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**The European Shoemaker**

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**Guidelines for trainers in  
Work Based Learning**

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## 1 Introduction to the Guidelines

WBL – Work Based Learning is a fundamental aspect of vocational training – it is directly linked to the mission of VET to help learners acquire knowledge, skills and competences which are essential in working life <sup>1</sup>.

Taking into consideration the above definition, the purpose of these guidelines is to provide a tool for trainers responsible for delivering the training contents elaborated under the “Shoe Made in EU” project to streamline students’ apprenticeships and thus enable students to train at the highest level.

These guidelines should provide hands-on tools and support based on the following structure:

Guideline 1: Plan and Prepare for Successful Experiences

Guideline 2: Maximise Learning

Guideline 3: Provide Effective Supervision

Guideline 4: Promote Safety

Guideline 5: Manage the Students’ Hours in the Workplace

Guideline 6: Pay When Required

Guideline 7: Provide Ongoing Support

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2013). Work-based learning in Europe: practices and policy pointers, European Union

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## 2 Guidelines

### 2.1 Plan and Prepare for Successful Experiences

Planning and preparation are two pillars of the success of all experiences, and Work Based Learning (WBL) is not an exception.

It is important to take structural elements of WBL into account, such as the roles and responsibilities of all involved, the definition of goals and expectations for both sides (trainer and trainee), planning of the training sessions, including duration and nature of the activities foreseen, and creation and maintenance of the right conditions for learning.

#### **What is a successful experience in WBL, from the perspectives of both the trainer and the trainee?**

Defining success is not easy, and it is even less easy when we talk about a work based learning experience. One tends to focus too much on the completion of the course or the learning itinerary, and a possible further certification of the course or training units, rather than on the factors that make the learning experience worthwhile. Learning the contents is important, but also achieving autonomy, as well as feeling empowered in order to work independently and to know where to find the needed information and guidance. A successful experience is also to be able to trust in learners' motivation to continue learning throughout life, after the WBL life cycle ends.

A successful experience in WBL, for both **trainers and trainees**, happens when:

- It is appropriate for the development of both parties;
- Includes an orientation for all parties (trainers, trainees, organisation, co-workers, etc.);
- Identifies learning objectives – achievement goals;
- Explores all aspects of an industry or sector;
- Develops the due skills and competencies, helping to build the skills required for specific occupations;
- Assesses performance with success;
- Provides opportunities for reflection, improvement and development;
- Links to appropriate next steps, creating foundations for further learning and/or to embrace multiple career options available in the workplace;
- It is documented and recorded;
- Complies with health and security conditions and labour laws.

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- Engages all parties involved
  - Enhances both self-esteem and self-confidence of all parties involved;
  - The trainee is more rapidly operational and will be ready to play a full part in the organisation in a shorter period of time.
  - Provides multiple opportunities for reflection on the experience.

From the perspective of the **trainer**, a WBL experience is successful when he:

- Develops personally from gaining new skills such as didactic skills and interpersonal skills (giving feedback, motivating, influencing positively, leadership skills...)
- Acquires knowledge from the trainee he/she teaches – innovation methods, other perspectives
- Gains new insights into the organisation as he/she sees it through the eyes of a newcomer, resulting in a refreshing of his/her own knowledge and in new ideas and insights being brought forward.
- Increases self-confidence
- Increases self-awareness
- Benefits from a chance to stand back and reflect on the organisation
- Expands personal network

The **trainer** acts as a tutor/coach during WBL. **What is expected from a WBL trainer?**

- To support the trainee with day-to day work
- To help clarify goals
- To stay connected to the trainee by following-up on activities
- To help find solutions
- To develop a relationship of trust and partnership with her/his trainee
- To facilitate knowledge through experience
- To give feedback
- To target high performance and improvement at work
- To suggest ways of altering performance to improve results
- To support and monitor the learning process and its evolution
- To report to hierarchy the progress of the learning process

**The trainer is the main facilitator of the planning and preparation of the WBL experience.**

In this context, here is a set of principles that should be followed:

**Get to know your trainee's learning style! Adapt the WBL plan to your trainee's best learning style/ method!**

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Learning methods are simply different approaches or ways of learning. Your trainee's preferred learning **method or style** is the way in which they learn best.

Information about learning methods is helpful for everyone. Knowing your trainee's learning style will help you as a trainer to elaborate an adequate WBL plan and to develop adequate strategies to compensate for weaknesses and capitalise on your strengths.

Three learning styles or methods that are often identified in trainees are:

- **Visual Learners:** Does your trainee need visual aids to understand the lesson? Visual learners learn more easily with graphs, charts, maps, and diagrams. They need to see the body language of the teacher and to see the teacher's face. They are disrupted by visual objects and prefer sitting at the front of the classroom. Visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information. They can easily visualise objects, plans, and outcomes in their minds. They have a good spatial intelligence, which gives them a good sense of direction.
- **Auditory Learners:** Does your trainee learn better through listening? An auditory learner depends on listening and speaking as a main way of learning. Auditory learners must be able to hear what is being said in order to understand and may have difficulty with instructions that are drawn, but if the writing is in a logical order it can be easier to understand. These learners often benefit from reading texts aloud and using a tape recorder.
- **Tactile/Kinetic Learners:** Does your trainee need to do things to learn? The tactile-kinetic learner remembers best the things they experience. They may find it difficult to sit still in a classroom for long periods of time and they may become distracted very easily and frequently. They have a constant need for activity and exploration.

