The influence of learning outcomes-based curricula in company training

Bulgaria case study

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Learning outcomes in WBL in Bulgarian context

National policies and arrangements supporting the use of LOs in WBL
_ 2015: starts the restructuring of state educational standards for VET (units of LOs approach)
_ 2016: adoption of a legal framework regulating the introduction of dual VET (= apprenticeships)

Characteristics of Bulgarian dual VET
_ leads to the same qualification as school-based VET
_ WBL takes place in the last two years of study (e.g. in a 5 year programme at NQF/EQF level 4)
_ apprenticeship placements shall be ensured in advance by the school
_ other forms of WBL include study practice and production practice

Company mentors are appointed by the company
_ possess a qualification in the profession
_ have at least 3 years of work experience in the same profession
_ have completed training to be a mentor

WBL student
_ 17-18 year-old person without previous work experience
Field research frame...

The setting... and some limitations of research

- Visits at 2 companies based in the capital (Sofia):
  - automobile industry: aftersales service centre of BMW
  - logistics and freight forwarding: Lagermax

Interviews with:
- 4 company management representatives
- 3 company mentors
- 2 students in their last year of study (including observation of WBL process)

- contacts to companies facilitated by VET schools - ‘good examples’ in a national VET context
- companies and schools participate in the ‘GoDual’ project, which connects schools with companies and also provides methodological support for the implementation of WBL in Bulgaria.
How far are companies aware of LOs and use them to structure WBL?

Key research question:
How are LO-based curricula informing, influencing and/or steering work-based learning?

- Close cooperation between schools and companies in the delivery of WBL
- schools prepare WBL curricula and align it to LO-based curricula
- companies provide feedback on the content with/without some suggestions for adaptations.

- WBL curricula with a more universal character to fit in to different company contexts e.g.:
  - broader formulation of intended LOs: e.g. ‘can prepare work-related documentation’
  - some 10% of WBL curricula - reserved for specific activities, relevant for the company

Structuring of WBL delivery:
- 1st year, familiarisation function: students get to know the company departments, activities, etc.
- 2nd year focuses more on students’ specialisation in a given department, field
Company mentors and the use of learning outcomes

Key research question:
To what extent and how mentors use LOs-based curricula to plan and execute their job as mentors?

- Company mentors are more involved in the design of WBL curricula and more aware of LOs as compared to management representatives.
- They use an ‘individual diary’ for each apprentice describing:
  - tasks completed by the apprentice
  - assessment criteria
  - observations on tools and equipment used, problems encountered, etc.

- Mentors align tasks and intended learning outcomes in a rather implicit way e.g.:
- Mentors do not explain the learning objective, intended LOs of each and every task they assign
- Sometimes they need support in the formulation of tasks to better align them with LOs.
## Assessment of WBL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</th>
<th>MAX. NUMBER OF POINTS</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. CAN OBSERVE WORKING HOURS, SHOWS DISCIPLINE AT WORK</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. CAN COMPLY WITH INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL RULES, INSTRUCTIONS…</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>3. CAN WORK TO TIGHT DEADLINES AND BEING PROMPT</td>
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<td>4. HAS COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS</td>
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<td>5. CAN WORK IN A TEAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. SHOWS RESPONSIBILITY, SELF-CONTROL, SELF-DISCIPLINE</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. MAINTAINS ORDER AND CLEANLINESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. HAS OCCUPATION-RELATED SKILLS (CAN CORRECTLY UNDERSTAND AND APPLY WHAT IS LEARNED; CAN LEARN FROM MISTAKES…)</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS:**

**MAXIMUM TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS:** 100

Source: GoDual project
VET students’ awareness of learning outcomes

Key research question:
To what extent are apprentices aware of LO-based requirements?
How does this influence their progression?

Aspects of students’ awareness:
- not involved in the development of WBL curricula, but didn’t express any doubts about it;
- aware of intended LOs – they receive the curricula at the beginning of the school year;
- use of LOs in WBL is associated with:
  _ increased practical skills to prepare, execute and complete work tasks assigned by the mentor;
  _ increased ability to work independently;
  _ increased motivation to learn;
- less aware of the assessment criteria used in WBL;
- take responsibility of their own learning process - no conclusions on the extent can be made.
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Благодаря за вниманието!

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