

CHAIN5 Webinar Work-based Learning, 25 November 2020

In November 2020, the thematic group Work Based Learning of CHAIN5 organised a webinar on Work-based Learning. More than 50 participants from Belgium, United Kingdom, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands, Croatia, Slovenia, Israel and the United States took part in this webinar.

During the webinar, Loek Nieuwenhuis, lecturer Workbased Learning at HAN University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, gave a keynote about the state of affairs regarding research into Workbased Learning (see the slides of his presentation at the website of CHAIN5).

His conclusions:

- Workplace learning research is still underdeveloped
- Three phases in workplace learning (preparation, enactment, and evaluation) do turn out to be significant analytical categories.
- The acquisition goal is dominant in the reviews in combination with elements of the participation objective. The orientation goal is hardly recognizable
- Workplace learning in initial TVET and HPE can only be understood in context (domain specific)
- 11 design standards for Workbased Learning: these design standards should be contextualized by educational teams in co-makship with the business partners of the labor market

Subsequently, the participants in the webinar engaged in a conversation in 5 break-out rooms using the following questions:

Questions

- a. What is work based learning according to you? What does it mean for level 5?
- b. What do you encounter in practice? Which dilemmas do you experience? What went really well? Tips on quality assurance?
- c. How can we do it even better?
- d. How can we help each other? What is a need for?

The notes of these conversations can be found on the following pages.

Eric Aldewereld & Mariette Muris

Thematic Group Work-Based Learning

Notes of breakout-room 1 at the Chain5 Webinar Work Based Learning, November 25th 2020

Moderator: Afke
Notes: Bea

Wim > NE, Rotterdam, works with level 1-4)
Anne-Marie > BE, Thomas More Hogeschool, level 5 (Geel)
Goedele > BE, Hogent, level 5 (Gent), 12 associate degrees
Jurrien > NE, Hogeschool Amsterdam, designs programmes level 5
Bea > Arteveldehogeschool Gent, organises internships abroad for level 5

1) Introductions

1) Workbased learning: how?

- Wim: the school created an “office” in the town center so students can execute practical office assignments
- Jurrien: We offer all kinds of assignments, short ones, real internships, in different companies
- Goedele: all kind of methods, individually, in small groups, simulations in school, in companies, in cooperation with other educational institutions...
- Bea: building up in intensity, length, responsibility over the 4 semesters
- Goedele: You definitely needs sby who coordinates all the WBL initiatives in your HE/programme
- AMA: you need to foster and coach your relationship with the companies
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2) WBL: difficulties?

- Anne-Marie: to find good assignments that the companies want to coach: difficult!
- Anne-Marie: When is the right time? Not in their first semester, but from the 2nd semester on
- Anne-Marie: some teachers lack the necessary professional background, are not willing to take courses or do an internship themselves.... Afke: LLL for teachers?
- Goedele: Every Lecturer needs to have experience in the work field. Mandatory (new policy in her HE). Idem Bea
- Wim: support the lecturers, e.g., how to create a LinkedIn account, digitalisation
- Goedele: each programme needs its own approach (shop assistant versus electronics...)
- Goedele: the companies don't know the difference between level 5 and level 6. How do we differentiate? What do we tell the company supervisors?

3) WBL: opportunities?

- Wim: if you start with a new programme, you have all the freedom
- Goedele: install “large blocks” (15 ECTS), reduce the learning goals, → more freedom!
- Wim: Introduce 21st Century skills and raise self-awareness with the students
- Cooperate better with the companies and communicate better with them

- Jurrien: start with intensive coaching, make sure the assignments start from easy and become gradually more complex
- Jurrien: involve the companies from the start. When you think of a new programme, e.g.
- Wim: Educational badges for extracurricular activities
- Goedele: gentlestudent.gent (a platform where citizens and organisations publish their needs. Students can help, it is recognized → a win win situation)
- Wim: Involve the students in your school management (marketing, communication, and recognise this as WBL)
- Wim: we need to reach out to other European partners: schools and companies
- Wim: Cocreation (companies, students, HE)
- Goedele: short stays abroad, in group, with a lecturer (language can be a barrier), requested the government to create a call in this respect

Notes of breakout-room 2 at the Chain5 Webinar Work Based Learning, November 25th 2020

Moderator: Tanja
Notes: Rianne

First, brief introductions.

In Croatia, WBL is interesting for companies, but is still quite theoretical.

Dual = work based learning. Is different from part-time education.

In Belgium, it is obligatory that 1/3 of level 5 education is work-based learning. Also, many Ad's are 3 years, 3x40 credits so students can work next to it.

In NL we are not allowed to offer an Ad in more than 2 years.

Dilemma's / challenges:

- how to get companies involved in grading of students
- many students want to switch company during the WBL. Because of what they learn, they have opportunity to change jobs.
- for students: combining studying and a job
- what qualifies / 'can count' as work based learning? What would be the definition?

What is the role of level 5? Preparing students for labour market or as stepping stone for a Bachelor degree? Most agree primary goal is to prepare for labour market.

Why would we want every course to have WBL (Work Based Learning)?

Ideally, a student upon graduation should have experienced working in various organisations (short and long). So work routines can be compared.

Also, it is important to learn more than theory: how to adapt to work environment, learn to deal with different colleagues, .. This is what you learn 'on the floor'.

Could short activities like conducting interviews (on work routines, job profiles,...orientation function) also be seen as WBL?