There are a lot of essays for you to help your trainee discover his/her learning method. The list of websites below is **non-exhaustive**:

- <https://www.how-to-study.com/learning-style-assessment/> This questionnaire is a 5-minute assessment to identify one's preferred learning style and receive study tips for the correspondent learning style
- <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles.shtml> this is a 20-questions questionnaire to identify one's learning style.
- <http://marciaconner.com/assess/learningstyle.html> 12-questions questionnaire to identify one's main learning style.

**Why is it important to know what your trainee's learning style is?**

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His/her learning style influences the way he/she understands information and solves problems. Many people use a combination of learning styles, whereas others learn best by using just one.

If your trainee is more **Auditory**:

... he/she learns by hearing and listening. He/she understands and remembers things he/she has heard, stores information by the way it sounds, and has an easier time understanding spoken instructions than written ones. He/she often learns by reading out loud because he/she has to hear it or speak it in order to know it.

If your trainee is more **Visual**:

.... he/she learns by reading or seeing pictures, understands and remembers things by sight, can picture what is being learnt in his/her head, and learns best by using methods that are primarily visual. He/she may have difficulty with spoken directions and may be easily distracted by sounds. He/she is attracted to colour and to spoke language (like stories) that is rich in imagery.

If your trainee is more **Tactile/kinetic**:

... e/she learns by touching and doing. He/she is a "hands-on" learner who prefers to touch, move, build, or draw what is being learnt. He/she needs to be active and to take frequent breaks, often speaks with his/her hands and with gestures, and he/she may have difficulty sitting still.

Please bear in mind that:

- These learning styles are not superior or inferior to one another. Discovering the trainee's own preferred learning style can help the trainer realise in which area the trainee is doing better.
- Also, this insight leads to learning aims to develop the other styles a bit more. All learning styles are present in people. One eventually learns best when one uses all the learning methods! You, as a trainer, must forget the idea that everyone learns in the same way. The trainer at the workplace must be aware of their own learning style, because there is a risk that he/she will unconsciously impose it to his/her trainee.
- The trainer should also adapt to the preferred learning style of the trainee to help him/her learn.
- Interaction takes place between the personal learning style and the surroundings.
- Learning styles can change in the course of time.

**Define a WBL plan together with trainees and your organisation:** the plan should outline activities and tasks that the trainee (or learner) should undertake, envisaging articulation with the learning objectives/goals. All the activities should be described in a timeline, and roles and responsibilities should be assigned. Assessment moments should be defined as well as a correspondent methodology and criteria. It should all be negotiated between the trainees and you in accordance with your organisation's strategy.

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Do not forget that everything should be planned together by both trainer and trainee – identification with the plan which is being built for him/her is the only way to reach a compromise and ensure success.

**Do not forget to adapt your plan to your trainee's learning style!**

**Provide due orientation to the trainees through giving instructions**– an instruction is a transfer of learning of a person (trainer) to another (trainee). Giving instructions is vital in the learning process. Anytime you are giving directions, orientations or telling how to do something, you are giving instructions. For a successful WBL experience, you, as a trainer, must know how to give them properly.

**How to provide adequate instructions?**

Each instruction session should have a **Head, Body** and **Tail**.

- In the **Head**, you should announce what he/she is going to do/perform and what the learning goals are.
- In the **Body**, you should describe the content of the training.
- In the **Tail**, you should summarise and evaluate the learning goals.

**Head of an instruction**– here are the steps of a good beginning, which determines the complete instruction session and inspires confidence in a good result

- Start and stop on time.
- Introduce yourself as the instructor.
- Put the learner at ease.
- Be enthusiastic.
- First, define the task and explain how the task fits in the larger whole.
- Give an overview of the instruction session: the learning goals, the different modules, the didactical methods, what you expect from the trainee – required performance standard - and possible links with the previous session.
- Explain why it is important that the trainee learns this.
- Ask the trainee for learning wishes.
- Give practical information (timing, breaks, lunch, etc.)
- Make clear appointments to avoid problems.
- Involve the trainee from the beginning to get interactivity.
- Encourage the trainee to ask questions if something is not clear.

**Body of an instruction** - here are the steps to develop it:

- Explain patiently and quietly and/or demonstrate in understandable steps and in chronological order.
- Put the trainee beside you during a demonstration (not in front of you).

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- Demonstrate first in the normal speed of work (standards for speed and accuracy). Explain that you do not expect the trainee to reach this speed and this accuracy immediately.
  - Demonstrate afterwards in a lower speed to teach the task.
  - Use real materials during the demonstration.
  - Use suitable language. Avoid jargon.
  - Be concise. Eliminate superfluous matters.
  - Try to make links with what the trainee already knows/can do.
  - Put the emphasis on important points or characteristics.
  - Provide tips and tricks at the right moment.
  - Explain the 'why'.
  - After each step, give them time to practice.
  - Let the trainee work first at his own pace. Later, the speed can be increased.
  - Let the trainee explain the task he/she carries out (programming of the brain).
  - Give the trainee feedback.
  - Emphasise that he/she can learn from errors.
  - Repeat the vital points once more.
  - Also explain where exactly the responsibility of the trainee lies.

Do not forget to always increase the involvement of the learner by:

- Showing your own enthusiasm.
- Creating surroundings where errors are possible.
- Maintaining eye contact, paying attention to body language.
- Encouraging regularly.
- Calling him/her by their name.
- Let him/her summarise the most important learning points.

