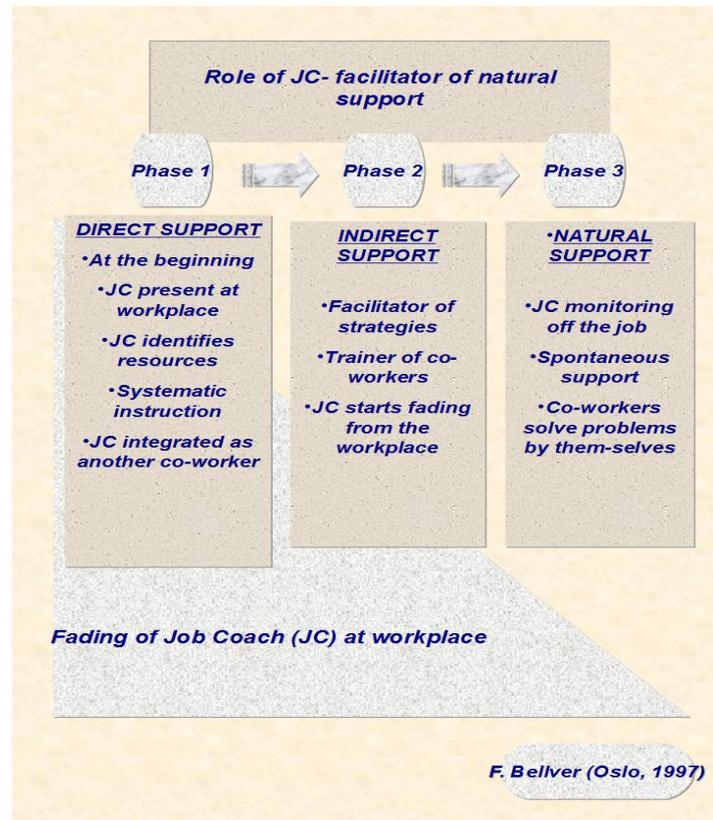


Table 1: Job coach’s fading.

In Table 1 we can see the role assumed by the job coach from the first moment he/she enters in a company to support a new worker: from the intensive phase of *direct support*, in which the procedures and strategies are implemented, we go to other phase of *indirect support* in which natural supports identified assume a good part of the support and reinforcement that requires the worker, to finish in the last phase of *natural support* in which the presence of the job coach tends to fade almost completely.

With these interventions and favorable data, the support professional can initiate a systematic process of fading from the workplace, beginning with a fading of reinforcement and of technical support provided by the job coach/instructor and following by a gradual physical distance, which is increasing in space and time, as the worker with diverse abilities is assuming as normal working by him/herself.

Finally, before fading at all, the job coach must have got that the manager and co-workers have included the new worker as one of the team, this will be noticed if they begin to resolve the problems that may arise on their own, if he/she is addressed directly to communicate new instructions or remind the house rules, or to correct him/her, or to ask for a favour or a situational shift change, etc... Something that would be very negative is to address to the job coach to solve these issues.

Get this attitude of inclusion of workers in the company is one of the best indicators that the job coach has done a good job, and this will be achieved not by chance but rather programming interventions, planning the fading of the reinforcement in benefit of the reinforcement provided by the manager and peers, adapting his/her actions to what is typical in the workplace, recording all data systematically, and attending to the progress of labour implementation of the worker, etc. In short, applying everything we have seen in this unit, which represents the core of supported employment. The job coach may fade from the company with guarantees.

This does not exactly mean that the professional or support technician will never come back to the company or the workplace. If the worker with diverse abilities needs that and circumstances require it, the job coach will always intervene again, and will have to redirect anything that is not well made or will have to perform new actions.

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