



A WORK PLACE-BASED LEARNING (WPBL) Policy: The National Perspective

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August 2015



Overview

1. Background
2. What is the context?
3. What is the challenges?
4. What is the policy context for WPBL?
5. What is the conceptual framework?
6. What are the purposes of WPBL?
7. What are the principles guiding WPBL?
8. What are the roles and responsibilities of role players in WPBL?
9. Policy framework development
10. Funding and reporting
11. Conclusion

Background



- The educational value of workplace-based learning (WPBL) is undisputed
 - Eases transition from learning to work
 - Enhances employability
- However, first and foremost, WPBL is about *learning*, and not about *working*. Work is a vehicle for learning.
- A tentative definition (DHET):
 - ***Workplace-based learning is an educational approach through which a person internalises knowledge, gains insights and acquires skills and competencies through exposure to a work-place to achieve specific outcomes applicable to employment.***
- WPBL has been practiced in a policy vacuum and has been an unfunded activity
- DHET- A national framework for policy and implementation

3

What is the CONTEXT?



- Students existing from the PSET system are not able to find work easily owing, in part, to the *lack of skills associated with workplace experience*.
- Workplace-based learning (WBL) has a long tradition in South Africa:
- It has been a central element of *higher education* programmes – medicine, engineering and teacher education etc.
- Has been associated with various types of *employer-education partnerships* for vocationally oriented qualifications – Co-operative Education in the technikon era
- WPBL is an indispensable component of *artisan training* and has for many decades served as the key site for the development of artisans.
- WPBL has also, for many years, been a *requirement of professional councils* for professional designation, which serves as a license for a graduate to practice as a professional.
- About fifteen years ago, a new form of WPBL was introduced in South Africa, one which facilitated the attainment of occupational qualifications through an arrangement referred to as *learnerships*. The new skills landscape introduced in the country during this period also strongly enabled the training of existing employees at the workplace through the Sector Education and Training (SETA) levy-grant system.

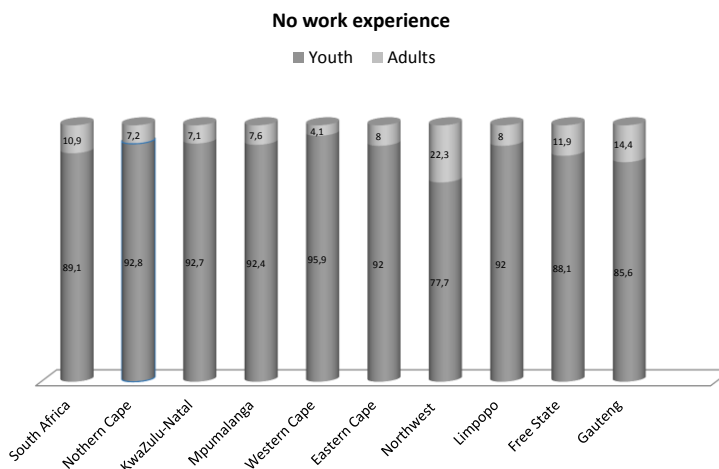
4

What is the CHALLENGES?

- *Differential implementation* of WPBL in many parts of the PSET system.
- “the *apprenticeship system* has been allowed to *deteriorate* since the mid-1980s, resulting in a shortage of mid-level skills in the engineering and construction fields”.
- Hundreds of students are *unable to achieve qualifications* such as the “N” Diploma and the National Diploma owing to a lack of access to WPBL opportunities.
 - Many students who complete vocational qualifications, such as the NC (V) are unable to obtain work experience to improve their chances of employability.
 - WPBL is central to the attainment of occupational qualifications, which are key to the economy of the country.
 - Many professional graduates too, are unable to practice in their professions owing to a lack of access to WPBL.
- PSET system has not built up *sufficient capacity to facilitate increasing numbers* of students and graduates in WPBL.
- *Employers, too, have been slow to recognise how partnerships* with education and training institutions might enhance the relevance of education for potential employees and lead to improved organisational performance.

5

The extent of the problem... (DHET, 2015)



What is the policy context for WPBL?

- Recent education, training and economic policies have emphasised the need for WPBL with specific reference to the White Paper for the Post school education and training (PSET) system:
- Non-education policies: solution to social and economic problems, e.g.
 - National Development Plan; New Growth Path; National Skills Accord; Youth Employment Accord; National Integrated Human Resources Development Plan; Industrial Policy Action Plan; Strategic Implementation Projects; Draft National Youth Policy; Turning the Public Sector into a Training Space; Public Service Human Resource Development Strategic Framework
- Education and training policies: solution to educational and social problems, e.g.
 - NQF Act; HE and FET Acts; Skills Development Act; Levies Act; NSDS III; SETA WPBL Regulations; Skills Development Grant Regulations; Learnership Regulations; Trade Test Regulations
- Remarkable alignment of policies and regulations, or is there?