### **Tail of an instruction**

- Summary of the most important learning points.
- Evaluation of the learning goals.

**Create a learning environment** - The concept and benefits of WBL should be widely promoted and supported. It is crucial to create a more positive perception of the methods and benefits for all parties involved. This may be done through proper information and promotion. Therefore, the trainer should continuously demonstrate the benefits of gaining new knowledge through workplace experience.

**Be aware of the adequate conditions of health and legal** considerations associated with the experience – this will be elaborated in a following chapter.

**Balance consideration and expectations with learners and the other employees** in the same learning environment (such as dress-code and workplace conduct among others).

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**Link to other ways of learning** – The experience consists in several moments of learning which should be linked – in this particular Project, the on-line training and the work based learning experience. Both components of the training should be planned, prepared, accompanied and followed up.

**Be prepared to possible challenges when dealing with WBL-** here are some tips for possible problems arising during WBL programmes.

- Some trainees may get too much information from different parties (HR department, manager, other employees, etc.) or may not get any information at all (HR thinks that the trainer will give the information, the trainer thinks the opposite, etc.). You will need to make sure that the communication is clear and that all the staff know their responsibilities towards the trainees.
- Some trainees may not feel professionally fulfilled in the training for many reasons. To prevent this, ensure that there is a clear training plan which covers all required knowledge.
- It is important to ensure that the right trainer is matched with the trainees and that they are regularly giving the right feedback.
- Be realistic about the time required to run your programme and consider time management issues for those involved.
- Uncommitted trainers or trainees will never be successful. Both trainer and trainee should not be pressured to take part or given unrealistic responsibilities and expectations. Any potential conflict of interest or clash of personalities should be managed without delay.
- The trainer should never take credit for the trainees' work in an educational/ training programme, and obviously neither in a WBL programme.
- Trainees should never be seen as an extra member of staff. Again, the programme goals and role expectations should be clear.
- Any misunderstandings around confidentiality issues should be ensured by communicating a clear policy.

## 2.2 Maximise Learning

Learning is a process of gaining knowledge, skills, and competencies in a given subject. Understanding theoretical knowledge is a very important element in this process that allows someone to start the process of acquiring knowledge. However, omission or marginalisation of the practical training process prevents the acquisition of sustained and concrete knowledge

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in a given field of study. This is due to our neurological conditioning because our brain is able to produce new and durable connections mainly through experiences, actions, creativity, and repetition.

"The most important goal of education is to educate creative and imaginative people who want to discover and produce new things and not just use what the previous generations have invented. The second task of education is to develop critically minded minds that do not accept everything they are offered, but that they can verify it ", said Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, whose cognitive development theory has revolutionised the way of thinking about the youngest. Also in the spirit of constructivist pedagogy, learning should be interactive, independent and take place through research and inquiry, as emphasised by prof. Lutz Fiesser from the Higher School of Pedagogy in Flensburg, Germany, initiator of Miniphänoment.

What should motivate a young person to become familiar with a particular area is the possibility of personalised action. This short guide about maximising learning is intended to give trainers a few tools to help them introduce young trainees into the profession in a way that maximises the use of their time, including the time they devote to the trainer's educational development.

It can be said that the principle of effectiveness refers to the functioning and optimisation of many factors, taking a direct or indirect part in the teaching process, as quoted by Wincenty Okonia, a well-known Polish teacher devoted to the education and upbringing of young people. Direct participation involves factors such as teacher and student work methods, task time, message and student performance, and indirect involvement such as intelligence, pupils' ability, teacher education and teacher culture, and family and peer environments.

The area, in which the principle of effectiveness functions, lies between the objectives of education and school performance. The goals define the direction of change that the learning process is about to achieve in the learners, and the achievements, especially those that are measured, speak about the changes that have taken place in the learning process. The key to this approach is the separation of what directly affects maximising learning, and what is largely fixed, i.e. the intelligence of educated people.

In looking for factors that can affect the effectiveness of education, one should analyse the model of vocational training effectiveness. U. Jeruszka proposes to present it using the following formula:

$$E = f(N, L, C, I, O, S)$$

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where:

/ = function symbol

E= effectiveness

N= factors related to the teacher

L= factors related to learning

C= content of vocational education

I= conditions for the implementation of the vocational training process

O= factors related to the organisation of vocational training

S= factors related to the external environment of the school

The maximisation of vocational training will therefore be based on the analysis of the above and on maximising the factors that affect us.

Due to the individual nature of each trainee, the tutor responsible for the practical process of his / her education should have a high degree of flexibility, a form of knowledge transfer and a way of communicating. The right choice of techniques to help reach young people is very important in terms of teaching effectiveness. A good tutor should not only be pedagogical but also psychological in order to open the young man/woman to new knowledge and to the desire to experiment.

A person who feels free in our company will be more willing to try new experiences even if they fail because they feel safe. And as you know, experimentation, sampling, and experience are the best and most effective forms of learning. So, the first key to maximising learning outcomes will be our commitment to freedom of thought, views, and perceptions of the educated person.

