



Disability Diversity Training: Current Practices and Future Directions

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- ### Overview
- Diversity in the Workplace
 - Diversity Training
 - Disability Diversity Training
 - Future Directions

Employment and Disability

Labor Force Participation Rates in 2014

- 69.4% for people without disabilities
- 19.4% for people with disabilities



(Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014)

Employer Knowledge & Attitudes

Employer attitudes and policies remain a substantial barrier for PWDs (Chan et al., 2010)

Numerous studies have concluded that:

- Employers need more accurate information to dispel misconceptions and concerns about hiring PWDs
- Employers (both supervisors and managers) need increased and improved training on disability-related issues
- Changing employer attitudes and increasing awareness are key aspects of improving employment outcomes (Grizzard, 2005; Kaye et al., 2011; Muller et al., 2003)

An Increased Employer Focus

Updates to Section 503 of Rehab Act

- Fed contractors required to provide written assessment of recruitment & outreach efforts to hire & retain PWD's (Requires a 7% utilization goal for qualified employees w/ disabilities)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA):

- Increases focus on demand-side employment by expanding services VR agencies can provide to employers (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 2014)

WIOA and Employers

WIOA Section 109: State VR agencies may expend payments to provide,

“training and technical assistance to employers regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities, **including disability awareness**, and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other employment-related laws...”

Awareness or Diversity training: Is there a meaningful difference?

Disability as a Form of Diversity

Is disability included?

Diversity

- The term *diversity* is typically used to reflect groups whose differences are celebrated and perceived as having the capacity to enrich an organization.
 - Commonly includes consideration of gender, race/ethnicity, and, more recently, sexual orientation
 - Disability is too often neglected as a form of diversity

Why the neglect of disability in employer diversity efforts?

Disability as Deviance

- Disability is not always viewed in the positive light typically conveyed by the term diversity (Davis, 2011)
- Employers hoping to minimize risk appear to have more difficulty viewing disability as a form of diversity
 - Stensrud (2007) conducted focus groups with employers and found participants..

“viewed disability as a problem to be accommodated rather than a difference to be celebrated.”

Disability as Diversity

- Employer’s view of disability as a form of diversity positively influences their willingness to recruit and hire individuals from the disability population
(McMahon, 2009; Chan et al., 2010)
- Greater knowledge about disability as a form of diversity is associated with:
 - More positive perceptions and employer behavior
 - Increased hiring and improved work environment for PWDs
(Chan et al., 2010; Copeland et al., 2010; Gilbride et al., 2000)

Literature Review

What has been tried and what works in diversity training?

Workplace Diversity Training

- Diversity Training (DT) is an intervention intended to improve intergroup relations and reduce prejudice in the workplace
- DT programs typically designed to improve knowledge attitudes, behaviors, and motivation to interact effectively with diverse others (Paluck, 2006; Bezrukova et al., 2012)
- Typical DT program involves:
 - 1 or 2 trainers
 - 20-30 trainees
 - 4-10 hours of training (Bendic, Egan, & Lofhjelm, 2001)

Current State of DT in the Workplace

- 67% of organizations report some use of DT (Kulik & Roberson, 2008)
- Businesses are increasingly focused on building a diverse workforce because it is generally perceived to:
 - Expand the talent pool
 - Be socially responsible
 - Provide employees who are better able to meet the needs of a diverse customer base
 - Create a competitive advantage by expanding the experiences and opinions used to inform innovation and decision-making.

