

Career Development

Foster, S. and MacLeod, J. (2004). The role of mentoring relationships in the career development of successful deaf persons. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 9(4), 442-458. [AN 1797]

A qualitative study of deaf graduates of Rochester Institute of Technology who became supervisors in primarily hearing work settings found that having a mentor was a primary and persistent element in their career success. In the deaf individual's early years, generally it was a family member or teacher who conveyed a belief in that individual's abilities, encouraged effort, and helped to instill self-esteem and confidence. Parents were often their strongest advocates; teachers were their advisors and facilitators. In the work setting, a supervisor or co-worker often served as a mentor by coaching, advising, and teaching the individual what they needed to know to succeed on the job. In many ways, these "informal" mentors provided the foundation that enabled the deaf individual to break through what are often barriers to career success, despite their skills and abilities.

Implications

Interviews with these deaf individuals demonstrate that any number of people can serve as a mentor to a deaf person. Parents, teachers, co-workers, supervisors, friends, and spouses are all among the people described by our respondents as having a significant impact on their personal and professional development. One need not have a long-term relationship to the person in order to have a significant impact. Making an effort to communicate with the deaf person is almost always a powerful gesture and one that may lead to a strong mentoring relationship. Offering emotional support may be more significant than any other kind of mentoring behavior. Acts of informal mentoring can occur at any time throughout the life of the mentor or person being mentored, e.g., high school peers provided this support, as did parents and spouses. The study shows that one is never too old or young to be a mentor, nor is one ever too old or young to benefit from the support of a mentor.

MacLeod, J. (2005). *Alumni Satisfaction Followup Survey 2004*. Rochester, NY: Rochester Institute of Technology, National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Department of Research and Teacher Education. [AN 1888]

The Institute needs continuing input from its graduates about how satisfied they were with their educational experiences at NTID/RIT. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Education needs some measure of how well the Institute is providing outstanding state-of-the-art technical and professional education programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The 2004 Alumni Followup survey queried graduates of the past five years to get their feedback about satisfaction with classroom-related issues and overall usefulness of their training. Additional data about continuing education, employment, and earnings were also collected. The response rate to this survey was 42.3 percent of the targeted sample.

Implications

Responding alumni demonstrated an overall 93% level of satisfaction with their educational experiences, in keeping with a benchmark expectation of 90% satisfaction; a labor force

participation rate (working or actively looking for work) of 94%; and current employment of 85%. Employment rates varied by degree levels, generally increasing with higher degrees, with the exception of fine arts where employment levels tended to be lower relative to other bachelor's and master's level awards. Nearly 40 percent of respondents had enrolled in other studies, and more than half of the alumni had taken additional training since graduating, demonstrating the desire and ability to pursue life-long learning. Reported earnings also varied by degree levels and paralleled earnings findings using Social Security Administration earnings data on NTID/RIT students of similar program and degree level attainment.

MacLeod, J. (2005). *Survey of deaf adults about their continuing education needs. Deaf Initiative in Information Technology (NSF Grant 0302790), Lange, D., Principle Investigator. Rochester, NY: Rochester Institute of Technology, National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Department of Applied Computing Technology. [AN 1889]*

Year five of this National Science Foundation grant to provide workshops to deaf and hard-of-hearing adults in the information technology field was completed. Grant funding was provided to NTID by the National Science Foundation because a critical national need exists for individual training in IT and for constant upgrading of skills. It has been shown that deaf and hard-of-hearing professionals have difficulty in obtaining training and skills that meet their communication and learning style needs even with an interpreter. This project allowed direct instruction of deaf participants by a faculty member skilled in sign language and with current or up-to-date information in the IT field. In addition to the grant's ongoing training and evaluation work, a separate DIIT survey was administered to deaf adults to ascertain what kinds of continuing education and learning experiences they have had once out in the work force.

Implications

A total of 227 deaf participants responded to questions about their continuing education activities, 76 percent of whom were also NTID/RIT alumni. Only a small percentage had ever taken a DIIT workshop. The majority (77.7 percent), however, had taken some kind of additional training since graduating. This training was most often inside their work-place, or outside and paid by their employer. Those who had not asked for educational support from their employers indicated either they did not know what training to take, were unemployed, or thought their employer would say "no" to supporting training. A variety of possible learning support situations were listed for respondents to rate according to how much they learned in those settings. Environments with primarily hearing participants but with interpreting support were most common, and 31 percent indicated they learned a lot, while 54 percent said they learned some. Among the few who had experienced a total sign language learning experience, 71.9 percent said they learned a lot. Other support scenarios were infrequently experienced, but the combination of an interpreter and notetaker ranked third in learning success. The majority felt that the ideal learning environment would include signing participants and instructors, with a workshop with interpreting support as a distant second. Other areas of possible training were listed for respondents to check; computer applications and business management were often cited. However, report writing and how to get promoted received the highest percentage of responses overall, demonstrating that deaf adults recognize the need for updating job skills, as well as learning skills that are important to career advancement in general.

**MacLeod-Gallinger, J., Kelly, R., Walter, G., & Whitehead, R. (2001, August).
Indicators of socioeconomic status and career mobility among NTID/RIT alumni.
Rochester, NY: Rochester Institute of Technology, National Technical Institute for
the Deaf. [AN 1890]**

The Alumni Satisfaction with Education and Employment Achievement 1999-2000 report describes the outcomes for graduates of NTID/RIT in areas of educational and job satisfaction. At the time of the survey, 52 percent of alumni respondents were employed in Professional Specialty and Technical occupations and 13 percent in Managerial and Executive occupations. More than 85 percent of alumni were employed (90 percent full-time) versus 15 percent not currently employed. And 70 percent were in a different job than their first job, versus 30 percent in the same job. The paper examined mobility/socioeconomic status of individual alumni using their reported employment data from three separate feedback surveys done over time since they graduated.

Implications

Alumni who reported the same job title for their first, second, and current job overall demonstrated higher socioeconomic status (SES)—determined by a combination of education, income, and occupational prestige values—and remained at a higher level relative to those who made one or more job changes post-college. A study done with National Longitudinal Survey data found that workers in high-wage industries reported longer job tenure and the occupations provided more formal training than jobs in low-wage industries; therefore, turnover was less frequent partly because high-wage jobs involved substantial investments in job-specific training. Further, in the same industries, workers in Managerial and Professional Specialty and other skilled occupations earned more, and were less mobile than similar workers in other occupations. This same pattern was observed among NTID/RIT alumni. A high percentage of the alumni surveyed were employed in the educational services industry sector in professional specialty jobs typically associated with long-term employment and relatively high prestige values, hence, their mid- to high-SES status and few or no job tide changes. Thus, upward and lateral job mobility can, but does not always, result in increased SES.

Note: [AN XXXX] represents a local NTID publications designation. Please include when requesting copies of these publications.