In order to maximise learning, trainees need to present a clear and transparent curriculum so that we know exactly what knowledge we have to give and the learner can know what to learn. This is due to better functioning within certain frameworks. By sticking to the didactic plan, we do not lose time by getting side-tracked, but less importantly, we focus on what is important and needed. This prevents loss of energy, time, and mental power to irrelevant issues. This is also due to the need to maintain a certain level of concentration while gaining practical knowledge. In order to maintain the above, a practice plan should be developed that will be based on a certain didactic scheme to facilitate the preparation of the trainees.

The construction of the European Qualifications Framework obliges the collection and consideration of specific information on the results of education, and distinguishes three sets of information (so-called descriptors), each composed of eight levels: 3 - knowledge, - skills, - personal and professional competences. Among the personal and professional competences, there are four groups: - autonomy and responsibility; - learning competence; - communication and social competence; - professional and vocational competence.

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In order to maximise learning, the following skills should be developed by the trainee:

- sharing his scientific mind.
- perceiving and correcting technological and organisational errors.
- finding new technological and organisational solutions.
- overcoming difficulties independently.

The attitude of the trainee himself, his will and motivation as well as psychological predispositions are also relevant. However, it is very important that the teacher applies such didactic measures to facilitate the apprentice's acquisition of knowledge. According to Czesław Kupisiewicz, the following teaching rules can be distinguished, which allow for permanence in the acquired knowledge and results in the masking of learning processes:

"To attract students to new material and create positive learning motives, they need to be properly targeted;

- In terms of organisation and teaching, activities must be prepared in such a way as to ensure that each pupil is actively involved.
- Exercises to fix the previously used material should be used after verifying that all students have understood it well.
- The frequency of repetition should be consistent with the forgetting curve, i.e. the highest frequency should be immediately after the students are familiar with the new material.
- Transfer of information should be combined into logical systems, and students need to scientifically verify the laws and rules.
- Systematic control of learning outcomes and assessment of student work should be applied, which will have a beneficial impact on the sustainability of the knowledge. Stability of messages and skills also ensures that they are handled in a practical manner. "

In order for the teaching resources to be properly used in the teaching process, the learning must correspond to the didactic conditions:

- scientific correctness.
- Intelligibility.
- aesthetic value.
- purposefulness and technical conditions.
- technical excellence (proven performance).
- simplicity.
- durability.
- safety.

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Empirical studies confirm that learning resources prove to be helpful in teaching and learning, and in particular, in becoming acquainted with new material, shaping motives for learning, repeating and fixing, and controlling and evaluating learning outcomes.

To conclude, it is worth emphasising the need for evaluation in the teaching process, which consists in gathering, analysing and interpreting data and consequently improving the effectiveness of learning.

## **2.3 Provide Effective Supervision**

### **Preconditions for Implementing a VET System**

Before listing recommendations for effective supervision of a dual VET system, let us take the example of the German dual VET system to understand the pre-conditions for implementing and operating such a system:

#### **1) Strategic commitments:**

- a wide consensus across society to provide all school leavers with vocational education and training.
- a powerful strategic concept for training young workers in cooperation with companies.
- a strategic top-down decision taken by government and employers to implement a cooperative system.
- the willingness of the public sector (government, schools) to accept the private sector as an equal partner in vocational education and training.
- the willingness of the private sector to accept quality control of its education and training activities.
- a fundamental Vocational Education and Training Act which regulates the roles of the stakeholders.

#### **2) Legal Commitment: The Vocational Education and Training Act**

- Private-public partnership: determines the role of the stakeholders, their rights and duties.
- Clear financing rules: enterprises cover their own training costs (e.g. apprenticeship pay, cost of trainers, material), government funding of schools; research in the field of vocational education and training and training promotion programmes.
- Organisational infrastructure through the chambers: accreditation of training companies, registration of training and work experience agreements, examinations and certification.

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- Core elements of vocational education and training: necessary components of vocational training standards; rules for the training agreement; rules for recognition of previous learning; apprenticeship pay etc.
  - Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BiBB): platform for dialogue between decision-makers, development and research institute, carries out research, development and advisor activities for politics and practice.

## **Recommendations / best practices:**

### **1) Legislation / Recognition at national level:**

- Promote solid understanding and broad consensus among stakeholders: apprentices, companies, education public and private education representatives, VET providers, business associations, trade unions, and chambers.
- Ensure a high degree of governmental (national, regional and local) commitment to implement and promote dual training. National recognition of a vocational profile (official state certificate) is essential for apprentices to enroll.
- Establish a clear and stable national political and regulatory framework (Vocational Education and Training Act) to define the institutional structure and the legal conditions for the operation of the training programmes / curricula of the occupational profiles. The regulatory framework for apprenticeships needs, in particular, to ensure that:
  - ✓ Employers do not use the apprentice status to replace regular workers. Incentives for employers to take on apprentices risk creating a replacement effect. In other words, an apprentice may be recruited for a position that was previously carried out by an employee; and
  - ✓ The administrative burden imposed on companies through the regulatory framework is not too heavy; otherwise, it may be seen as a disincentive. In some countries, apprenticeships suffer from a bad reputation among employers due to the perception of heavy paperwork involved. This affects negatively the supply of apprenticeship placements.
- Ensure that the occupational profile and training path for skilled workers in the footwear industry is subject to and complies with the national legislation on vocational training, and it is embedded in the institutional structure for vocational training.
- In order for dual VET pathways to be attractive to a range of learners and employers, they must be permeable. In other words, they must be structured in a way that enables people to access additional, continuing and advanced VET or further and higher education. The qualification must be clearly linked to and anchored within the overall qualification system.
- Define the rights and duties of apprentices and host companies in the regulatory framework. Emphasise that apprenticeship contracts are employment contracts and therefore must comply with the applicable labour legislation.