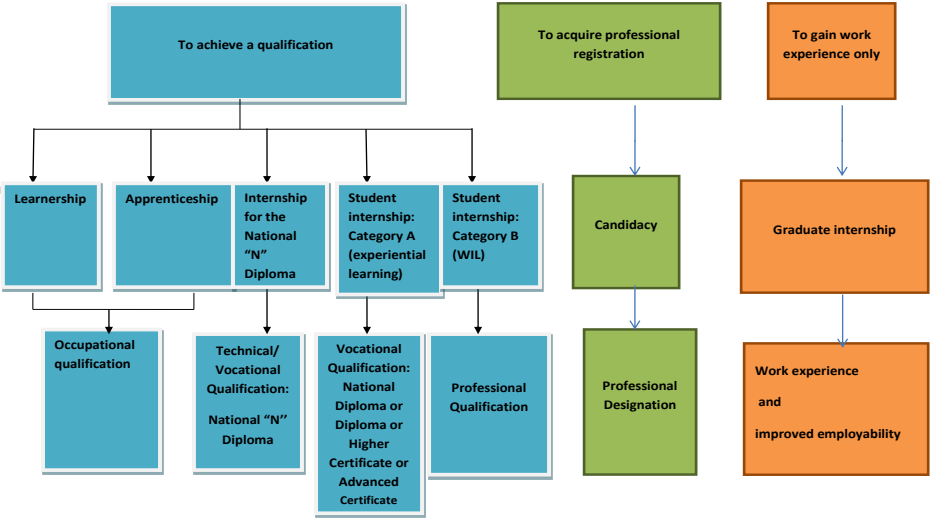
7

What is the conceptual frame for the WPBL?

- '...an educational approach that aligns academic and workplace practices for the mutual benefit of students and workplaces' (CHE, 2011)
 - Learning **for** work – induction of new entrants to the profession/vocation
 - Learning **at** work – the integration of knowledge and competencies through experience
 - Learning **through** work – work-related tasks as part of the curriculum
- The combination of these encourages the integrative aspects of learning and work
- However, there is no one-on-one relationship between curriculum and work...
- So what is the purposes of WBL?

8

AN OVERVIEW OF WORKPLACE-BASED LEARNING
Version 3 April 2014



9

APPENDIX B: TYPOLOGY OF WORKPLACE-BASED LEARNING ARRANGEMENTS (VERSION 3 APRIL 2014)									
WORKPLACE BASED LEARNING	TARGET GROUP	PURPOSE	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	RESULT	REQUIRE- MENT FOR QUALIFICATI- ON	ASSESSMENT BODY	QUALITY ASSURANCE BODY	MUST BE REGISTERED AS A STUDENT OR LEARNER	IS AN EMPLOYEE
LEARNERSHIP	Workers and school-leavers who are working towards occupational qualifications	Obtain WPB experience as part of the requirements of an occupational qualification	The minimum level of education attainment required is applicable to a particular occupational qualification	Leads to an occupational qualification	Yes	Assessment quality partner	QCTO (currently delegated to SETAs by QCTO)	Yes, as per learnership contract	Yes
APPRENTICESHIP	Persons who have completed Grade 12 or NC (V) Level 4 in Engineering or N2 (Engineering)	Obtain WPB experience to prepare an apprentice for a trade test/journey towards becoming an artisan	Must have completed Grade 12 (and usually expected to have passed maths and science) or NC (V) Level 4 in Engineering or N2 (Engineering)	Certification as an artisan by the QCTO following successful completion of a trade test	Yes, but WPBL must be followed by a trade test	Chief Artisans Assessors	NAMB moderates and QCTO certificates	Yes, for competency-based modules as per apprenticeship contract	Yes
STUDENT INTERNSHIP: CATEGORY A	Students who are enrolled for the Diploma, National Diploma, Higher Certificate and Advanced Certificate	Obtain WPB experience as part of the requirements for a Diploma or National Diploma or Higher Certificate or Advanced Certificate	Must be enrolled as a student for the Diploma, National Diploma, Higher Certificate and Advanced Certificate	The Diploma, National Diploma, Higher Certificate and Advanced Certificate	Yes	HEI or FET College	CHE or UMALUSI	Yes	No

