

# The influence of learning outcomes-based curricula in company training

## Bulgaria case study

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The shift to learning outcomes: Rhetoric or reality?

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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**
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# 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)
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- \_ 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.
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# 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:

- \_ 1<sup>st</sup> year, **familiarisation** function: students get to know the company departments, activities, etc.
- \_ 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	MAX. NUMBER OF POINTS	POINTS	GRADE
1. CAN OBSERVE WORKING HOURS, SHOWS DISCIPLINE AT WORK	10		
2. CAN COMPLY WITH INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL RULES, INSTRUCTIONS...	10		
3. CAN WORK TO TIGHT DEADLINES AND BEING PROMPT	10		
4. HAS COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS	10		
5. CAN WORK IN A TEAM	10		
6. SHOWS RESPONSIBILITY, SELF-CONTROL, SELF-DISCIPLINE	10		
7. MAINTAINS ORDER AND CLEANLINESS	10		
8. HAS OCCUPATION-RELATED SKILLS (CAN CORRECTLY UNDERSTAND AND APPLY WHAT IS LEARNED; CAN LEARN FROM MISTAKES...	30		
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS:</b>			
<b>MAXIMUM TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS: 100</b>			

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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The Day of the Slavic Script and  
of the Bulgarian Education and  
Culture

Благодаря за вниманието!

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