Example of Avans: 1/3 theory, 1/3 in-house work-based learning, 1/3 out-house work based learning. In-house: working on assignments for organisations, in which the school has designed the assignment, criteria etc. but the company is 'owner' of the assignment, introduces it to the students, inspires the students, provides data, etc.

Assessment of education is focusing on the student, and equipping him/her with what is needed to be able to work in different companies (so, education is not tailor made for the specific company).

How can we do it better?

-build up competencies & attitude to prepare for successful WBL for students that do not yet have much practical experience

Notes of breakout-room 3 at the Chain5 Webinar, November 25th 2020

Moderator: Mariette

Notes: Bert

1. What is workbased learning? Implications for level 5?

Workbased learning in Flanders: often used in relation to level 6, not always clear distinction with traineeships. Good demarcation between levels (5 and 6) and student activities needed.

Velo: virtual learning opportunity, form of workbased learning invented in Canada.

At university level, there is the difficulty of getting companies to work with the world of academically oriented apprenticeships.

In defining the concept there is also the issue whether the whole programme is workbased or only parts of programme where the students is active in the company.

Difficult to have students in workplaces because of Covid. Also affect the counselling and guiding of students. Programmes have to be adjusted, plus students have difficulty finding working places.

Companies have problems supplying mentors.

The topic of the possible tension between the study load of 60 ec per year and the fact that students also have to work, often full-time. How to use elements of the work environment to incorporate into the study programme and count them as credit points.

2. Problems of finding places in Covid times.

Flanders: 1/3 has to be workplace learning. Rest of the programme takes place at the university, theory and skills. The workplace experiences are also made part of the courses taught at school. Now it is difficult for students to work in companies, mostly they have to work at home. Sometimes students have difficulty getting access (IT) to the company.

Plus there is the difficulty of discipline working at or from home. Hard to stay motivated. So how to do this? How to keep students motivated? And also: teach them how to behave when working from home, how to dress, etc.

Relevance of theory for workplace learning: that keeps students motivated. Applying theory in practice, that's motivating.

But also giving them a perspective of a job or of a career in these days of distance working.

Notes of breakout-room 4 at the Chain5 Webinar, November 25th 2020

Moderator: Nina
Notes: Toon

How can we convince organizations to participate in LLL? How do we get the work field involved in a sustainable way?

- Mentors in organizations want to get involved, but can they? **Let them!**
- **The coach** has an important function as a hub between organizations and the school.
- Mentors in organizations are/should be **proud to be an element in the learning trajectory**.
- **Workplace learning is a culture**, a mechanism with different elements (government promotion campaign, coaching responsibilities, ...).
- The relevance and importance of **'soft skills'** to make some attitudes explicit is part of the learning trajectory and helps to see value in education for the organization. Making profit is now an important goal for an organization, but there is an evolution towards sustainable entrepreneurship. Professional skills are not so difficult to learn, but they lack resources to educate the soft skills. Do we stick to what we know or do participate in **a broader learning?**
- If education want to be relevant, they have to **adapt their competences to the work field itself**.
- Set up of **a network** is very important. You have the typical hub-institutions (advisory institutions from the industry) and they can play a huge role in convincing organizations. Also attract more coaches in the university. How can we form a sustainable relationship? Sometimes it depends on only one person and his network in the field. Set up a trajectory.
- Also students **can take real work**, create value for the organization. F.e. taking small projects.
- **Not only coach, but also career guiding!** Definitely for the young students. The existence of a course 'LLL' is very important.
- **The longer you wait** to involve students in the work field, the scarier they get...
- Why is it more difficult in higher education (+18y)? We might need a PR-campaign? Maybe the workplace learning and AD or graduate system **is to young** and we need to be patient.
- **Learn from each other**. If you do it by yourself, it will take you a long time to set a good system in place. What we are doing today is a good example.

Notes of breakout-room 5 at the Chain5 Webinar, November 25th 2020

Moderator: Loek
Notes: Felipe

a. What is work based learning according to you? What does it mean for level 5?

Inge: nursing level 5 in Belgium; starts from workplace learning, inductive learning, quick introduction to the workplace. Starting from practice, going to theory. WPL is organised in various ways, depending on the situation of each student, students go to the workplace, work there and get visited by the teachers; teachers teach students on the workplace as well. Active learning environment on the workplace, focus on general skills. Workplace help build the curriculum. Theory is implemented and integrated in practice. Trust in students

Harmen: Broad range of maritime companies, a lot of different work experiences. First year is focussed on general education, second year is focussed on specific education, student has a say in which focus. Assignments are always connected to the workplace. Important role for the workplace coach. Middle management, fills gap in employment.

Oran: workplace learning degree in shop management, modular, assignments based in the workplace. Culture clash between institute of HE and workplace; three parties: students, HE and workplace. Dealing with employers is an integral part of the process. Employee is key, determines the success of the outcome. Number one stakeholder. Assignments designed to improve/challenge certain topics on the workplace. Example: marketing module, assignment completes assignment that leads to improvement in the store. Mutual benefit from assignments is important. Employer knows the learning outcomes associated with the module.

Yoel: company classrooms, support students with mentors in the company. Students need to be ready for workplace learning. Ministry of work allows companies to determine 25% of the curriculum, relationship based on trust.

b. What do you encounter in practice? Which dilemmas do you experience? What went really well? Tips on quality assurance?

Problem: what is quality? Different standards from workplace < > HE; how to bring them together?
Open discussions with three stakeholders.