

The significance of work - How does persons with disabilities experience it?

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Repports from yesterdays reflection groups

Some highlights

How does persons with disabilities experience their work?

The Norwegian researcher Terje Olsen have been asking persons with special needs directly about their work experiences

The researcher identified six main categories

- Working as *hallmark*
- Working as *personal development*
- Work *to serve needs* (produce useful things)
- Work for *having a social life*.
- Working as a *pass time* (just to do something)
- Work as *stigma*.

(Olsen, 2009, s. 139)

Working as **hallmark**

Prestige, reputation, pride and autonomy

The story of Åge:

"It's he who decides, he mastering the production (computers), he can tell visitors what products should be used and where they are sold".

(Olsen, 2009, s. 141)

*Work as personal **development***”,

Development

The story of Unni:

"At the workbench is notebooks, she daily writes down how much she has done.

She notes daily how much she has produced and summarize this for every week, every month and every year.

-So that I can see if I have developed me, she explains”.

” Work to serve **needs**”

Social benefit, a "helping role, a manufacturer

The story of Jorn:

"I create clothes for children".

Is that you do important?

"Yes, it is important that all the little angels have warm clothes. "

(Olsen, 2009, s. 143)

Work for fun / the social life.

Social dimension, friendship and unity

The girls at the art workshop:

"- It is very nice that people like what we make - we make people happy. I like that people come in and look at what we do here "

"The product is a symbol of the relationship between employees within and between them and customers"

(Olsen, 2009, s. 144)

” Working as a **pass time**”

- Just something to do....

Activation

The story of Jan:

"- After You had been unemployed a while, you started here again. Why? [He falls silent, so I added:]

Was it because you missed the work, or?

-Well- a little ... it goes a bit up and down...

Was it someone who forced you to begin again? Yeah, it was too. But I had little desire, too. Want to come out, not just sit at home. "

(Olsen, 2009, s. 145)

”Work as *stigma*”

Salary, status, identity

The story of Stig:

"In the breaks in the smoking room some of us talked about if we thought about this as a job

- When we come to the workshop in the morning:
Do we consider it as a normal job?
- Everyone said no to that. "

(Olsen, 2009, s. 145)

“Work as *stigma*”

Salary, status, identity

The story of Stig:

"We earn 9.50 per hour (normal salary about 250.-)

For some here, it is very tough

- it says so much about the work and about the bad situation the individual are in. "

(Olsen, 2009, s. 145)

”Versions of work”: Olsen (2009).

Nature of work for special need people is often quite traditional:

- Carpentry or cut wood.
- Sewing or weaving.

Why?

“Versions of work”: Olsen (2009)

- Expectations of society to what these people are going to work with.
- The people clearly want such jobs.
- Maybe we should challenge this kind of habit thinking and develop new kind of jobs?

Benifits of work (summary):

- Rhythm: the time structuring work entails.
- Health promotive effects
- The Social dimension: contacts outside the family.
- The personal status and identity work entails
- Through work, the individual is linked to collective goals and given an experience of a meaningful existence.

(Jahoda) i (Nylenna,2015)

Inclusion demands visibility. Skovsgård hotel (Denmark)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dT5JsYc-av8>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58rLq_HS
UxM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58rLq_HSUxM)



- ” By working, persons with disabilities shows the world that they actually can make a contribution”.
- Persons with disabilities are much more than their limitations, handicaps and dysfunctions.
- A well designed working community have the possibility to affect social identity in appositive way. ”.

Work and identity

"Older persons with disabilities highlighting their work when they tells their life story.

- They dont say so much about their disabilities and limitations.....

(Rosenlund, 2007)

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