Current State of DT in the Workplace

- DT in the workplace often emphasizes building the “business case”
 - Competitive advantages, better organizational flexibility, enhanced marketing efforts

(Point & Singh, 2003; Bezrukova et al., 2012)

Components of DT

- DT may be a **single session or multiple sessions** over time
- May include **trainers within or outside the organization**
- May focus on **specific groups or be more generally applicable**
- May have **different pedagogies** (e.g. lecture-based, video materials, simulation problem-solving exercises, role-playing, discussion)
- May be **voluntary or mandatory**

(Kalinowski et al., 2013; Bezrukova et al., 2012)

Common Goals of Workplace DT

1. Creating a more successful organization with better performing employees (Primary Goal)
2. Changing employee behavior towards socially disadvantaged group members
3. Increased compliance with legal & ethical standards
4. Greater harmony within the workforce

(Bezrukova et al., 2012; Bendick et al., 2001; Rossett & Bickham, 1994)

Awareness Training vs. Skill-Building

- Many DT programs target both increased awareness & skill, others focus on one
- **Awareness Training:**
 - Increase self-awareness regarding diversity-related issues
 - May include discussion, sharing personal experiences, and education
- **Skill-Building (behavior-based) Training:**
 - Emphasizes behavior change of participants to respond more appropriately to differences in the work environment
 - May include practicing communication skills and interpersonal skills (Bezrukova et al., 2012; Roberson et al., 2001; Probst, 2003)

Assessment of DT outcomes

- Assessment of **Knowledge (Cognitive Outcomes):**
 - Measuring knowledge & learning of DT content
- Assessment of **Affective Outcomes:**
 - Measuring change attitudes toward diversity, diversity self-efficacy, or motivation to embrace diversity (Most commonly measured outcome)
- Assessment of **Behavioral Outcomes:**
 - Measuring changes in behavior (e.g. ability to resolve conflicts, self-perceptions of diversity-friendly behaviors, objective observation)

(Bezrukova et al., 2012; Kalinoski et al., 2013; Curtis & Dreachslin, 2008)

Three Domains for Best Practices

1. Design
 - duration, distribution, method of delivery
2. Content
 - # of topics covered, level of participant interaction, goal-setting, mentoring
3. Participants
 - upper-level management involvement, composition/characteristics of group, voluntary vs. mandatory

Design

- **Duration of Training:**
 - Longer than 4 hrs ⇒ larger effects on affective outcomes
 - Longer than 8 hrs ⇒ diminishing returns
 - 4.5 to 6 hrs ⇒ sufficient to change attitudes
- **Distribution of Training:**
 - More effective when spread out across multiple sessions
- **Method of Delivery:**
 - In-person trainer more effective than computer-based training

(Kalinoski et al., 2013; Combs & Luthans, 2007; Reynolds, 2010)

Content

- **# of Topics**
 - Focus on single aspect of diversity = a larger effect on cognitive outcomes
- **Level of Participant Interaction / Task Interdependence**
 - Increased task interdependence (working with others) and active learning = a larger effect on cognitive outcomes
 - Mixture of task interdependence, active and passive learning methods = a larger effect on affective outcomes

Content

- **Goal-Setting and Mentoring**
 - Setting behavioral goals post-training helps maintain diversity-supportive behaviors
 - Having mentor post-training leads to more supportive behaviors & attitudes

(Kalinoski et al., 2013; Madera, King, & Hebl, 2013)

Participants

- DT is most effective when upper-level management is directly involved in educating and training employees on diversity priorities (Katz, O'Connell, & Nicholas, 2012; Linkow et al., 2013)
- Greater cognitive effects when:
 - DT group was comprised of more than 60% women
 - DT group was comprised of less than 40% Caucasian

(Kalinoski et al., 2013)

Disability Diversity Training

What do we know from the research?

Literature Review of RC Research

- Conducted a lit review within 5 primary rehabilitation journals for 1990-2014:
 - 1) Journal of Rehabilitation
 - 2) Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation
 - 3) Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin
 - 4) Rehabilitation Psychology
 - 5) Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education
 - Results of Review:
 - Very few empirical investigations of disability diversity training
 - Numerous scholars highlighted the utility of such trainings for improving employer attitudes, increasing employer awareness, and promoting disability as an aspect of diversity
- (e.g., Brostrand, 2006; Younes, 2001)

Used and Suggested Content Areas

Highlighting & Dispelling Disability Myths

- People with disabilities as less qualified
- Concerns that companies will be forced to keep employee even if cannot maintain performance standards
- Concerns about increased medical and legal costs

Disability Legislation & ADA

Assistive Technology & Accommodations

Disability Etiquette & Communication

Benefits of Disability in Workplace (climate, business advantages)

PWDs in Leadership Roles

(Katz et al., 2012; Amir et al., 2010; Chan et al., 2010; Linkow et al., 2013; Shannon et al., 2009)

Consideration of Disability Diversity Programs

What is out there?