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- Ensure that there is an official and harmonised sectoral training remuneration policy for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd apprenticeship year.
  - Ensure that attendance to a VET school is compulsory.

## 2) Educational contents:

- Federal Ministries, State Ministries, Employers' Associations and Trade Unions develop:
  - ✓ qualification profiles/VET-standards
  - ✓ examination requirements
  - ✓ duration and contents of training programmes
  - ✓ level of qualification
  - ✓ criteria for quality assurance
- Appoint an expert to organise a roundtable with representatives of all stakeholders to approve and/or modernise the curriculum / meet regularly to discuss potential issues and to see whether new technologies or other innovations should be included in the current curriculum, and to define the criteria for exams and certification.
- Operationally, separate VET school and company curricula: there is one curriculum for work-based learning in the companies where the apprentices spend about 80% of their time, and another for classroom tuition, which makes up for about 20% of the time. Within a specific training programme, it is important that the WBL aspects are clearly connected with the school-based parts, complementing each other. In well-established dual systems, recognition in the school environment of what trainees learn in the workplace is a crucial success factor, ensuring the coherence of the pathway. The educational system (school supervision bodies) is responsible for supervising the VET school part, i.e. hiring teachers, conducting exams (on the contents of the VET school curriculum; more or less theoretical contents in a broad sense); it is up to the companies to organise implementation of their part of the curriculum (i.e. mainly provide tutors and materials for work-based learning; which does not exclude imparting theory).
- Establish an independent quality control body who ensures that the employers hosting learners in WBL comply with the minimum requirements. This could be anchored at the regional Chamber of Industry and Commerce or a regional governmental institution. They also typically verify that providers and employers put in place processes to plan, implement, and assess WBL to make sure that young people develop the expected knowledge, skills and, competences. This entity should also develop assessment mechanisms (mid-term exam, final exam) for the in-company-part. To wrap it up, the main quality control tasks are:
  - accreditation of training companies
  - assessment, testing, and certification

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- monitor and evaluate the training process
  - maintain training centres for continuing training
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- In case of disputes (for example if an apprentice feels that he/she is not being trained correctly in his/her training company and would like to complain), there must be an independent “arbitrator”. Ideally, this should be the responsibility of a third party – other than VET school or companies; it could be the regional Chamber of Industry and Commerce or a regional governmental institution.
  - Ensure that the contents of the VET school curriculum as well as the qualification of the VET teachers in terms of footwear-specific know-how (i.e. beyond pedagogical skills) are sufficient for the professional development of the apprentices (this aspect of quality control could be anchored in the national education system / school supervision bodies in cooperation with the expert round table).
  - The quality of work-based learning may also be integrated into the external quality assurance framework for VET providers – for example as part of accreditation measures or as part of inspection criteria.
  - Ensure that companies participating in the dual VET system are apt to train (e.g. is there a certified in-company tutor, does the activity of the respective company comply with the in-company curriculum for the training pathway for skilled workers in the footwear industry), that the training at the workplace is actually executed in compliance with the curriculum (and not just parts of it) and that the in-company training meets all other requirements (e.g. health & safety, work legislation).
  - Implement a certification process for in-company tutors (the responsible entity could either be the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, sectoral training providers or regional governmental institutions).
  - Promote and develop (through certified training) the key role of in-company tutors; differentiate these workers through salaries or other forms of remuneration. The quality of work-based learning entirely depends on their “coaching” skills.
  - The apprentices should be obliged (regulatory framework / written down in the employment contract) to keep record of all learning activities in the format of a record book. Each day or week the apprentices document the subjects that were treated in VET school and the activities / theoretical contents they were introduced to at the training company. Over the duration of the apprenticeship, the record book gives proof whether each individual apprenticeship complies with the official VET school and in-company curriculum.
  - There should be a certain flexibility in terms of timeframe for the single learning fields, in order to be able to adapt the apprenticeship to the specifics of each training company (depending on the type of product / production organisation etc).

## 2.4 Promote Safety

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Promoting workplace safety, responsibly and professionally, in line with current legislation and standards of practice, is inextricably linked to the concept of safety culture.

The British Health and Safety Commission (HSC) defines safety culture as: Product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competences and behavior patterns that define engagement and the style of health and safety management of an organisation (HSC, 1993).

We have to define what is important to promote a culture of safety in the company. In the past, "work protection" was treated primarily as protecting workers from occupational accidents and illnesses. In order to fully benefit from the health and safety principles, however, a new approach to safety and ergonomic issues needs to be introduced. It is important for the employee to be aware that working conditions directly affect his or her level of job satisfaction and the quality of the products produced. You can see the positive correlation between improved working conditions and the economics of the company.

Among the resources that can be used to promote workplace safety we can mention:

- publications
- advertising materials (flyers, posters)
- internet
- movies
- computer software
- word of mouth, conferencing
- training

The issue of improving working conditions and, as a result, raising the level of health and safety and satisfaction at work in companies operating in the European Union is one of the most important tasks formulated within the framework of Community social and employment policies. This is evidenced by several acts of Community law which relate to the issues discussed here, in which attention is drawn to the collection of Community directives. In particular, it is expressed in the so-called Framework Directive 89/391 / EC on the introduction of measures to improve the safety and health of workers at work and the so-called " Specific directives", which are a complement to the Framework Directive.