10

APPENDIX B: TYPOLOGY OF WORKPLACE-BASED LEARNING ARRANGEMENTS (VERSION 3 APRIL 2014)									
WORKPLACE BASED LEARNING	TARGET GROUP	PURPOSE	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	RESULT	REQUIREMENT FOR QUALIFICATION	ASSESSMENT BODY	QUALITY ASSURANCE BODY	MUST BE REGISTERED AS A STUDENT OR LEARNER	IS AN EMPLOYEE
STUDENT INTERNSHIP: CATEGORY B	Students who are enrolled for professional qualifications (eg teaching, social work, nursing, medicine, law)	Obtain WPB experience as part of the requirement for professional qualification	Must be enrolled as a student for a professional qualification	A professional qualification (which could serve as a basis for professional registration as in the case of teaching, nursing etc)	Yes	HEI	CHE	Not directly	No
INTERNSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL "N" DIPLOMA	Persons who have completed N6 and who require WPBL to achieve the national "N" Diploma	Obtain WPB experience as part of the requirements for the National "N" Diploma	Must have completed N6	National "N" Diploma	Yes	DHET	Responsibility of QCTO, but not functional as yet	No	Yes (but may not happen in practice)
GRADUATE INTERNSHIP	Recently qualified persons who require work experience (eg persons who have completed any level of the NC (V), any diploma, higher certificate, advanced certificate, or degree	Obtain WPB experience to improve chances of employability	Must have a post-school qualification	Work experience	No	Not applicable	Not applicable	No	Yes
CANDIDACY	Persons who have completed a professional qualification and who need to be registered with a professional council (eg. In Engineering, Law, Architecture, Medical, Theology)	Obtain WPB experience as a requirement for professional registration	Must have completed the underlying qualification related to the professional qualification	Professional registration by a professional body	No	Professional Body (but needs policy review)	Professional Body	No	Yes

11

What are the guiding principles for WPBL?

- WPBL is aligned to the mission/vision of the institution
- WPBL is a matter of curriculum, pedagogy and directed learning
- A curriculum with WPBL 'faces two ways' – disciplines and the world of work
- WPBL is assessed and quality assured, monitored and reported
- Work-related activities are related to the goals/purposes of the qualification - **part of the curriculum design**
- WPBL is based on partnership between institutions, industries and the students
- WPBL is a long-term commitment to jointly plan for, implement and monitor learning
- Government is an important enabler
- Partners have clearly defined roles and responsibilities

12

What are the roles and responsibilities of role players?



Role player	Role and responsibility
Government (DHET includes SETAs)	policy, incentives, funding, links with other government agencies and departments, report
Institutions (HEI, TVET)	curriculum development, implement WPBL, manage and monitor, assess, QA arrangements, support students, staff and employers, report
Employers	workplace opportunities, safe environment for learning, mentor, monitor and feedback
Students	LEARN, adhere to workplace rules as learner-workers, complete workplace related tasks; submit logbook

13

Policy framework development



PURPOSE:

The urgency to arrive at a common understanding on WPL is driven by three imperatives, namely:

- to categorise the different arrangements by which WB-PL can occur;
- to define the quality arrangements whilst in the workplace;
- to support the development of a registration and information system which is currently being developed in the Department that will facilitate reporting on WPBL;
- to make decisions on the allocation of funds;
- to regulate learning in the work place; and
- to enable improved planning and accountability through monitoring and reporting.

14

Funding and Reporting

Once there is broad agreement on the categories and arrangements for WBL for students/learners, it is proposed that a second exercise needs to be undertaken to identify the funding and reporting requirements of the following situations:

- WBL placement arrangements which the DHET is committed to fund through SETAs and/or the National Skills Fund (NSF);
- WBL placement arrangements that need to be supported and/or facilitated by the DHET / SETAs (but which may not necessarily be currently funded e.g. UoT type programmes);
- Formulation of information/statistics/indicators in relation to WBL that can be used to monitor and report WBL.
- WBL placement programmes for FET College lecturing staff that might need industry exposure which should be funded and reported on

15

Conclusion

- Learning to work transitions are always fraught with problems for new entrants
 - In SA combined with historical disadvantage;
 - Almost 60% of unemployed people have never worked before, the majority of these are youth;
 - 9 out of 10 businesses will rather hire someone with experience than those without
- In many systems internships and work readiness programmes are compulsory parts of qualifications;
- International policies highlight the need: United Nations, Commonwealth, African Youth Charter, etc. (DHET, 2015)
- SA policy point to WPBL as a solution to both education and economic issues;
- Is the pedagogic imperative at odds with social/economic demands?
- Placement thinking or engagement thinking?....cooperative education?

Conclusion

- However, WPBL does not offer a 'quick fix'
- It does not transform 'low skills' to 'high skills'
- It contributes to work-readiness (CHE, 2011)
- Benefits to:
 - Students – enhances learning, progression, employability and self-confidence, work readiness
 - Institutions – enhances the curriculum, improves retention and motivation, the reputation of institutions, student graduates and is work ready
 - Employers – pool of work-ready applicants
 - Communities – service learning benefits
 - Government – work-ready applicants, educated citizens
 - Economy – productive participants

Thank you