Disability Diversity Training Resources

| Program | Live Trainer | Length (hours) | Active Learning | Work Setting | Cost |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|------|
| Discovering Untapped Talent | Y & N | >4 | Y | Y | N |
| Tilting at Windmills | Y | >4 | Y | Y | Y |
| Work Support | N | <4 | N | Y | N |
| Workforce Discovery | Y | 4-8 | Y | Y | N |

Discovering Untapped Talent

- The only empirically tested training found
 - Specifically related to employment for PWDs
 - Blended Learning approach
 - 8 In-person Modules and 10 online sections
 - Focused on conversation, business advantage, and future action
 - Connects employer to ADA Center for support
- (Rudstam et al., 2013)



Discovering Untapped Talent
Evidence

Quantitative Results

- Positive change in pre-post assessment for
 - Knowledge
 - Attitude
 - Behavioral Intention
 - Behavioral Estimation



(Rudstam et al., 2013)

Discovering Untapped Talent
Evidence

Qualitative Results

- 79% of the 34 respondents from the qualitative sample had taken action in support of disability diversity at 4 to 8 month follow-ups.
- Those that didn't take action cited indecision on what action to take, a lack of power to make organizational change, or that the desired action was already in place

(Rudstam et al., 2013)

Discovering Untapped Talent
Facilitating Disability Diversity

Qualitative Results.

- Industry specific training
- Prior commitment to disability as diversity
- Organizational readiness or commitment – highlighted strong HR practices

(Rudstam et al., 2013)

Discovering Untapped Talent
Barriers to Disability Diversity

Qualitative Results.

- Economic climate and "survival mode" do not facilitate diversity missions
- Challenge getting to decision makers
- Need for ongoing support – even beyond a connection to ADA center services

(Rudstam et al., 2013)

Tilting at Windmills

- Longest running program found
- 11 Modules with the flexibility to complete in a day or over several days
- Highly Interactive
 - sharing of experiences, games/activities, group/panel discussions
- Instructor-led (Instructor has specific training)
- Brostrand (2006) showed that employers found the training beneficial and valuable in satisfaction ratings



Disability Awareness Online Program

- Self-administered and computer-based
- Eight sections that cover:
 - Common disability myths
 - ADA and accommodations
 - Proper social etiquette
- Provides review of empirical support for the work contributions of people with disabilities
- Provides opportunities to share perspectives / experiences
- Allows for feedback from online facilitators



Workforce Discovery

Specifically related to employment for PWDs

- Instructor-led
- Four Training Modules:
 - 1) Typecasting: Understanding Disability
 - 2) Legal Implications: Overview of the ADA
 - 3) Reasonable Accommodation
 - 4) Etiquette: Communication and Interaction
- Fifth Module: “Best Practices for Trainers”
 – Instructions for training future instructors (Baum et al., 2004)



Next Steps in Disability

Diversity Training

- Continued testing of existing disability diversity training programs for improving attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes
- Integrate best practices from general diversity training into disability diversity training programs
- Greater consideration of VR counselors role in employer disability initiatives, including diversity training

Key Points

- There is a great need and opportunity for addressing negative employer attitudes, behaviors, and policies regarding disability in the coming years
- People with disabilities are likely to benefit in the workplace from employers embracing disability as a form of diversity—one that can enrich a workplace and facilitate performance

Key Points

- Disability diversity training appears to be an underutilized, demand-side approach that has real potential for improving employment rates for people with disabilities
- Current state of knowledge provides a nice foundation for assessing and creating effective practices