Formulating specific provisions of Community law guidelines is accompanied by an attempt to define security levels in enterprises along with corresponding variables such as motivation, type of action, typical evaluation methodology, organisational culture characteristics in the area of safety and work hygiene, and the results achieved in the area of safety and work hygiene.

A company should have both formal and informal health and safety procedures to make work easier and safer. (*R. Studenski, Work Safety Culture ..., op Cit.*).

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How to promote safety at work? In order to have a proper, long-term, and practical approach to promoting safety, we must focus on the behavior of employees and on the workplace.

If we look at the organisation's security promotion, it is necessary to shape and maintain a high security culture in the organisation and promotion of security:

- Involvement of management by expressing personal interest and concern for the safety of employees. Considering the principles of occupational safety and health in planning and implementing organisational, technical, and personnel changes.
- Open and honest communication through reliable and systematic communication with all employees about hazards, protection measures, and all undesirable situations occurring in the workplace.
- Employee participation through the use of knowledge, opportunity and experience of employees. Encourage all employees to submit their own opinions and suggestions on health and safety at work; Involve employees in the development of internal standards and security documents.
- Training in occupational safety and health by education tailored to the specificity of work and the current needs of workers.
- Accident analysis, identifying causes and taking actions to prevent others.
- Motivating and reinforcing safe behaviours by approving and recognising employees who work safely and engage in workplace safety measures.
- Promoting safe behavior outside of work (Practical methods of shaping a culture of security in the company. *(Jerzy Wroński, safety and security portal for beginners, 2011, op.cit).*

It is important to remember that managers must set a good example. Otherwise, employees might not follow certain standards and principles of occupational health and safety.

## 2.5 Manage the Students' Hours in the Workplace

2.6

### Accreditation of Companies as Education Providers

The accreditation of education providers (also see Guidelines on Effective Supervision) is key to ensure the supply of high quality WBL teaching and learning. This accreditation serves to enhance and promote the quality and reputation of the provider. Furthermore, in order to ensure the quality of the learning experience, a number of key stakeholders in various European Member States are collaboratively involved in determining the content of WBL curricula, which guarantees the suitability of the education content to the needs of the industry.

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The accreditation of a company as an education provider assesses the capability of a company to host learners. It concentrates on the following:

- Does the company, where WBL takes place, offer sufficient training opportunities to comply with the curriculum?
- Does the company have (an) experienced and competent in-house workplace trainer(s) available?
- Is the company prepared to cooperate with the VET school?
- Does the apprentice have work space available?

### **Personalised Learning Plans**

In WBL, an effective personalised learning plan is at the heart of a quality learning experience. Logically, it has to be based on the in-company curriculum and serves as a planning tool that sets out the overall learning goals, concrete learning objectives, and learning outcomes of a programme that the learner will follow.

The person responsible for setting up personalised learning plans for apprentices is the head of training at the company (if it is an SME). In larger companies, a team of trainers assists the head of training and shares the responsibility for the apprentices.

The learning plan should clearly state how the learning objectives will be achieved, whilst recognising that objectives may need to be modified as the learning plan unfolds. The personalised learning plan should not be considered as additional paperwork duplicating information that exists elsewhere, but instead should be used as an active tool that explains the nature of the learning proposed to the learner (and as well to the employer as an education provider).

Personalised learning plans could also be used as part of a learner's progress review. They reflect the growing skills and capabilities of the learner, though any changes made should be agreed with the learner and, where appropriate, the employer and education provider.

Personalised learning plans should be owned and used by the learner as a record of learning goals and achievements. In addition, learners can use their learning plans to reflect on their experience and to improve their knowledge and experiences in the future.

A personalised learning plan should typically include details of:

- What is the trainee supposed to learn (skills, knowledge and competences required)?
- Where will the training be delivered (which production site, department, machines)?
- When will the training be delivered (duration; one or several modules, year / month / week, work placements)?
- What kind of training will the learner receive, where is it delivered, how it is scheduled?

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- Who delivers the training (tutor, mentor, skilled worker, etc.)?
  - How will the training be delivered? Methods and supports that will be used to deliver training (i.e. in groups, 1:1 with tutor; will there be a theoretical introduction and/or a phase where the apprentice just observes the execution of a work operation before starting to do it him/herself);
  - How will the assessment be done (demonstrate that certain operations can be executed autonomously)?

It is recommended to draft a training plan over the complete apprenticeship experience (i.e. for example, three years), including which part of the apprenticeship the trainee will spend in which department. It will state all learning objectives, workplaces, contact persons and ways of assessment.

The curriculum defines dedicated training phases for each learning activity in the different departments. Personalised Learning Plans should have separate blocks per learning module and divide each block into weekly schedules (for example 1<sup>st</sup> training year: 8 weeks in cutting). Within a block, the plan should indicate in which department the trainee will be trained and who the respective contact person in the department is, what he/she is supposed to learn in which week (if there are different tutors at different operations within the department, please specify names) and how (maybe there are preparatory exercises), and whether he/she will receive a general introduction to the subject (maybe in a different location than the production department).

In addition, briefing and de-briefing sessions are also an important aspect of the learning process and allow learners to reflect on their learning experience and verify the knowledge acquired.

### **Designated Contact Points**

At each workplace, it is essential to designate a person who is in charge of the learner and his/her progression. This designated person plays a crucial role in mentoring the learner, helping the learner make sense of the different components of the learning programme and also to ensure that learners do not feel isolated or unsupported. It is important that the person does not work under time pressure. The tutoring should be rewarded in a certain form, which is not necessarily monetary. Being selected to be an in-company trainer and being sent to trainings to better fulfil this role can be a very motivating incentive as well.

The mentor/ tutor should receive a training session to become certified in-company tutors (see guidelines on quality control). Secondly, they should have a copy of the individual learning plan of each apprentice. In order to be able to communicate all important elements at each learning station (i.e. each operation which is relevant for the training), tutors/trainers should analyse the learning stations they are in charge of. The aim is that at each learning station, the trainee will receive an introduction explaining the overall context and interdependences, and a duly eloquent explanation of all relevant aspects when executing the respective operation. There are methods to prepare this, for example the so-called Learning Station Analysis (LSA).

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## Assessing and Recording Learning Achievements in WBL

Assessing and recording the learning achievements in WBL is an important part of the learning process and serves several functions. This includes identifying each learner's success/failure, the provision of valid and meaningful statements of what has been achieved, the evaluation of teaching (in the sense that the apprentice can give feedback on the training modules received) and maintaining a record of learners' progress to assist them in planning their own learning.

Record books (see Guidelines on Effective Supervision) are also part of monitoring each apprentice's progress.

### 2.6 Pay When Required

Good WBL governance means creating a cost-benefit ratio that encourages employers to get involved. Work-based learning can only exist in a country if companies buy into this concept and offer apprenticeship placements, student placements or cooperate with schools.

Stimulating the creation of apprenticeships and placements is a key challenge in many European countries that wish to upscale their WBL practices within initial VET. For employers, WBL represents a cost, but also provides benefits to the company and even financial gains. An apprenticeship represents a future skilled worker, who will contribute to increase the competitiveness of the company in particular, but also of the industry as a whole. The ratio of productivity depends on many aspects: the duration of the WBL training and the time actually spent in the workplace, the regulations regarding salaries, benefits and social security contributions, the needs in terms of facilities, equipment, materials, and the possibility for the employer to engage the learner in productive tasks. The regulatory framework typically clarifies the incentives for employers to engage learners in exchange programmes. These can be financial incentives such as tax reductions, subsidies or other, but also non-financial, such as access to certain support services, for example to help companies with the paperwork related to hosting apprentices.

Students/trainers should also be rewarded on the base of their work and performance.

When students perform productive work for companies, they are entitled to receive compensation or wages, depending on the legislative framework.

A school credit is not a substitute for wages. Also, students cannot be required to volunteer their services in any setting nor can they volunteer in private businesses under any circumstances.

Work-based learning activities such as workplace tours, job shadows, and career mentoring are typically unpaid experiences. In these activities, students visit workplaces and observe work activities but do not perform productive work.

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Work-based learning activities such as internships, apprenticeships and work experience are typically rewarded positions. In these activities, students obtain valuable experience while providing a service for the employer.

### **Strategies that Work**

In conjunction with the workplace partner, teachers and youth programme staff should review the nature of the experience and determine if pay is required.

## **2.7 Provide Ongoing Support**

As a Work Based Learning trainer, it is crucial that you provide ongoing support to your trainees. It is your obligation to help your trainees acquire the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in the course, especially when facing problems and situations that need your special support.

Below you will find some guidelines to provide adequate ongoing support to your trainees and help to make the learning process a good and useful experience for both sides.

**Support learning from practical experience**, i.e. help your trainees learn from practical experiences by supporting and challenging them:

- **Active listening and empathising with the trainee.** Be alert to what the trainee says, both explicitly and implicitly.
- Enable the trainee to step back and look at his experience.
- **Do not judge too quickly, and consider recommendations when needed** – first listen, understand the problem/situation, ask reflective questions and, only after, provide recommendations according to the situation.
- **Start discussions for further exploration** of different approaches to problems/situations.
- **Stimulate** the trainee **to make links** with theoretical learning and other experiences.
- **Stimulate** the trainee **to reflect on consequences** of their behaviour and approach to problems/situations.
- **Help** the trainee **get an insight** into their feelings and motivations.
- **Give feedback** on the behaviour of the trainee and the way others experience this behaviour.
- In the event of a problem / situation, **help the trainee become aware** of the situation and focus on the real problem.
- **Open new horizons**, developing hypotheses, stimulating reflection on alternatives in each problem/situation
- **Share your own experiences**, tell stories, and show your own vulnerability by being open about your feelings, doubts and lessons learnt from the past.
- **Direct the discussion** from problem to solution.
- **Challenge** the trainee to investigate options when facing problems/situations
- **Look for possibilities** to put what they have been learned into practice.
- **Encourage** the trainee **to experiment**, to develop new insights and ways of acting.

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Feedback allows you to acknowledge your trainee's strengths and to motivate him to work on areas of weakness. Keep in mind that your trainee wants and needs your feedback to move forward in his or her learning opportunity/experience. By giving feedback, you demonstrate that you are actively listening and you are confirming the communication between the people involved. Furthermore, feedback is useful to ensure that the communication is understood, which makes it a good tool to use to verify everything you heard while actively listening.

Giving feedback is a skill, actually, and like all skills, it takes practice to build your confidence and improve. It is something you, as a trainer, must also develop by yourself. It is part of the win-win experience which WBL offers to both trainees and trainers. Take it as a challenge, commit to learn, and enjoy.

Here are some tips to provide effective feedback:

- **Try to make it a positive process and experience.** Before giving feedback, make sure you remind yourself why you are doing it. The purpose of giving feedback to your trainees is to improve the situation or performance. You will not accomplish that by being harsh, critical, or offensive. Do not attack. Give feedback concerning specific, perceptible behaviour, avoiding vague and general judgements.
- Talk directly to the learner and do not talk above his head. Look at him/her, use his/her name.
- **Be timely!** Give feedback without delay, during or directly after the operation, situation. The closer to the event you address the issue, the better.
- **Be honest!** Give positive feedback for what the trainee knows/can do. Do not give unmerited positive feedback.
- **Make it regular.** Feedback is a process that requires constant attention. When something needs to be said, say it. Your trainees then know where they stand all the time.
- **Talk about positive too.** A good rule is to start off with something positive. This helps to put your trainees at ease. It also lets them "see" what success looks like and this helps them to take the right steps next time.
- **Be specific!** Tell the trainees exactly what they need to improve on.
- **Use "I" statements.** Give the feedback from your perspective. This way you avoid labelling your interlocutor.
- **Limit your focus.** A feedback session should discuss no more than two issues.
- **Prepare your comments.** You don't want to read a script, but you do need to be clear about what you are going to say. Prepare yourself.
- **Provide specific suggestions.** Make sure both you and your trainee, at the end, know what needs to be done to improve the situation, the performance or solve the problem.
- **Follow up!** The whole purpose of feedback is to improve performance.
- And remember... It is better to give too much feedback than too little.

**Support also means to explore and question. Ask effective questions!** Developing effective questioning skills is vital to a successful WBL experience. Your primary role as a trainer is to encourage your trainees to learn, practice, perform, and succeed. This cannot be reached if you create excessive pressure or confusion by inappropriate questioning. Trainers

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should be able to apply good questioning techniques and should know how to ask effective questions.

Here are some tips to ask effective questions:

- Ask open questions to make the trainee think (such as: "What...? ", "Why...?", "How...?", "When...?", "Where...?")
- Regularly ask questions to understand your trainees' progress
- Give time to think when asking a question
- Respond to answers in a positive way
- When you notice the trainee does not understand you (look at the body language!):
  - Ask a closed question (such as: Was this clear?)
  - Or an open question (such as: How would you summarise what you have just heard?).
  - Repeat what you have said in other words
- Use practical examples to bring abstract ideas to life
- Ask questions, stimulate discussion, summarise.
- Encourage the asking of questions ("Which questions do you have? "). Never avoid questions.
- Make sure that you understand the question.
- Give an honest answer.
- There are no 'stupid' questions (be careful with your non-verbal communication!).

And remember: If you do not know the answer ask for help or write down the question and give the answer afterwards.

**Develop emotional awareness:** Emotions play an important role in the way we communicate in a learning environment. It is the way you feel, more than the way you think, that motivates you and your trainees to communicate or to make decisions.

Emotional awareness provides you the tools needed for understanding both yourself as a trainer and your trainees. In this way, it is critical in a supportive relationship that you want and should build with your trainees.

Emotional awareness helps you:

- Understand and empathise with what is really troubling your trainees
- Stay motivated to understand and empathise with the person you are interacting with
- Communicate clearly and effectively, even when delivering negative messages
- Build strong, trusting, and rewarding relationships, think creatively, solve problems, and resolve conflicts

Thus, know more about this and convey to your trainees.

**Effective communication requires both thinking and feeling** - When emotional awareness is strongly developed, you will know what you are feeling without having to think about it—

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and you will be able to understand what someone is really communicating to you and act accordingly. This is essential to provide effective support.

**Emotional awareness is a skill you can learn** - with patience and practice, it can be learned at any time of life. You can develop emotional awareness by learning how to get in touch with difficult emotions and manage uncomfortable feelings and remain in control of your emotions and behaviour, even in very challenging situations. Convey what you learn to your trainees.

**Friendliness** - Through a friendly tone, you will encourage your trainee to engage in open and honest communication with you.

**Confidence** - It is important to be confident in all of your interactions with your trainees. Confidence ensures your trainees that you believe in them.

**Empathy** - Even when you disagree with a trainee, it is important to understand and respect his/her point of view. Using phrases as simple as "I understand where you are coming from" demonstrate that you have been listening to him/her and respect his/her opinions.

**Open-mindedness** - Enter any conversation with a flexible, open mind. Be open to listening and to understanding the other's point of view. Be willing to start a dialogue.

**Respect** - Simple actions like using a person's name and actively listening will make your interlocutor feel appreciated.

**Help your trainee to identify areas for growth and development, give vision, support the learning in the frame of career development, and provide support, counselling and advice.**

- Talk to your trainees about career opportunities, in the future, at the organisation; make them aware of opportunities
- Encourage risk taking in learning.
- Provide appropriate and timely advice.
- Confront negative intentions or behaviours.
- Guide in the culture and practice of the organisation.
- Besides being a trainer, also be a mentor.

**And....**

**Always, always communicate!** - Communication is a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange information and feelings but also create and share meaning. **Communication is a way of connecting people!**

Good communication is a key element of any relationship, and a WBL relationship is no exception.

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Effective communication helps to develop a successful working relationship between the trainer and trainee.